

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Comments on the 2007 MOPAN Survey

UNDP appreciates the presentation of the synthesis report of the 2007 Multilateral Organisations Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) survey made by Switzerland on behalf of MOPAN members at UNDP's headquarters in New York on 13 November 2007 and welcomes the invitation to comment on the report.

We consider the perception-based and intentionally 'light' approach of the MOPAN survey as unique among the wide range of approaches towards organizational assessments. Perceptions of behaviour and effectiveness of multilateral organizations are of critical importance in the increasingly networked and interdependent environment in which both multilateral and bilateral development actors operate. Capturing and presenting these perceptions in the way the annual MOPAN survey does, provide a useful starting point for a better informed and more effective engagement with multilateral organizations and, importantly, for reflection and learning within the multilateral organizations themselves. For this to be fully realised, it will be important that MOPAN surveys are used as a basis to discuss and clarify findings at the country-level among the representatives of the MOPAN members and of the respective multilateral organizations. Feedback received from some of the UNDP country offices which formed part of the survey confirm this need for additional interaction and clarification on the findings of the survey and the methodology applied in the survey.

UNDP notes with satisfaction the report's finding that its role and work is widely appreciated and understood among respondents. The report confirms a generally high level of knowledge of and interaction with UNDP at the country-level by the majority of MOPAN respondents. This finding confirms that UNDP country offices are seen as increasingly networked and extroverted in the way they operate and interact at country-level.

The survey report usefully compares UNDP's perceived partnership performance in 2004 – when UNDP was first surveyed by the newly established MOPAN group – and 2007, the second survey, which makes UNDP one of the first multilateral organizations to be surveyed twice by the MOPAN. UNDP is pleased to note that perceptions of its performance further improved and are generally positive. All 'areas of observation' regarding partnership behaviour towards other international development agencies (information sharing, inter-agency coordination and harmonization) show significantly improved perceptions among MOPAN members when compared to the 2004 survey. These areas are also critically important to UNDP given its role as managing the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) system. For future MOPAN surveys, it might be interesting to devote a part of the survey to the RC system and to how progress in system-wide coordination is perceived.

The 'areas of observation' regarding partnership behaviour towards national stakeholders (policy dialogue, capacity development and alignment with national strategies) reflect relatively stable and generally positive perceptions when compared to the 2004 survey. In this category only the perceptions in the area of 'advocacy' work have declined since 2004 although with 'fairly good marks' as the report states. Perceptions in this area suggest that UNDP seems 'good at supporting government campaigns', but not 'to play a very visible advocacy role' itself. Similar to the MOPAN 2004 survey, the present report also shows that UNDP is sometimes perceived as avoiding to 'address politically sensitive issues' and 'focus more on its roles as coordinator'. While there may be a range of different observations leading to these perceptions, they also seem to reflect important characteristics of UNDP's support to country-level development processes: UNDP places importance on its role in convening and facilitating dialogue platforms for all stakeholders. Real progress on controversial issues often requires a concerted

effort of the international community using different approaches and actors. UNDP's work is at times more effective when it remains below the waterline of public visibility.

We note with interest that the 2007 MOPAN survey findings are quite consistent with UNDP country evaluations, which have been undertaken in five of the ten countries surveyed. On methodology, UNDP notes and welcomes the intention to continuously review and enhance the MOPAN approach. From a UNDP perspective this could usefully include information with regard to the selection of the countries for the survey and, importantly, an indication of whether or not MOPAN members work directly with UNDP, possibly in the same areas, or whether perceptions are based on more distant observations. It would also be useful for the reader to contextualise to the extent possible the often very different country situations and country-specific approaches, particularly when it comes to crises countries.

Finally, as also pointed out in 2004, the findings of the MOPAN survey may be further strengthened if studied together with actual evaluations or other external performance assessments. With respect to UNDP, the results could, for example, be reviewed together with the observations of the London-based One World Trust (www.oneworldtrust.org) in its recently released 2007 Global Accountability Report as well as UNDP's Global Partnership Survey, the Global UNDP Staff Survey etc. UNDP strongly encourages openness and welcomes external scrutiny of performance, effectiveness and results. We thank the MOPAN group for its contribution to that effort.

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