

United Nations



Nations Unies

Plot No. 7, Area 40
P.O. Box 30135
Lilongwe 3

Malawi

Tel: (265) 1-773 550 / 772 278 Fax: (265) 1-773 637
E-mail: registry.mw@undp.org

PRO/300/RC

Lilongwe, 28 February 2010

Dear Secretary General,

On behalf of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) Malawi I am pleased to submit to you the Resident Coordination Annual Report for 2009.

The year 2009 saw many successes for the United Nations in Malawi. The Delivering as One agenda was taken to a higher level in the second year of the implementation of the UNDAF 2008 – 2011 and the UN Business Plan 2008 – 2009, making the system a more relevant and effective in assisting the government and the people of Malawi to achieve their development goals.

Politics, Economy and Food Security

Politics: In 2009, the government, with critical support from UN/DP, held the country's fourth democratic elections in a free, credible and peaceful manner. The UN's role in coordinating donor efforts through the Elections Task Force (ETF) was instrumental in guiding the capacity building of Malawi's Electoral Commission and Parliament. This involvement also enhanced the role of civil society in civic education around the election process.

Economy: The Gross Domestic Product of Malawi continued to grow steadily even in the face of the global financial crisis, thanks to some successful interventions in the agricultural sector, which is the main driver of its economy. Tobacco continues to be the highest foreign exchange earner, followed by tea, coffee and cotton. The exchange rate has been stable under a managed float regime. Despite adverse conditions in the world trade markets due to the crisis, the inflation rate was stable with figures still maintained within single digits.

Food Security: Good rains and the fertilizer subsidy program produced a bumper harvest, with a surplus of about 1.2 million metric tons of maize. It assured adequate domestic food supplies, as well as exports to neighboring countries of maize and a few cash food crops as in the previous year. Small pockets of hunger were noted in some southern districts and assistance

was given accordingly. The Malawi experience with food security sparked a lot of interest among developing countries. The President of Malawi was invited attend and address the World Summit on Food Security in Rome in November 2009.

Summary on Progress towards UNDAF Outcomes

UN support at the macro and micro levels led to varied progress and results in each of the five UNDAF outcomes.

The Government of Malawi identified agriculture as the key to poverty alleviation and the development of the country. In the area of **agriculture and food security**, at the policy level, FAO in cooperation with UNICEF, WFP and WHO, supported the development of the National Nutrition Policy. In the context of the national effort to establish an Agriculture Sector Wide Approach, UN Agencies continued to engage, ensuring that the new initiatives also incorporated food and nutrition security elements. This contributed to improved food security at household level, and is expected to have a significant impact on the number of ultra poor living below the poverty line.

Special attention was given to the interests of vulnerable groups in agriculture, i.e. women, youth and people with disabilities. School gardens and the Junior Farmer Field and Life Skills initiative (with participation FAO, UNICEF, WFP, UNESCO and ILO) proved to be particularly successful, achieving their full target (41 sites in 6 districts). 789 girls and boys engaged in hazardous farm work were re-integrated in various school and education-related activities. This exceeded the target of 750 children withdrawn from child labor.

In the area of **Social Protection** and **Disaster Risk Reduction**, the UN continues to play a leading role in advocacy, key technical advice, capacity development, M&E, maintenance and expansion of Information Management Systems and leveraging of resources in favour of social protection for Malawi. UNICEF facilitated the secondment of two senior advisors by the EU to the Ministries of Economic Planning and Development and the Ministry of Women and Child Development to help government accelerate the design of the national social protection programme. Efforts undertaken by UNICEF and WFP resulted

Karonga - the occurrence of a series of earthquakes (of up to 6.0 magnitudes) that hit the northern district of Karonga during the month of December 2009 displaced over 30,000 people due to damage to housing and property.

Over Christmas, staff from WFP, FAO, UNICEF and UNFPA undertook a detailed assessment mission. The data and information obtained provided the foundation for a coordinated response involving UN Agencies, Civil Society and Government of Malawi.

in the EU's commitment of 20 million Euros for the Social Cash Transfer Scheme for ultra poor and labor constrained households and 25 Million Euros for Social Protection programmes in support of labor endowed ultra poor households.

A number of steps have been taken towards the development of policy governing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Operational Guidelines for responding to disasters and a DRR Framework are being developed with support from UNDP, WHO, WFP, FAO, UNICEF, UNHCR and UNHABITAT. As floods are an annual occurrence in Malawi, a Flood Risk Management Strategy has been drafted, following the completion of a capacity needs assessment. The strategy is expected to be finalized soon and will be complemented by Flood Preparedness Plans so far developed for 8 of the 14 flood-prone districts. In the area of Climate Change, to augment national capacity, the UN has been providing training to the Department of Disaster Management Affairs, District Assemblies, and District Commissioners in better cross-sector collaboration and more inclusive planning.

