



Kyrgyzstan 'Delivering as One'

CONCEPT NOTE

November 2009

This concept note sets out the Kyrgyzstan UN Country Team's plan to move forward UN coherence, efficiency and effectiveness in its efforts to assist the Government of Kyrgyzstan to recover from the recent humanitarian crisis, to advance Kyrgyzstan's national development plans and to move towards achievement of the goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration.

1. NATIONAL CONTEXT

In the past two years, Kyrgyzstan has been hit by high fuel and food prices, energy deficits and the destabilising effects of the global economic crisis. These shocks are having a serious impact on vulnerable groups. As an urgent step, a Flash Appeal was launched in November 2008 to address some of the most pressing humanitarian needs in the winter-spring period.

The Flash Appeal was a one-off humanitarian response to a particularly worrying pattern of socio-economic problems converging in autumn-winter 2008. It responded proactively to the humanitarian needs of the population, focusing on the most vulnerable segments of society. In particular, the humanitarian appeal, as revised and implemented, delivered primarily food aid to address the precarious food security situation faced by the most vulnerable citizens of the country and agricultural inputs (seeds, veterinary medicine, and fertilisers) to support poor farmers to maintain their livelihoods.

The Flash Appeal process showed the UN system how working together can have a powerful synergetic effect in responding to complex challenges. It also spurred the United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan to continue working together to tackle the underlying issues of the Flash Appeal and the new threats related to the global economic crisis.

The United Nations is fully aware that the insecurities in Kyrgyzstan in the areas of water, energy and food are chronic and recurrent. The problems reflect the long-standing lack of investment in the country along with capacity constraints. However, it is also true that the challenges facing the country are significantly aggravated by the global economic crisis, reflected first and foremost in stagnant economic growth and declining remittances. In addition, the spike in food and energy prices in 2007 and 2008, which has receded globally, remains an issue in Kyrgyzstan. Energy price increases reflect the fact that these resources were much cheaper in the country than globally; nevertheless, the impact of such sharp increases is particularly severe for vulnerable groups. Continuing high food prices are harder to explain, but still of real concern for the significant portion of food insecure people in the country (more than one third of the population are either moderately or severely food insecure).

Traditionally, the people of Kyrgyzstan are resilient and have long established coping mechanisms. As a result, we do not see a typical humanitarian crisis. At the same time, vulnerable families are depleting assets as part of their response mechanism, they are suffering from worsening health and education services (primarily due to the ongoing use of scheduled electricity cut-offs that seriously affect service quality) and they have corresponding difficulties in raising their income and productivity in ways that would offset these negative trends. The combination of internal and external challenges that face the country are significantly compromising the coping mechanisms of the most vulnerable, and hindering the country's progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In short, a traditional development approach alone is not appropriate, and risks that may lead to acute humanitarian needs must be carefully monitored and mitigated.

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is convinced that by continuing to work together on a series of longer-term interventions, the United Nations can support the country to return to a path of sustainable human development and get back on track towards meeting its development targets, including the Millennium Development Goals. This joint response is an ideal opportunity to make further steps towards implementing UN reform in Kyrgyzstan and for the United Nations in the country to Deliver as One.

2. DELIVERING AS ONE IN KYRGYZSTAN

The unique context in Kyrgyzstan has inspired a deeper commitment to Delivering as One. Both development and humanitarian focused agencies need a higher level of coherence in order to best assist the Government. United Nations Organizations previously not represented in Kyrgyzstan have benefited from better coherence in the UN to establish the fuller presence necessitated by the situation. The UNCT is determined to align the full value of the UN system and to channel reduced administrative costs into an intensified development and, if and where necessary, humanitarian agenda.

There are a number of reasons why the UNCT in the Kyrgyz Republic wants to adopt the Delivering as One model:

1. *Slow-onset crisis:* The multiple shocks that have hit Kyrgyzstan over the past three years have placed it in a new situation, quite different from that envisaged when the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was developed. For this reason, additional joint and synergetic programming is needed to ensure that the country returns to its path of sustainable development
2. *Fluid situation:* Having a Joint Fund would allow the UNCT to respond more flexibly in the most critical areas of concern as the effects of the multiple shocks are felt over the next two years, and before a new UNDAF is introduced in 2012.
3. *Closer Government cooperation:* The Prime Minister has expressed a strong interest in working with the United Nations as a whole to tackle the new challenges facing the country. Having Government representation on the Joint Steering Committee will help ensure that national priorities are reflected in budget allocations, and meet the requirements of the Paris Declaration.
4. *Transparency and accountability:* The Joint Budgetary Framework will allow United Nations Organizations and partners to see clearly and easily how funds are being allocated to meet the evolving needs in the country, and to determine the best course for further disbursement of funds, in order to maximise the impact of interventions.

