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**RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED NATIONS
AND THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES**

(b) Co-ordination within the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

Executive summary: A report on the outcome of the first regular session of 2003 of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) held in April 2003.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 17

Related documents: None

CEB First regular session of 2003

1 As envisaged in document C 90/26(b), the first regular session of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) was held in Paris on 25-26 April 2003, at the invitation of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations attended the session, which was chaired by the Director of ILO at the request of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. A private meeting and a retreat of CEB members were then held and focussed on water and energy as key issues for development and peace-building. The most recent political, economic and social developments as well as the system-wide implications of the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization were also addressed. The Secretary-General participated in these two meetings, which were also attended by the Executive Heads of other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system.

2 As proposed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, CEB regular sessions continue to focus on the themes identified in the Road Map report to the United Nations General Assembly on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. The report to the 2003 session of the General Assembly stated the need to focus on sustainable development and financing for development.

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Follow-up to the Millennium Summit: Strategies for Sustainable Development

3 CEB agreed that, to ensure that the process of reporting on the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration fully reflects a United Nations system-wide perspective, it must also serve to strengthen the overall capacity of the system to translate norms and goals into practical action that will further progress the implementation of the objectives of the Millennium Declaration. With regard to sustainable development, in particular, the system has a set of clear mandates for action. The policy guidance framed in the Millennium Declaration was given added thrust at Johannesburg, where a significant number of specific new goals and targets were added to further stimulate and focus such action. The action strategies that the system will now develop to chart the way forward should be guided by these goals and targets and focus both on strengthening co-operation and co-ordination within the system itself, and on nurturing partnerships with all relevant actors in ways that will enhance overall coherence and impact.

4 Members of CEB generally concurred with the approaches to the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) elaborated by the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP). With regard to specific recommendations submitted to it by HLCP, CEB asked the Committee to further elaborate them, in the light of the discussions and specific observations in CEB. In so doing, the Committee is to focus its further work on the substance of the follow-up to WSSD, so as to ground further consultations on modalities for co-ordination and related collaborative arrangements as well as the policy guidance to be provided to technical work and operational activities on substantive objectives and tasks. It is also to provide a sound basis for further strategic discussions on the matter.

5 The need for coherence and consistency was highlighted - at operational, regional and global levels as well as strong linkages among these levels. Also highlighted were country ownership of the follow-up process, co-ordination support for capacity-building and full use of existing country-level mechanisms, a focus on sustainable and productivity and on natural resources as the engine for sustainable growth, greater attention to the regional dimensions of the WSSD follow-up, implementation to be linked to the broader processes of integrated follow-up to UN conferences and summits and HLCP to assist in identifying ways of streamlining parallel processes and duplicative reporting.

6 CEB noted, with regard to health, agriculture, biodiversity/ecosystem management and adequate shelter, that these areas have a clear institutional focal point within the system, which should be drawn upon to steer follow-up actions and interactions with other partners, avoiding duplication at the international, as well as the inter-agency and secretariat levels.

7 With regard to fresh water resources as well as water and sanitation, extensive work is underway. There is, however, no institutional focal point in the system. CEB requested that consultations on the most effective arrangements in this area should be actively pursued, reiterating that mechanisms for co-ordination are essential for achieving coherent action in this area.

8 CEB, noting the diversity of activities in the UN system, concurred that with regard to energy, appropriate mechanisms should be developed by the organizations most directly concerned and that consultations on modalities for engagement with key non UN-system actors should also be further pursued.

9 CEB also agreed that further consultations should be pursued on co-ordination arrangements relating to oceans and coastal areas.

Report of the High Level Committee on Programmes

10 The main considerations that were guiding the Committee in elaborating its new work programme, which had been developed within a longer-term perspective of its work, were outlined by the Chairman, mainly: follow-up to the Millennium Declaration - preparations for the 2005 comprehensive review; conflict prevention-nexus between political, humanitarian and sustainable development; HIV/AIDS: linkages with food security and governance; energy in the follow-up to Johannesburg; and international trade and the Doha development round.

HIV/AIDS-Africa

11 CEB noted with grave concern the continuing and extraordinary toll the HIV/AIDS pandemic is taking on human lives and its severe consequences on food security, public health and educational systems, and on the institutional capacity in the public and private sectors in affected countries, particularly those in Africa. CEB requested HLCP to pursue further work on this issue and its linkages with food security and institutional capacity, and to report to the Fall 2003 session of the Board.

Doha Development Agenda

12 The Executive Heads decided to issue a statement expressing support for the Doha Development Agenda and expressed their commitment to work closely with the World Trade Organization (WTO) to guide trade negotiations towards timely conclusion and urging Member States to adhere to the deadlines established at Doha, Qatar, to ensure tangible progress at the forthcoming Ministerial Conference in Cancun, Mexico in September.

Africa's development and NEPAD

13 On system-wide support for Africa's development and NEPAD, CEB endorsed the approach recommended by HLCP that the thematic clusters established in the context of the regional consultations on NEPAD should serve as the main instrument for consolidating UN system support for African development.

Other matters

14 The Director-General of UNESCO briefed CEB on progress in the implementation of the education-related Millennium Development Goals and the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All. Current assessment with regard to progress on three time-bound quantitative goals relating to universal primary education, gender parity and adult literacy in 154 countries highlights the need for concerted and co-ordinated action by both Governments and the UN system. Support was expressed for the recommendations contained in the UNESCO note on this subject.

15 The Secretary-General of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) briefed CEB on the status of preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society and invited members of the High Level Summit Organizing Committee to strengthen their support and assistance in increasing the visibility of the Summit, contributing to the content and output of the Summit and supporting the Summit financially. CEB members reiterated their strong interest and support for the objectives of the Summit.

16 The UN Security Coordinator launched the system-wide self-administered learning course entitled “Basic Security in the Field: Staff Safety, Health and Welfare” during the CEB meeting. The course aimed to educate individual staff members on how best to avoid or minimize potential dangers and threats and indicated what they could do in situations of insecurity. The course is intended to be mandatory for all UN staff and constitutes an essential part of the Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS).

Action requested of the Council

17 The Council is invited to take note of the above information and comment as it may deem appropriate.
