



**UNITED NATIONS
PACIFIC**



**United Nations Pacific Strategy (UNPS) Fund
Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday 25 June 2020 from 9.00am to 12noon**

Venue: RCO Conference Room – Suva Participants
Zoom Link: <https://undp.zoom.us/j/94922042025>

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

United Nations Pacific:

Sanaka Samarasingha, RC Fiji [Co-Chair]; Simona Marinescu, RC Samoa [Co-Chair]; Sandra Bernklau, UN Women Representative; Aleta Moriarty, Regional Programme Manager, Markets for Change (M4C), UN Women; Jennifer Butler, Director, UNFPA; Saira Shameem, Deputy Director, UNFPA; Levan Bouadze, Resident Representative, UNDP Pacific; Jorn Sorensen, UNDP Samoa; Revai Aalbaek, Effective Governance Team Leader, UNDP Pacific; Sheldon Yett, UNICEF Representative for the Pacific; Vathinee Jitjaturunt, Deputy Representative, UNICEF; Gulana Huseynova, Team Leader, RCO Fiji; Mohammed Mozeem, UN Partnerships Specialist, RCO Fiji; Klem Ryan, Team Leader, RCO Samoa; Elisapeta Kerslake, Partnerships Specialist, RCO Samoa; Sanya Ruggiero, Communications Analyst, RCO Fiji; Damian Kean, Communications Consultant, RCO Samoa

Donor Representatives:

Deborah Collins, Divisional Manager, Partnerships, Humanitarian and Multilateral, MFAT (Wellington); Salli Davidson, Lead Advisor-United Nations; MFAT (Wellington); Christine Conway, First Secretary (Development), MFAT (Suva)

UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) Representatives:

Jennifer Topping, Executive Coordinator, MPTF Office; Mari Matsumoto, Portfolio Manager, MPTF Office

Agenda item 1: Introductions

The Co-Chairs welcomed all in attendance from different parts of the world.

Agenda Item 2: UN Pacific Strategy Fund (Vision and objectives, NZ-UN Pacific Partnership, Partnership Principles)

- The Co-Chairs noted particular their appreciation of the Government of New Zealand for its trust and in investing via this innovative way of financing the UN's work in the Pacific and also the work of RCO colleagues, MPTF Office (as ex-officio members) and agencies, funds and programmes in developing the necessary documents and efforts to enable the setup of the fund. The Co-Chairs noted the great responsibility of everyone involved via the steering committee to ensure the fund operates well whilst noting the everchanging environment that everyone was working in. The Co-Chairs also noted their commitment to support building the up the fund for the next 2.5 years and beyond and getting more donor commitments towards this innovative financing mechanism.
- The Co-Chairs noted that this was an incentive to further implement the SG's reform and to use this funding to make a difference in the small Pacific countries working in an integrated and coordinated manner. This new way of working and the investment by NZ is setting the bar high not

only for the region but also globally. The Co-Chairs acknowledged the principles of the partnership that is also critical for a successful outcome for this new relationship, including NZ's support as a partner, as well as a donor, in this process and its support for the UNPS Governance Structure review was acknowledged as well.

- Deborah Collins, Divisional Manager, Partnerships, Humanitarian and Multilateral, MFAT gave apologies on behalf of Jonathan Kings, Deputy Secretary who could not participate in the meeting as envisaged. NZ was very pleased with the progress made, noting that the first SC meeting was a crucial milestone that had been achieved. NZ noted its broader engagement with the UN generally but noted that the UNPP approach was something new and not the usual way NZ had been engaging with the UN in the Pacific. NZ sees its partnership to work with the UN to achieve the broader outcomes of the region; secondly its support in the implementation of the reform and this was more or less as a global first; and thirdly its focus on a more strategic engagement with the UN in the region. MFAT will be reviewing the partnership in a couple of years' time which will then be used to inform its future engagement with the UN in the region, including support to further convince the political leadership on this new way of working with the UN in the region. NZ noted the ambitious and short time frame available to showcase results but they have been very encouraged by the confirmations from the UNPP partners. NZ noted the current context of COVID-19 and the challenges shaping the current work. It was further noted that the partnership will deliver and support results around that as well. Another feature of the partnership which NZ mentioned was the provision of a Special Assistant to the Resident Coordinator. Due to travel restrictions a New Zealander could not be mobilized so there are local recruitments under way. NZ was also looking forward to seeing further collaboration with other development partners, regional organizations and stakeholders through this partnership. NZ was also keen to see future SC agenda's including updates and discussion on macro-level trends and developments in the region as well.
- The Secretariat (Mohammed Mozeem, Fiji RCO) reiterated on the Partnership Principles that guided the implementation of the Fund noting the five-broad partnership principles. The partnership principles were acknowledged by the SC members and it was appended to the meeting documents as well as the UNPS Fund TOR.

