



**Interoffice Memorandum**

To: Mr. Fidele Sarassoro  
UN Resident Coordinator  
Ethiopia

Date: 19 June 2008

From:   
Assistant Administrator and Director, Partnerships Bureau  
UNDP New York

Extension: 6005

Subject: MDGF-1644-Ethiopia: Leave No Woman Behind

File: MDGF 1644

**I. Approval Status**

On behalf of the MDG-F Steering Committee I am pleased to inform you that your Joint Programme "Leave No Women Behind" is approved subject to a number of changes, hereby explained, to address those aspects that the Secretariat has considered as critical.

The Joint Programme is approved with an allocation of **USD\$ 7.5** million for three years. This figure includes 7% for indirect costs incurred by UN Participating Organizations. Please note the 1% AA fee will be reimbursed directly to the MDTF Office and need not be included in your allocation.

**II. JP design comments**

We have identified in section III below, those **changes we require to the design of your Joint Programme**. Once these adjustments have been reflected in the document and the budget has been reduced according to the recommendations of the Secretariat, you may proceed with signature of the Joint Programme document. In addition to the Government, the UN Resident Coordinator and Participating UN Organizations should each sign the Joint Programme document. We would encourage you to ensure some visibility for this event and for the launch of implementation.

The MDG-F Secretariat, in collaboration with various experts, has reviewed the draft Joint Programme resubmitted and considers it an extension of the approved concept note. We note however that the participating agencies and the distribution of funds among them differ considerably from the approved concept note to the draft Joint Programme document resubmitted. We strongly recommend discussing and documenting this aspect in the first meeting of the National Steering Committee after the approval, ensuring that appropriate measures have been put in place so that the remaining participating agencies are able to meet the expected results.

We recognize that an effort has been made to address the recommendations made by the independent reviewer. However the proposed draft does not sufficiently address the recommendations made by the Secretariat in its previous communication. This includes the reduction of the total budget by \$1 million.

**Relevance and external coherence**

We consider that this Joint Programme responds to the terms of reference of this thematic window dealing with different aspects of gender based discrimination throughout the life cycle.



We note that the Joint Programme is adequately linked to those priority areas identified in the UNDAF in which gender is considered as a cross cutting issue. As regards Paris Declaration, we consider as positive the strong national ownership evidenced in the involvement of the Ethiopian government. We see as very strategic the fact that the Joint Programme will complement a governmental poverty reduction initiative - the Productive Safety Net Programme- addressing its limitations in regards to the inclusion of a gender perspective by emphasizing gender intra-households expenditure dynamics. We think that the involvement of the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) is extremely positive although we have some concerns about the sustainability of the results of some of the activities suggested, especially in regards to the recruitment of staff “in” the Ministry; while we consider appropriate recruiting new staff to ensure that there are enough human resources to implement this ambitious Programme, we do not think it is adequate hiring employees already working in the Ministry. In both cases it would be necessary to clarify how the sustainability of this component will be ensured once the Programme is over. We recommend further clarifying how the Programme plans to “strengthen” the MoWA as the key national counterpart in the implementation. This could be done through the elaboration of a capacity building plan.

We also appreciate, as far as harmonization is concerned, that the Joint Programme mentions the existence of similar initiatives funded by other donors (such as the Women’s Development Initiative Project supported by the World Bank and the Italian Cooperation on micro credits) although it would be desirable to define how partnerships could be built with this actors. We consider that the documentation of the consultation process constitutes a model for other Joint Programmes.

In respect to UN Reform, we reiterate our concern about the fact that some agencies are no longer participating in the Programme and the lack of explanation for this modifications. This is for instance the case of UNICEF which has a clear expertise on key areas for the Programme such as education. We recommend considering the possibility of strengthening the existing linkages with the Gender technical working group to ensure a wider interagency support to the proposed interventions.

