



14 March 2005

*Rhonda*  
Dear Ms. Gossen,

**The MOPAN Survey 2004 – Synthesis Report**

I refer to your letter dated 21 January 2005, attaching the above report, and to the subsequent presentation of the report to UNDP in January 2005. In this regard, I am pleased to forward herewith UNDP's comments on the Synthesis Report.

I would like to express my appreciation for the manner in which the survey was conducted, which encouraged participation and dialogue between UNDP and MOPAN members, both at the country and headquarters' levels. We appreciate the value of both the process and the outcome of the MOPAN exercise since they serve to reinforce our own culture of openness and the quality of engagement with partners.

I look forward to our continued cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Jenks', is positioned above the printed name.

Bruce Jenks  
Assistant Administrator

Ms. Rhonda Gossen  
UN and Commonwealth Programs  
Multilateral Programs Branch  
Canadian International Development Agency  
Quebec  
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## UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

### Comments on MOPAN Exercise 2004

UNDP appreciates the presentation of the synthesis report of the 2004 Multilateral Organisations Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) Exercise made by MOPAN members in New York on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2005, the open dialogue that has characterized the MOPAN process and welcomes the invitation to provide a response to MOPAN members. The approach being intentionally 'light' and perception-based notwithstanding do see it as one instrument among a key few which help partners to better understand multilateral organisations and to identify common threads in terms of perception of multilateral actors on the ground.

We note with satisfaction that the report finds that UNDP's role and work is widely appreciated and understood among respondents. Especially important to us is that the report confirms a generally high level of knowledge of and interaction with UNDP at the country-level by the majority of respondents; only a small percentage of respondents felt that they did not have enough information to answer the questionnaire. This finding is an extremely central one for UNDP since it tells us that we are indeed seen as increasingly networked and extroverted in our culture. Improving in this area was an important element of UNDP's reform agenda in the past few years and positive results appear to be borne out by this finding.

The report also reflects a positive perception of UNDP's role in national policy dialogue, capacity building, support to non-state actors, support to national policies and strategies, and, in particular, advocacy for human development and poverty eradication. We are especially pleased to note that the report findings suggest that UNDP provides effective policy advice in specific development policy areas such as gender (e.g. gender sensitive budgeting), governance (e.g. fair elections) and environmental issues, as well as a strong leadership role within the policy dialogue in the fight against HIV/AIDS. High scores also on advocacy especially for human development and poverty issues at the national, regional and global level we also note with satisfaction since they confirm – as indeed our own evaluative instruments do – that advocacy efforts and messages related to key development issues across the institution are recognized on the ground and in policy advocacy circles.

We also note that the MOPAN findings show that UNDP is perceived less positively in risk taking on controversial issues. UNDP places importance on its role in convening and facilitating dialogue platforms for differing views and opinions, creating space for all actors, including civil society, to partake in discussions and debates, especially on sensitive topics. The organisation's recognized work on democratic governance and institutional reform, allows it to question national government policies and influence decision-making on controversial issues. Real progress on controversial issues often requires a concerted effort of the international community using different approaches and actors. We would therefore suggest that the finding related to risk taking should be seen together with those related to strong advocacy scores on human development, strong performance on governance issues and good external partnerships as composite indicator of effectiveness on controversial issues, rather than in isolation.

UNDP's role as coordinator of the UN system at the country-level appears to be seen as crucial and proactive by most respondents, though the report suggests that UNDP still tends to respond better to national partnerships than to inter-agency partnerships at the country-level. UNDP recognises the report's mixed results on interagency coordination and would point out here that the MOPAN approach to multilateral assessment remains relatively narrow, and organization-based rather than system-based. UNDG and UNDP are taking numerous measures to increase the UN Resident Coordinator's decision-making abilities. Tools such as the CCA, UNDAF and Joint Programming will increase collaboration as well as information sharing between UN agencies. A collective 'donor voice' might further assist this process and a more systemic alignment of multilateral and bilateral organisations.

The MOPAN report reflects progress made with regard to simplification and harmonisation of processes and products, like UNDAF and common houses, but rightly calls for further efforts. With regard to joint funding and implementation mechanisms, it is important to note that the mechanism chosen depends on the context and the national mechanisms in place. Regardless of the mechanism used, national ownership is at the centre of UNDP work, and implementation modalities are chosen based on and in an effort to support national capacities.

UNDP recognises that the conceptual approach underlying the 2004 MOPAN exercise has been further developed since the first pilot exercise in 2003, e.g. through tailoring the questionnaires to the mandate of each organisation. To quite a large degree the MOPAN perceptions mirror the findings of UNDP evaluations (Assessment of Development Results/ADRs) carried out in select countries. On methodology, we note and welcome the intention to continuously review and enhance the MOPAN approach. From our review this could include (a) defining and openly presenting the parameters for the selection of respondents in terms of knowledge base; (b) establishing a broader base for triangulating the findings, including national partners; and (c) establishing a quality control mechanism ensuring the practice followed the standards and that the findings and conclusions are robust and defensible (d) including a more precise indicator of degree in the key findings to more clearly indicate the number or proportion of respondents with a particular view. These steps may support the MOPAN aim of identifying general trends rather than outliers. In our view, it would also be important that assessments such as MOPAN contextualise to the extent possible the often very different country situations and country-specific approaches, particularly when it comes to crises countries.

In presenting the findings of the exercise to a wider public, we recommend that the report 'takes the reader by the hand' in explaining the MOPAN methodology and scope as well as the conclusions and recommendations drawn from it. This may help to ensure that results are viewed in the context of both the scope of the exercise and the nature of a perception-based methodology. It would also seem important to share with partner organisations how the results and findings would be used; how decisions would be made on the basis of the report findings and, lastly, how the follow-up on findings is envisaged by MOPAN member countries.

Finally, we would like to underscore that the positive messages of the MOPAN exercise are strengthened further when seen together with set of external performance effectiveness of reviews and internal results based and evaluations instruments. With respect to UNDP, the results could, for example, be reviewed together with the DFID Multilateral Effectiveness Assessment, the Global Partnership Survey with 1600 external respondents in 2004, the Global Staff Survey etc. We feel that as an organization UNDP has made special effort in recent years to encourage openness and welcome external scrutiny of performance, effectiveness and results. We thank you for MOPAN's contribution to that effort.

BRSP/UNDP, March 2005