3. UN REFORM IN KYRGYZSTAN

The United Nations in Kyrgyzstan is committed to UN coherence and aid effectiveness and is actively working towards increased harmonisation among partner agencies and alignment with national priorities. The current UNDAF has guided the United Nations system since 2005. To put the UNDAF into operation, the UNCT in Kyrgyzstan has taken pragmatic steps over the past several years to increase the coherence of the UN system in country to lead to more collaboration and harmonisation. Key practices include:

Humanitarian response to natural disasters: The United Nations has worked closely together to respond to a series of earthquakes in Kyrgyzstan in 2006, 2007 and 2008. In 2008 a UN Joint Programme was begun to establish a Disaster Response Coordination Unit, led by the Resident Coordinator, which consists of UN Organizations, government, donors and civil society organisations.

Joint programming and joint advisors: In addition to the Disaster Response joint programme, multi-agency programmes have in recent years begun or been planned on Voice and Accountability; Decent Work; HIV and AIDs; and Gender Equality. The UNCT also has a team of Joint Advisors on Human Rights, Gender, Disaster Response, and Political Affairs.

The Resident Coordinator ad interim system: A team of Resident Coordinators a.i. from three United Nations organizations (UNICEF, WHO and UNHCR) work closely with the Resident Coordinator not only while the RC is out of the country, but also on a regular basis to ensure that RC functions and responsibilities are shared across UNCT members, and to enhance collegiate decision making.

UN House: A common premises for the UN in the Kyrgyz Republic was opened by the Secretary General in October 2002. Currently OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNV, and WHO are all located in UN House in the centre of Bishkek. Joint operations and utilisation of common services have led to a significant reduction in contracting, procurement, utilities and other expenses, and strengthened the ties between the different organisations and their staff members.

UN taking a lead in Donor Coordination: The United Nations Country Team has galvanised the small donor community in Kyrgyzstan to more actively work together at all levels to improve coordination. UNCT was a founding partner of the multi-donor Joint Country Support Strategy, which now commits eight major donors to working together in key areas to ensure coherence in response to the challenges facing the country. Recently, UNCT has taken the lead in developing a system of donor groups in the fields of energy, education, health, agriculture and governance, to further enhance cooperation on these vital issues.

Flash Appeal: The unique nature of the crisis Kyrgyzstan faced in 2008-2009 meant that the coherent expertise of the whole UN system was needed in order: to make the case for the effect of slow onset crises on vulnerable populations; to respond to humanitarian needs; to build capacity to mitigate disaster effects; and to return the agenda quickly to a development focus. The Flash Appeal was a prime example of the UN system in Kyrgyzstan working coherently together, and is the key achievement of UN coordination and coherence in the country to date.

4. AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE - ONE PROGRAMME KYRGYZSTAN

As the UNDAF was developed long before the food, energy, and economic crises hit, it could not have taken these additional challenges into account. In addition, as the Country Development Strategy (CDS) was revised in May 2009, these revisions also needed to be reflected across UN programming, particular given the new focus of the CDS on economic, food and energy security.

The United Nations in Kyrgyzstan is committed to pooling its strengths as a system and delivering our support in this context as 'One'. In addition to ongoing programming under the 2005-2011 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the One UN Programme contains a set of interventions which expand our current UN development assistance to address the consequences of new economic challenges, and food and energy insecurity. Some of these are scaled-up or accelerated already planned interventions, while others have been newly designed to meet the new challenges. These are represented in the One Programme as equivalent to a new UNDAF Area D, which builds on Areas A, B and C of the existing UNDAF. The One Programme is designed to build on the UNDAF in the two year interim period before a new UNDAF comes into operation in 2012. The process of development of the One Programme has also involved the use of new modalities of working together that will be useful in preparing the country's next UNDAF.