In the area of **Social Services**, the UN continued to work towards improving collaboration and 'delivering as one' while striving to align major initiatives with national planning processes.

WHO plays a pivotal leadership role in co-chairing the Health Sector Working Group and technical support has been jointly provided to the Ministry of Health, in its efforts to deliver the essential health package through the Health SWAp. In 2009, the partnership between various agencies on maternal, newborn and child health as well as the associated catalytic initiative, worked well towards common goals. Given the need to focus and intensify efforts, maternal health and newborn care have been areas of common interest to three UN agencies (WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF).

One key priority for the UN is to make significant strides on MDG5 (maternal mortality) as progress has been slow on all accounts. In 2009, a significant push has been given to raising the profile of maternal mortality and engaging high level political support. The nomination of the Malawi Vice President Banda as the Goodwill Ambassador for Safe Motherhood is a notable achievement.

UNICEF, UNFPA and UNESCO have successfully provided leadership, resources and technical support to Life Skills education as a key learning area within the new Primary Curriculum Assessment and Reform. So far 100 per cent of learners in public primary schools enjoy at least one hour of life skills lessons each week. To improve education enrolment, attendance, completion and achievement rates, the Child Friendly School framework was adopted as the practical vision/definition of quality education, and has since been incorporated in national documents.

The 2009 MDG report highlights good progress on infant and under-five mortality reduction however progress toward maternal mortality reduction has been slow. A Development Partners

Group on Nutrition, co-chaired by UNICEF was formed to support implementation of the Nutrition Policy and assist with resource mobilization and donor coordination. World Breastfeeding Week campaigns were carried out in all 28 districts in Malawi, complemented by national panel discussions on infant and young child feeding aired on radio in the local language Chichewa.

The national response to **HIV and AIDS** in Malawi continues to be scaled up, placing the national goal of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services within reach. UN leadership and overseeing throughout the process of developing the prevention strategy has been critical and continues to be drawn on. The UN continued to provide programmatic and technical support to Government, NGOs, the private sector and civil society to manage and effectively respond to HIV and AIDS issues.

UNAIDS has been successfully leading the UN support to the development and finalization of the national HIV prevention strategy. The acceleration of HIV prevention embodied in the National Prevention Strategy launched by the President Mutharika on World AIDS Day 2009 is one more critical element on Malawi's road to Universal Access.

Strategic and critical interventions were directed at supporting the scale up and up-take of HTC services, Life Skills education and Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission services, as well as supporting interventions for Most-At-Risk-Populations. The UN also worked towards improving equitable access to and uptake of AIDS treatment, care and support services. While the main focus has been on supporting national response activities related to the provision of equitable access to HIV care services, there continues to be a deliberate effort to strengthen access to comprehensive community and home-based care.

With respect to **good governance**, a notable achievement in 2009 was the successful delivery of the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections.

UNDP and UNFPA support were instrumental to strength capacity for the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC). Managed by UNDP, a Trust Fund amounting to about US\$ 21 million allowed the MEC to register about 94% of all the eligible voters and achieved a voter turnout during the polling day of about 74%. This resulted in a free and credible election as applauded by both international observers and national monitors.

During the election, the UN, under the leadership of UNFPA and UNDP, supported Ministry of Gender to undertake a 50/50 campaign to increase the number of women taking part in political processes. The immediate results of the initiative have been the increase of women in Parliament, *from 14 to 22 percent*.

2009 also saw the improved coordination of the justice sector supported by UNDP and UNICEF. Through collaboration among justice stakeholders, the institutionalization process of the Justice

Sub-Sector has been singled out as a model of which experience will be used to institutionalize other Sector Working Groups. Through the Capacity Development for Public Sector Management Program supported by UNDP in cooperation with UNAIDS, Government embarked on a review of the outdated Malawi Public Service Regulations. Joint UN efforts led by UNFPA in collaboration with UNICEF, FAO, UNDP, UNIFEM and UNESCO have gone into providing capacity support to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Community Development to increase the level of gender mainstreaming in budgeting and expenditure tracking processes. The UN has further supported a number of initiatives by Government and civil society organizations on gender-based violence.

2009 was the year of the midterm review (MTR) of Malawi's UNDAF 2008 – 2011. The MTR provided the UN agencies (both resident and non-resident) with an opportunity to collectively assess our performance in “delivering as one”. Key findings emerging from the MTR suggested that in a number of UNDAF areas, the UN delivered support through small projects implemented across a number of sites and targeting a small number of beneficiaries. Moving forward, a key challenge will be for the UN to consolidate further, and identify fewer, higher impact programs through which to deliver support.

Summary on Progress towards UN Reform

Delivering as One in Malawi is a core target for us. On being invited to the Inter-governmental Conference on Delivering as One Meeting in Kigali, Rwanda last October 2009, Malawi presented its significant progress towards Delivering as One since the launch of UN Reform in 2007.