### **Internal coherence**

The Joint Programme has a good identification of the problems that will be addressed although the logic of intervention could be improved. We see that, overall, the suggested outcomes are very vaguely formulated and do not target sufficiently the population identified as more vulnerable due to gender based discrimination. Consequently, joint outputs fail to define what concrete results will be achieved. Besides, the agency specific outputs, in many cases, look like annual targets and most of the activities, although being very concrete, appear insufficient to achieve the expected outputs. We also recommend, as it has been already mentioned in the previous feedback of the Secretariat, that further details, both in the narrative and in the results framework, are provided in regards to outcome 3 (on livelihoods) especially considering the generous budget allocated to this outcome.

We note that there are some inconsistencies in the order of the enumeration of the outputs and outcomes throughout the Programme. We recommend revising this formatting aspect.

It is difficult to assess whether the overall cost of the intervention is reasonable until the budget has been revised downwards 1 million and more details are provided on outcome 3 as previously recommended. The late recruitment and procurement of equipment of the national counterpart carried out during the



first year, may appear inefficient if it results in postponing the implementation for the following two years. We also recommend reducing the cost for vehicles (\$170.000 vehicles) that we see as excessive.

Finally, we see as very positive the geographical concentration as well as the “house to house” methodology used to deal with the isolation of the target beneficiaries.

### **Sustainability, monitoring and evaluation**

There seems to be some confusion identifying beneficiaries under the different outcomes. Therefore we would recommend clarifying if, in every output, the document is referring to the same group of women and girls. We also note that there are some inconsistencies in the numbers (page 12 and 15) that should be adjusted.

While we see as very positive the fact that the Programme is based on an ongoing experience (“Leave No Women Behind” and “Light for Eve” on early marriage lead by UNFPA) with a pilot experience in Amhara, we feel it could be further justified the necessity of elaborating a baseline in first 3 months in the selected regions while explaining how this baseline will complement the data already collected by the existing UNFPA programme.

We also recommend providing more details on the reasons why the WFP experience “Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transmissions to more sustainable livelihoods (MERET)” on which the programme is based, should be considered as a successful model to be scaled up. More explanations should be provided especially in regards to the “revolving loan scheme” as well as defining in more detail the criteria to select the “credit delivering institutions”.

The analysis of risks and the Monitoring and Evaluation framework appear to be particularly weak given the ambitious nature of the Programme. We strongly recommend that indicators related to the livelihood component are further developed. Nevertheless please note that the Fund Secretariat plans to work with all approved programmes during the current year to address their M&E frameworks and to develop a small number of common indicators relating to the thematic windows, UN reform, Paris Declaration process and the Millennium Declaration.

### **III. JP re-design requirements and/or recommendations**

The Secretariat recommends that:

#### **In regards to external coherence**

- During the first meeting of the National Steering Committee after the approval, the difference between agencies participating at the concept note level and JP level is discussed and documented, ensuring that appropriate measures have been put in place so that the remaining participating agencies are able to meet the expected results;
- It is further clarified how the Programme plans to “strengthen” the MoWA as the key national counterpart in the implementation (elaborating a capacity building plan), while providing more details on the recruitment process and the sustainability of this output;



- Consider the possibility of strengthening the existing linkages with the Gender technical working group to ensure a wider interagency support to the proposed interventions;

#### **In regards to internal coherence**

- Outcomes and joint outputs are formulated in a more specific way targeting the population identified as more vulnerable due to gender based discrimination;
- Agency specific outputs and activities are revisited making sure they will be sufficient to achieve the expected outputs and outcomes;
- Further details, both in the narrative and in the results framework, are provided in regards to outcome 3 (on livelihoods);
- The budget related to the revolving fund is revised downwards 1 million and more details are provided on outcome 3;
- Review the sequencing in recruitment and equipment procurement to ensure the most cost efficient timing as to when implementation can begin.
- Cost for vehicles (\$170.000 vehicles) is decreased;

#### **In regards to sustainability, monitoring and evaluation**

- Target beneficiaries in regards to every output are clarified;
- Further justify the need for a baseline to be carried out in the first 3 months in the selected regions and explaining how this baseline will complement the data already collected by the existing UNFPA programme;
- More details are provided on the reasons why the WFP experience "(MERET)" in which the programme is based, could be considered as a successful model to be scaled up as well as in regards to the "revolving loan scheme" as well as defining in more detail the criteria to select the "credit delivering institutions";
- The analysis of risks and the Monitoring and Evaluation framework are strengthened and indicators related to the livelihood component are further developed.