5. ONGOING COMMITMENTS AS DEFINED UNDER THE UNDAF 2005-2011

While working together to tackle the emerging problems that form the basis of the One UN Programme, the UNCT will continue to follow the three priority areas of cooperation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2005-2011. The additional programming will complement and add value to all three areas of cooperation of the UNDAF. Meanwhile the UNCT is continuing to honour its ongoing commitments to the government as articulated in the UNDAF results framework. These are briefly summarised below:

Poverty Alleviation and Social Services: UNCT will continue to work in the specific areas of intervention outlined in the UNDAF, focusing on opportunities, empowerments and security, where it has global mandates, operational capacities and local experience. These are linked to the national goal of radically reducing extreme poverty (MDG1 – Kyrgyz Republic), as well as to all other MDGs.

The United Nations system will continue to work to achieve the following UNDAF outcomes in its approach to radically reduce poverty:

- Increased employment and income generation, with special emphasis on women and the disadvantaged, to expand choices of the poor
- Poor and vulnerable groups have increased and more equitable access to quality basic social services and benefits, in a strengthened pro-poor policy environment

Democratic Governance: The revised Country Development Strategy states that governance efficiency remains a national priority, and devolution of state administration is among the most important areas of democratisation. As a whole, good governance is critical to achieving all the MDGs, as well as the goals and objectives of the CDS and the multi-donor Joint Country Support Strategy (JCSS).

Work is continuing to support the government to improve transparency and to tackle corruption, thus reducing the barriers to actualising rights in the Kyrgyz Republic and accelerating the reform process towards effective people-centred governance. The low political participation of particular interest groups, such as women and minorities, is being addressed, thus increasing their opportunities to voice demands and their visibility at the policy level. Good governance at all levels of the state and in all areas of social life – including parliamentary reform and establishing an accountable judicial system – continues to be crucial to achieve sustainable development in the country.

Empowerment, cooperation, equity, sustainability and security are dimensions of governance that will guide all United Nations system initiatives in support of national development goals. These are essential for giving voice to poor and marginalised groups, and are designed to involve the public sector, private sector and civil society alike. The expected outcome is summarised below:

- Good governance reforms and practices institutionalised at all levels of Government, civil society organisations and the private sector towards poverty reduction, protection of rights and sustainable human development

HIV/AIDS: In the last few years the Kyrgyz Republic has experienced a rapid growth of HIV infection. As of 1 July 2009 the officially registered number of people living with HIV is 2271 (187 with AIDS). According to WHO figures about 78 per cent of people registered living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) are injecting drug users, with young men in their thirties predominating over women. Others have been infected through sexual conduct or unsafe medical practices.

The overall objective continues to be to contribute to the Kyrgyz Republic's efforts to achieve a fair society by minimising the impact of HIV/AIDS; developing multisectoral strategies emphasising human rights for all; and contributing to economic growth by addressing the impact of HIV/AIDS on pressure on public resources. In line with the above, the expected outcomes are summarised below:

- Young people and other vulnerable groups reduce their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS by adopting safer behaviours
- All vulnerable groups exercise their rights to develop in a safe and supportive environment that provides protection from HIV/AIDS and care for people living with HIV/AIDS

6. NEW INTERVENTIONS

The common objective of all the additional interventions that collectively make up One Programme Area D has been formulated as follows:

Government efforts to ameliorate the effects of the economic, energy and food crises on vulnerable groups, and to revitalise rural Kyrgyzstan's path to sustainable social and economic development are strengthened.

In addition, while no interventions are purely humanitarian in nature, the One Programme has been designed bearing in mind possible humanitarian needs that may develop during the Programme implementation period.

The outcome will be achieved through two approaches. First, measures will be taken to sustainably increase supply of, and access to important services, such as energy, essential services, and improved agricultural and pastoral land through a range of measures to improve the enabling environment. Second, other activities will decrease vulnerability, through reducing susceptibility to natural disasters and conflict, and by providing essential food and agricultural support to needy vulnerable families.

Within One Programme Area D, a series of interventions will be made in the following thematic areas:

1. Social services
2. Food security
3. Agriculture
4. Energy
5. Environment
6. Risk management

These thematic areas have been chosen because they reflect the UN system's core capacities which can have the greatest effect in improving the lives of vulnerable people in the population. For more details on the thematic area strategies, see section 5 below.