Agenda Item 3: Review and adoption of UNPS Steering Committee (UNPSF) Terms of Reference (TOR)

- **The Secretariat** (Mohammed Mozeem) made a brief presentation on the Steering Committee (SC) TOR for consideration of the SC. It was mentioned that the SC TOR was a specific requirement for such funds and that the TOR was derived from the SC TOR that's in the UNPS Fund TOR. The SC was asked to consider specific elements of the SC TOR though, such as the composition of the SC; the required quorum of the SC; key tasks and responsibilities of the SC – such as approving the SC TOR by the SC, review and approval of the "Operations Manual"; reviewing the UNPS implementation and discussion of challenges – this will not be fully done under this meeting but in the next meeting when more updates and information is made available. Additionally, the other key areas for SC to consider were the frequency of the SC meetings both virtually and on face-to-face basis; and agencies were required to ensure prior consultations within their agencies and that it meets agency regulatory requirements before proposals were put forward to the SC for consideration.
- **Co-Chair (Samoa)** agreed with the TOR as presented and made a suggestion that once the face to face meetings are possible to be organized, that these meetings to alternate between Fiji and Samoa to ensure NZ also gets to view the implementation of those initiatives funded by NZ in the Samoa part of the region. The SC was also encouraged (by UNICEF) to consider virtual meetings to ensure more efficient use of time and resources. It was agreed by the SC through consensus to

determine the need for face-to-face meetings as required and to convene virtually otherwise. Additionally, it was mentioned that there is a need to determine ways for decisions and recommendations of the SC are provided to the UNCT without a need for holding special meetings of the UNCT to cater for further alignment. The RC's obviously will be having a key role in undertaking this task.

In terms of the SC composition, Co-Chair (Samoa) proposed that new SC membership, should be considered as additional resources are contributed to the Fund.

- **MFAT** noted its preference to have some face-to-face meetings once it's possible. MFAT signaled interest in having an extraordinary SC meeting in 3-month early meeting to take stock of how the implementation is progressing during this initial start-up and during the uncertainties of the Covid-19 environment. This could be transactionally light.
- **The MPTF** Office indicated that whilst the broad guidance for six months and yearly meetings are there from the MPTF, there may be good reasons to frontload some of the meeting frequency during the startup to allow implementation to facilitate early programming decisions and fast-tracking as needed.
- **Co-Chair (Samoa)**, reiterated that whilst there is no-government representation at the SC of the Fund and whilst there is government involvement in the Joint Country Action Plan (JCAP) steering committee to add a line in the SC TOR that members of the SC and Co-Chairs are responsible for duly informing the government counterparts on initiatives funded and implementation update to the governments. Additionally, around the principles of the partnership, there is mutual accountability and understanding on the results, this gives the RCs an ability to allow review of results with the aim for value for money and specific focus on results. Additional query raised by the Co-chair was whether new contributors to the Fund need to be reviewed by the SC or whether it will go with the flow as it happens.
- **Co-Chair (Fiji)** requested for the modification of the steering committee TOR to modify in terms of "leveraging" on page 3, decision number 5. If there is no objections the Co-Chair asked it to allow modification of this item on the language to make it as part of the role of the SC to support leveraging of new funds to allow the growth of the partnership. The MPTF Office clarified that this was a standard function of the SC and it can be revised to reflect this and additionally when new funds become available, the potential new contributor may want to know the strategic nature and fund contribution which can be discussed with the Co-Chairs and members in the future. The Secretariat (Mozeem) suggested to allow the fund leveraging function to be made more clearer to replace the words "work programme" with the word "steering committee" on page 3 of the SC TOR, decision 5 and to further expand the second last bullet point in the SC TOR under the "Key Tasks and Responsibilities" section, in particular second last bullet point "Approve extensions to the UNPS Fund, as required; and..." to further revise the wordings here to add words such as "expansion" to allow new fund contributors and agencies to be added by the SC through consensus. Changes to be shared with the SC in due course and prior to the next SC meeting.
- **UNICEF (Sheldon)** asked it to be made a bit clearer in terms of fund leveraging function of the SC and that agencies reserved the right to mobilise resources bilaterally and through other means beyond the UNPSF modality. The Co-Chairs noted that collective resource leveraging was a responsibility of the SC and was part of the Management Accountability Framework (MAF) and the Funding Compact principles as part of the reform which all have already signed up for and it also did not discourage agencies or donors to not raise bilaterally as well. The RCs as Co-Chairs will play a key role in raising funds under the pooled financing mechanism for the UNs work in the region.

