

## Minutes of the MDG-F/UNDP Steering Committee

Madrid, November 5, 2013, 6.00 pm

### On behalf of Spain:

- Gonzalo Robles, Secretary General of Cooperation
- Laura Lopez de Cerain Salsamendi, Director for Horizontal and Financial Multilateral Cooperation, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)
- Fernando Castillo, Head of the Multilateral Cooperation Department, AECID
- Javier Hernandez Peña, Development Policies Assistant Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MAEC)
- Sergio Alvarez, Cabinet Director of the Cooperation Secretariat, MAEC
- Fernando Castillo, Multilateral Human Resources Assistant Director

### On behalf of UNDP:

- Rebeca Grynspan, Assistant UNDP Administrator
- Bruno Moro, Director of the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F)
- Paloma Duran, Senior MDG-F Advisor
- Vikram Sigh, UNDP
- Felipe Santos, MDG-F Communications Consultant in Spain

The meeting began with Gonzalo Robles's speech thanking for the work accomplished and for the efforts made by the MDG-F team in organizing the September events in New York. These events were highly praised by policy decision-makers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Likewise, Rebeca Grynspan thanked the support provided by Spain to the UNDP through the MDG-F.

The meeting followed the schedule previously approved in the agenda:

## 1. Global Evaluation of the Fund

Bruno Moro explained the methodological challenges faced by the company in charge of the evaluation and the need to increase consultations with the advisory group and the reference group.

He also discussed the need to extend the contract for several months free of costs –until at least March 2014– to improve the methodology of the report and its final format.

## 2. Communications

On behalf of the Fund, Paloma Duran submitted a summary of the communication actions performed and their influence, as accounted for in detail in the report submitted to the Steering Committee (SC). Gonzalo Robles recalled the two MDG-F events foreseen for December under the 25th AECID anniversary.

The first is a panel group or roundtable to inform about the main lessons learned from the Fund's work; and the second is a concert for MDG-F Partners with the 'Playing for Change' band. The band composed the MDG\_F song and already participated in the September 25 event.

Additionally, Mr. Robles reported on the exhibition to be launched by HM the Queen of Spain on November 11. This event is expected to showcase selected photographs of programmes implemented by the MDG-F.

## 3. Knowledge Management

In addition to the detailed information submitted in the report to the SC, Ms. Duran briefly summarized the activities performed. She also confirmed the implementation of an on-line library to summarize all outputs developed in the various MDG-F knowledge management initiatives.

A proposal was made for the new facility to be established in January 2014 to be in charge of the management and update of the current MDG-F website.

Likewise, Mr. Robles requested the inclusion of all this information in the new AECID website to facilitate the use of all the materials. Ms. Grynspan also

mentioned UNDP's interest to use all this material. She specifically mentioned the virtual school, created in the UNDP Colombia office, to disseminate and use the materials available.

Finally, the MDG-F reported on the follow-up work being performed by *Universidad de Gerona* to place the outputs developed under its partnership with the Fund in the Fund's server.

#### 4. Joint Programmes

After briefly exposing and referring to the detailed information on programmes included in the report, Mr. Moro and Ms. Grynspan disclosed that a formal letter had been sent to all programme participants reminding them that any remaining programme funds could not be used after the programmes' termination date; a letter with the same message was also sent to all United Nations System agencies.

Ms. Greenspan mentioned that out of the 120 programmes, 4 of them had not submitted reports due to different reasons (China, North Sudan, South Sudan and Mali), and that it was not expected for them to do so given the prevailing circumstances. Since this explanation was satisfactory for the SC, the matter was considered as closed.

#### 5. JPOs and SARCs

The report contains an itemized list of all the individuals who have performed as JPOs and SARCs funded by Spain. The figures are for the 2001-2012 period, which is longer than what was strictly funded by the MDG-F.

Mr. Robles proposed to check this information with AECID to obtain additional data. The group would like to know how many of these people chose to apply for a position in the System and how many didn't succeed, as well as the System's average retention compared to those of people funded by other countries.

Ms. Grynspan points out that UNDP's corporate restructuring program foresees the creation of system entry points for more junior position than now, thus facilitating access as P1-P3. The decision is based on the current pyramid with very few entry-level positions and a strong concentration of higher-level posts.