In order for the One Programme to be a coherent and comprehensive response, the interventions fulfil strict criteria. They are designed to be sustainable, with the results lasting after the Programme is over. As part of this, many projects have an element of volunteerism, which increases community ownership of, and civic engagement in, the Programme. The projects will already have an impact within a 24 month period. Finally, they are oriented towards preventing the most vulnerable in society from slipping into urgent humanitarian need.

7. ARCHITECTURE TO DELIVER THE ONE PROGRAMME AS ONE

Implementation of interventions under One Programme Area D will be supported by a coherent budgetary and governance structure, with clear lines of accountability and decision-making. This will ensure that the UN system is guided by common objectives, and is able to deliver agency-specific projects and joint programmes adhering to the principles of 'Delivering as One'. It will also be supported by joint resource mobilisation and communications strategies.

The **Joint Steering Committee** (henceforth, Steering Committee) will provide overall strategic guidance for the One Programme in Kyrgyzstan. The Steering Committee will consist of representatives of the United Nations in Kyrgyzstan (heads of Participating UN Organizations), representatives of the Government in Kyrgyzstan (Ministers designated by the Office of the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic). Local donors (represented by the Donor Council in Kyrgyzstan) and civil society organisations (represented by the Civil Society Advisory Board to the UN in Kyrgyzstan), both of whom the United Nations system has a long standing positive cooperation history, will be consulted, informed and updated about all phases of the One Programme implementation. The tasks and responsibilities of the Steering Committee will include monitoring the overall progress of the One Programme and results achieved by the Implementing partners – governmental or non-governmental – as supported by the Participating UN Organizations; and recommending and making joint decisions on the allocation of One Fund resources to agency-specific projects and joint programmes of the One Programme.

As part of the One Programme, **Thematic Area Working Groups** (henceforth, TAWGs) will be established. There will be a TAWG for each of the six thematic areas of the One Programme. The TAWGs will comprise of all Participating UN Organizations working within the individual thematic areas. TAWGs will be responsible for information and knowledge management and technical support; progress reporting to the Steering Committee; and resource mobilisation. Each TAWG will be chaired by a Participating UN Organization whose representative will become the TAWG Lead.

The **One Fund** will be established as a pooled funding mechanism specifically to support the new or expanded programming. Resources for the One Fund will be mobilised by the UNCT through various sources, including the Expanded Delivering as One Funding Window. UNDP, as the One Fund's Administrative Agent, will be responsible for day-to-day financial administration of the fund. Funding allocations will be made by the Joint Steering Committee.

The UN Country Team, under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, will work together with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to jointly **mobilise resources** for the additional interventions under the One Programme. During the second half of 2009, the UN Country Team's commitment to One Programme Kyrgyzstan has been discussed with development partners in country, who see this as a positive step forward. The UN system will now work with traditional and non-traditional donors at all levels to mobilise resources for the One Fund.

The United Nations will implement a harmonised **Communications Strategy** to inform about and advocate for the One Programme to Government, development partners, donors and the general public. This will be in addition to other communications that the United Nations in Kyrgyzstan makes on its ongoing programming. The communications strategy will be implemented by the inter-agency United Nations Communications Group, working closely with the Office of the Resident Coordinator. It is imperative to present a cohesive public image which also reflects the complementary roles and expertise of each Organization. At the same time, Participating UN Organizations will continue to advocate and ensure communication for their own agency and mandate.

8. CONCLUSION

The UN Country Team in Kyrgyzstan is committed to UN reform. We want to ensure that the UN optimises its role, responsibilities and collective human and financial resources to make a positive impact on people's lives, to help Kyrgyzstan return to a path of sustainable development and to achieve internationally agreed development targets, including the Millennium Development Goals. With these goals in mind, the One UN Programme can and will be implemented rapidly (within the next 24 months), based on the capacity of the individual UN agencies involved and on the use of proven approaches. It will significantly reduce the severity of the impact of the emerging challenges on the most vulnerable, while establishing the basis for sustainable and inclusive development in the period of the country's next Development Strategy (2012-2017) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2012-2017).