One Plan: The formulation of an operational document (One Plan) with its annualized expected results and associated budget not only helped the UN better implement and monitor the UNDAF but also facilitated the allocation of fund from the One UN Fund to the strategic and prioritized activities.

Resource Mobilization Strategy and the One UN Fund: The development of a joint UN Resource Mobilization Strategy and Action Plan is a critical element which provides focus to the joint resource mobilization efforts of the UN system in Malawi while complementing the efforts by individual agencies. The Strategy enabled the mobilization of USD 18.51 million from the Expanded Delivering as One Funding Window. In 2009 additional non-core funding from the One UN Fund enabled UN Agencies to upscale and prioritize activities for development results as set out in the UNDAF/One Plan and timely deliver on critically strategic interventions such as the support to the 50/50 campaign which observed an increase from 14 to 22 percent of women in Parliament.

Humanitarian Affairs: Good progress was noted in humanitarian reform. The establishment of the Malawi Humanitarian Team aimed at promoting the cluster approach to humanitarian assistance for the country. The first major test for the cluster approach was the occurrence of a series of earthquakes (of up to 6.0 magnitudes) that hit the northern district of Karonga during the month of December, which displaced over 30,000 people due to damage to housing and property. The cluster dealt with it very effectively.

Aid Effectiveness and Capacity Development: Within the context of a changing aid environment in Malawi, the UN Country Team saw a need to reexamine the strategic positioning of the UN, including its roles and capacities in promoting harmonization and collaboration among UN Agencies. In preparation for the development of a new UNDAF, the UN Country Team in 2009 is currently developing two dedicated strategies, one on aid effectiveness and the other on capacity development.

Enhanced Government ownership and leadership: The UN supported the government in coordinating development partners during the annual review of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy. Appropriate emphasis was placed on the need to institutionalize and operationalize Sector Working Groups as main vehicles to improve dialogue and discussion during the review process. With participation of key line ministries and central ministries, development partners and the UN family, the first Joint Strategy Meeting was a high level event where the findings of the UNDAF Mid-term review were validated, the proposed allocation of fund from the One UN Fund was endorsed and strategic discussion on future UN work in Malawi initiated. This is not only a positive and welcome development in the process of partnership building but also a solid beginning for the Government, the development partners and the UN to address the level of strategic thinking and step up collective efforts in delivering as one for the benefit of all the people of Malawi.

Key Aspects of the Proposed 2010 Work Plan

2010 brings some new challenges. Following the recommendation by the Joint Strategy Meeting in December 2009, a policy dialogue will be initiated in early 2010 to ensure UN alignment with the new priorities of the Government. Results of the dialogue will partly inform the development of the new UNDAF.

The UN Country Team will in 2010 focus on launching the UN Business Plan II (2010 – 2011), a strategic management tool that articulates how the UN will organize itself to better achieve the development results in the One Plan. Operation reforms initiated in 2009 will continue to be pushed forward in 2010 with a clear focus on IT, HR and procurement.

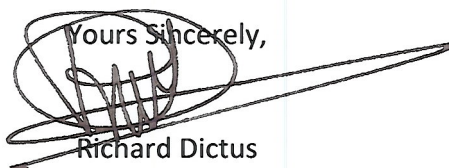
Together with other official pilot countries, Malawi is undertaking a country-led evaluation on Delivering as One. While it is true that an impact assessment of Delivering as One in Malawi and how it effectively contributed to the achievements of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy is not yet feasible, the Government and the UN believe that the exercise will ascertain the effectiveness of the DAO initiative and set critical benchmarks for future cooperation between the Government and the UN.

Recommendations

It is important to note that the 2009 results were achieved with almost no extra staff to support the UN in Malawi during this intensive implementation phase. Experience shows that the upfront investment in terms of staff time has been overwhelming. While enhanced coordination and avoidance of duplication will undoubtedly lead to efficiency gains in the future, the start-up investment costs with all UN Agencies both resident and non-resident have been substantial.

The pace of reform at country level is also inevitably linked to the willingness of Agency headquarters. Many agencies reported that the necessary flexibility has not been forthcoming in terms of allowing for harmonization and simplification of procedures, guidelines and practices. Continued support by different UN Agency Headquarters and regional director teams with regard to Delivering as One plays a key role in enhancing progress towards UN reform at country level.

To avoid a dual burden on Government, the UN is committed to ensure that the UNDAF will be process wise as much integrated into the national planning process as possible and show clear progress in delivering as one with greater focus, coherence and synergy. To enable this, ExCom Agencies are requesting an exceptional late submission of Country Programme Documents to Executive Boards in May 2011 (in lieu of February 2011) for the Board discussion in September 2011 and approval in November 2011.

Yours Sincerely,

Richard Dictus
UNRC

CC: Deborah Landey, Director of UN Development Operations Coordination Office (DOCO)
UNCT, Malawi