Agenda Item 4: Presentation on MPTF Fund Financial Status

- The MPTF Office congratulated all members for their efforts and progress made on the setup of the Fund, specifically the inaugural meeting of the SC, championing the SG's reform agenda. Ensuring the foundations are right at the very beginning will provide a good platform for future engagement and fund implementation.
- The MPTF Office places a very heavy emphasis on transparency both during and pre-post COVID phase as well to ensure partners and stakeholders have access to the progress of the fund. In this connection the MPTF Office noted the available Gateway, the MPTF Office's website with a specific page for the UNPS Fund page which provides real-time financial information, and regularly updated by the Fund Secretariat on narrative progress and also encouraged the members to utilize this digital setup to access various information.
- In terms of the financial position of the fund, the Funding Framework is presented to the Steering Committee as a standard agenda item. Currently, only the contribution table is included along with the general financial status table. As the fund evolves more information on transfers and expenditures will be populated. The MPTF Office Gateway also captures financial inflows and outflows on a real-time basis. Interest earned on the fund are deposited back to the programmatic resources of the fund.
- According to the Funding Framework USD\$6.342,930 is available for programming.

Agenda Item 5: Structure, Process and other procedures (incl. reporting)

- A brief presentation was made by the Secretariat (Mozeem) to the SC. This is enclosed in the annex to these minutes.
- The Secretariat also proposed for SC to consider the drafting process of the Operations Manual as well which is one of the requirements of the MPTF. It was discussed and agreed that this will be developed in-house jointly between the two RCOs to the next SC meeting.

Agenda Item 6: Review and endorse the UNPSF 2020 Joint Work Plan (JWP) – including presentation of programmes by outcomes (5 mins per agency)

- The Secretariat (Mozeem) presented the Joint Work Plan for the SC's consideration. The overall budget noted for the JWP for 2020 for the next six months was noted as \$4.155 million NZD dollars and the full budget for the 2.5 years was noted as NZ\$22.52m. The Secretariat requested the SC to consider the budgets as presented and for the JWP to be converted into USD based on the applicable conversion rates from NZ to USD based on income received and for it to be endorsed by the SC Co-Chairs on behalf of the SC. The fund transfer request to the MPTF Office/Administrative Agent, therefore, will be made by the SC Co-Chairs on behalf of the SC. There were no objections received and the SC adopted the proposal from the Secretariat.
- UN Women raised the issue of currency fluctuations, in particular whether the interest earned will be used to manage currency fluctuations. The MPTF Office clarified that once the deposits are received in the Fund that's the exchange rate that will be applied, and in terms of interest earned from the Fund it goes back to the Fund for programmatic considerations. The MPTF Office also noted that the funds deposited in the Fund are not expected to also sit in the account for too long which reduces the amount of interest that will be earned but in principle whatever is earned as interest will be used to offset currency fluctuations.
- Additionally, Co-Chairs (Samoa) mentioned that considering the cooperate requirement to mention in the minutes that within the actual implementation of the UNPSF 2020 workplans that agencies will consider the Socio-Economic Response and Recovery elements. No objections were received on this suggestion considering there were no specific changes needed on the JWP as presented.

MFAT also made a point that whilst the fund was starting a few months later to enable sense-checking against the COVID-19 elements, it will be important for the SC to meet in the next 3 months and seek how the implementation progresses with the understanding that there is limited ability to make significant shifts in scope of the programme.