## 6. Financial Information

Mr. Moro explained the financial information attached to the report submitted. He confirmed that while the usual standard deviation is very low for this kind of expenditure estimates, the information is not fully closed yet and the final confirmation of the total resources available for the Fund in the new phase will only be known after May 2014.

In addition to the \$40 million available now, programme completion is estimated at 97%. Thus, the remaining 3% should involve up to \$60 million, although this figure is by no means final. It will vary according to the programmes' implementation levels.

Mr. Moro added that a letter was sent to field office decision-makers and agencies, reminding them to rigorously close programmes and requesting them to avoid any expenses after the programme's closure date.

Mr. Robles said that for the new facility, it would be important to have UNDP certification confirming the approximate figures mentioned.

He added that the information provided must be closely examined and that any issues that may arise during the analysis of the report will be submitted to the SC.

## 7. Revolving Funds

Of the countries with revolving funds included in the report, Nicaragua has had the most problems. This country lacked collaterals for UNDP and donor follow-up and considerably changed initial programme beneficiaries.

The following agreement was reached: keep the revolving funds in countries where funds and collaterals are meeting their roles; analyze the funds' caducity forecasts, if any; in the case of Nicaragua, keep the funds that have already been distributed in that condition, but reinstating those still not distributed and returned to the MDG-F.

MDG-F will deliver detailed documentation regarding this process.

## 8. New Facility

Mr. Moro introduced the proposal included in the report to the Committee.

Mr. Robles pointed out that Spain would welcome a framework agreement determining the overall course of action; as well as a detail document specifying priorities and other information.

He highlighted Spain's interest for a facility that promotes flexibility for the support of joint programmes and also for transferring some inputs to the United Nations System agencies.

In short, the following issues were discussed:

- a) Signing of a framework agreement before the end of 2013. For this purpose, Spain is requesting a certificate consolidating the financial position and estimates. Since Mr. Moro pointed out the difficulties of delivering a certification going beyond April 2014 (when the annual SNU accounts are closed), Spain proposed that the agreement should specify that the new facility would be launched with \$40 million, in addition to the remaining funds. Also, an estimated forecast would be included in the annex to the framework agreement.
- b) Regarding the location of the new facility in UNDP, its position in the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy (BERA) is accepted for programmatic issues and in the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office of the Bureau of Management (BOM/MPTF) for administrative/operational issues; while strategic decisions and actions, in turn, are to be informed back to the Executive Office.
- c) Spain proposed the mitigation of administrative expenditures, sharing them with UNDP, adding that people working in the MDG-F should become UNDP staff members, and that, together with the Director and the D1 (Senior advisor), they would prefer to have a P5 level employee and not the P3 level proposed by UNDP. Spain understands that in mitigating the costs involved in the Director, the P3 level employee could be replaced by a P4/P5. Also, it is assumed that for the extension of the global evaluation and the completion of the MDG-F work, as well as for the development of the action plan, a transition period until march 2014 is required.

- d) The new facility will be timeless by nature or for an indefinite time –as a strategic Spain & UNDP agreement. Once the financial situation of Spain has improved, its contributions will increase. The country aims at a permanent cooperation effort, with additional budgets, for the new facility to have no termination date unless one of the parties gives notice thereto. A work plan for the 2014-2016 period will be included in the annex to the 2013 framework document being prepared.
- e) The facility will be governed by a Committee and shall meet twice a year (at least once), alternatively in Spain and in New York. Technical meetings will be held as required.
- f) Regarding name and logotype, Spain requested that suggestions should be provided to make the final decision during the signing of the agreement.
- g) Regarding the priorities, Ms. Grynspan proposed that they should be indicative, not binding, so as allow for decision-making by the Committee. Spain commented that according to the new Master Plan of the Spanish Cooperation, it has focused work sectors and agencies.

Before concluding, Gonzalo Robles expressed his gratitude to UNDP and the MDG-F for the work performed and the cooperation with Spain; Rebeca Grynspan in turn thanked the support received by UNDP from Spain and for the expressions of trust involved in the political decision of creating a new facility

The meeting was adjourned at 8.00pm