#### **IV. Management arrangements and delegation of authority**

On receipt of the report of the inception workshop and a copy of signed document, the Fund Secretariat will transfer the full three-year allocation to the custody of the Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) Office pending further instructions from you.



Please note the MDTF Office will pass-through funds to Participating Organizations on instruction from you as Resident Coordinator and Co-Chair of the National MDG-F Steering Committee.

As reflected in the Fund's Framework Document (Section 9 'Formulation Process & Release of Funds) and the global MoU with Participating Organizations (Article I, 2-c) the MDTF Office will release resources on an annual, advance basis. For the first advance, these funds will be transferred on the basis of receipt of the first year Annual Workplan and the signed Joint Programme document. Subsequent annual advances will be released on instructions from you and on the basis of a) receipt of the next annual work-plan approved by the National Steering Committee; b) evidence that a formal review of the programme's progress has been undertaken not more than three months earlier, either in the form of an annual progress report (if the timing coincides) or through the minutes of a National Steering Committee where this has been discussed; and c) only when combined commitments against the existing advance have exceeded 70%. Please review the initial year budget requests carefully with participating organizations in order to ensure realistic delivery targets in this regard. The annual agency apportionment projected in the final budget attached to the signed Joint Programme document should also be reviewed and can be revised up to the time of your first funds-advance request. This is important for the reasons outlined below.

In order to allow the implementation team some flexibility to adapt the strategy to unexpected challenges and opportunities (most particularly delivery issues), and to empower Resident Coordinators in their oversight responsibilities, this memorandum also provides you with the authority over the three year duration of the programme in consultation with Participating Organizations and with the agreement of your National Steering Committee to (a) transfer up to \$1,000,000 or 20% of the total value of the project budget – whichever is lowest – *between Participating Organizations* identified in the original Joint Programme budget and (b) re-phase up to \$1,000,000 or 20% of the total value of the project budget – whichever is lowest - *between years*. The base-line against which these ceilings will be measured is the annual budget projection (by year and by participating organization) confirmed at the time of your first funds-advance request. The MDTF Office must be informed of any revisions of this kind, decided locally and is responsible for tracking these delegation ceilings for each programme. Any changes that fall outside these parameters will have to be referred back to the (Global) MDG-F Steering Committee for approval.

As you will appreciate, one of the MDG-F's express goals is to strengthen the role of Resident Coordinators as leaders of Country Teams. The success of the MDG-F activities will depend on your ongoing leadership and engagement. We count on you to exercise this leadership and to ensure this Joint Programme remains an ongoing, integrated effort by the UN system in support of national priorities. Please also use the National Steering Committee mechanism to help ensure national ownership by the Government in particular and involve it in important financial and programmatic oversight decisions.

The signed Joint Programme document and the completed Fund Release Form should be sent to the MDG-F Secretariat and MDTF Office within 30 days of the receipt of this memorandum. If this deadline is not possible, please inform the secretariat accordingly.

The Executive Coordinator of the MDTF Office, Bisrat Aklilu, will be in contact with any specific documentation requirements to ensure the programme meets compliance requirements for the Fund's pass-through arrangements.



With best wishes.

cc.

Mr. Bisrat Aklilu, Executive Coordinator, Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office  
Mr. Gilbert Houngbo, Assistant Administrator and Director Bureau for Africa, UNDP,  
New York  
H.E. Mr. D. Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo, Permanent Representative of Spain to the  
United Nations  
H.E. Mr. Dawit Yohannes, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations  
Mr. Gabriel Ferrero y De Loma-Osorio, Deputy Director of Development Policy Planning  
and Evaluation, MFA Madrid  
Ms. Sally Fegan-Wyles, Director, Development Group Office  
MDG-F Secretariat