- The SC then considered presentations from all the 4 UN agencies. Presentations are enclosed for reference.
- Co-Chair (Fiji) made a remark for transparency purposes that UN Women also received additional funds for programmes such as the Markets for Change (M4C) from the Secretary General's COVID-19 MPTF funds for Vanuatu and Solomons for instance for WASH support for UN Women component and UNDP also received funds for training and agricultural support. UNDP and UNFPA received similar funds for Tokelau.
- The SC also reviewed an Options Paper for the Joint Programme between UNDP and UNODC. Paper is annexed to the minutes. MFAT requested further clarity on what it meant for UNODC to sign the MOU from an accountability perspective, given that MFAT is not a party to the MOU and the understanding is that accountability for the PRAC component rests with UNDP. MFAT also sought clarity on the various cost implications as well. The Co-Chairs requested if this could be clarified internally within the UN and the paper then revised for circulating to the SC electronically for a decision. The SC agreed on this proposed way forward.

Agenda Item 7: Review UNPSF M&E and Results Requirements

- The Secretariat (Mozeem) requested the SC to consider the UNPP Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL) Document and Theory of Change (TOC).
- MFAT requested finalisation of the MERL by ensuring the baselines, targets and indicators are all completed. MFAT also noted that the indicators that cover the UNPP approach require further work. A smaller taskforce to review it was proposed, although MFAT expressed a willingness to endorse the documents submitted, in principle.
- The Secretariat also requested the SC to consider the MPTFO requirement for a UNPSF monitoring plan.
- It was agreed that the smaller taskforce comprising of the M&E teams from both the RCOs and agencies and to complete the drafts of the MERL, TOC and the Monitoring Plan within a month's time to be shared within the SC and then approved virtually.
- The SC was also requested to note the requirement for 6 monthly monitoring meetings.

Agenda Item 8: UNPP Communications

- The Secretariat (Mozeem) updated the SC on communication matters, specifically the launch which was rescheduled to take place around the week of 6th July to include NZ High Commission, UN and broader stakeholders. There will be also joint press releases and joint communications materials produced.
- Clarity from UN Women (Sandra) was sought in terms of communication and branding of when the agencies could start using logos etc and branding. It was clarified that the RCOs and MFAT have already been working on branding for the launch materials, through a Trello board which links all comms elements. Agency focal points will be linked as well.
- The SC agreed to establish a communications team working group comprising of the RCOs Communication colleagues, MFAT and the agencies. The working group would develop branding guidelines, a communications plan and various media outreach activities before the next SC meeting.

Agenda Item 9: New Zealand/UN Pacific portfolio

- MFAT shared their full UN Pacific investment portfolio excluding PNG which stands at NZD\$107 Million dollars. MFAT noted that from time to time they would share insights from their wider engagement with the UN with the SC as well.
- Co-Chair (Fiji) requested clarity from MFAT on their thinking on 2021 and beyond on other areas such as climate change etc and whether MFAT will be considering funding agencies outside of this partnership. She also sought MFATs support to strategize about generating interest from other partners in joining the Fund. It was noted that some of donors have already been approached by the Fiji RCO such as Japan, US, Australia, EU, Canada and Switzerland. The response from US and Japan had not been very promising noting that further discussion needs to happen at the headquarters levels (with the US representative) including a need to have some focus regions for donors such as Japan in the north pacific. For Australia the request for the Australian Humanitarian Fund was also made and there is some potential, but it has not been quite positive so far. MFAT noted that they had also had some engagement with Canada, Australia and the UK and is interested in doing further outreach once the UNPP is launched. The SC Co-Chair (Samoa) noted that there were also very few philanthropic funders that were available for this type of funds and very few have been involved in such areas.
- In response to the query about post-2021, MFAT mentioned that the Minister of Foreign Affairs had approved only the scope of the UNPP pilot. In terms of bilateral activities that are at the concept or design stages, MFAT will consider the fit with the UNPP and the UNPS Fund mechanism.

Agenda Item 10: Confirming action items and scheduling of next SC meeting

- It was agreed that the next SC meeting would take place in 3 months- in September 2020 (Date TBC).
- Meeting minutes will be shared in due course for review of all the SC members which will indicate key follow-up actions.

Agenda Item 11: Closing Remarks

- MFAT, thanked everyone for the work. RC Samoa thanked all colleagues and mentioned that the UNCT will be meeting soon and will be provided an update on the UNPS fund which has been established and we will continue to receive requests from UN agencies to join in the Fund.