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**Chief Executives Board  
for Coordination**

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**ICT NETWORK  
Eighth Session  
United Nations, New York, USA, 10-11 May 2007**

**Discussion Summary and Conclusions**

**I. Opening of the Meeting**

1. The ICT Network opened with welcoming remarks from the Chairperson.
2. The Network welcomed new and returning participants, especially those who have not been able to attend recent meetings.

**II. Adoption of the Agenda**

3. The ICT Network adopted the agenda.

**III. Country-Level ICT Coherence**

4. The chair of the UNDG working group on ICT presented the activities of the group, focusing on the technical requirements for the one-UN pilot offices that will have a system-wide impact. These include a common directory for name and contact details and a proposal for a “federated identity” approach that could allow cross access to protected agency intranets; i.e. staff from one agency allowed to access another’s intranet for knowledge sharing.
5. The presentation noted that, working with the CEB Secretariat, a ToR for a study on the options for a global directory had been developed and is due for release in the coming weeks. It was noted in the discussion that while the UNDG Working Group on ICT focused on the inter-agency requirements of the eight one-UN pilot offices, these issues, to be effective their work must also be applicable to the entire UN system.
6. The discussion raised some concerns about the details of opening intranets and sharing directory information, however the Network expressed its full support to these initiatives. Also noted by the UNDP during the discussion were other

technical issues that could be addressed system-wide, specifically noting the value of a system-wide standard for IP addresses.

7. As not all agencies participate at this level in the UNDG, the network expressed interest in the detailed presentation and supported the efforts to open up lines of communication between agencies. There were suggestions among some participants that the time had come to break down intranet access barriers. The ICT Network also noted that these efforts were driven by business need in a “bottom-up” approach, and agreed to work, within the context of the UN System ICT Strategic Framework and the HLCM Business Practices proposal, to address these issues from a top-down approach through high-level policy agreements. The Network agreed to the importance of a close working relationship between the ICT Network and the UNDG working group on ICT, and reiterated the value of having the CEB Senior Advisor on Information Management Policy Coordination participate in the UNDG ICT Working Group meetings as well as having the chair of the UNDG ICT Working Group participate in the ICT Network meetings.

#### **IV. System-Wide Business Practices**

8. The discussion on system-wide business practices began with an overview of the background behind the HLCM Business Practices proposal by the CEB Secretariat Director, Mr. Adnan Amin. In his remarks, Mr. Amin, who before joining the CEB Secretariat as Director, was the director of the secretariat for the High-Level Panel on System-wide Coherence, noted that the Panel’s main focus was on the three major issues within its mandate, humanitarian, development and the environment along with the cross-cutting issues of gender, sustainable development and human rights.
9. The Network learned that during its series of consultations, the panel concluded there was a need for harmonization of business practices, noting that these represented some of the practical barriers to cooperation, coordination and harmonization in the system. The CEB Secretariat Director noted further that without a locus for decision-making and resources for system-wide harmonization efforts, progress in these areas can be difficult. The HLCM business practices proposal emerged to address these issues, using the harmonization issues identified in the Panel report as a starting point in order to provide a framework for further discussion with the Networks.
10. The presentation explained that the proposal groups the initiatives into several cross-cutting management themes, including ERP issues, governance and accountability, HR, finance, data warehousing and knowledge sharing, most of which can benefit from ICT Network consideration. An example specifically highlighted was the issue of data warehousing, since the panel discovered that the UN system lacked a standardized framework for reporting system-wide staffing information and financial flows from member states. Knowledge management was another example of a consistent message coming from the panel and the CEB – that there is a tremendous wealth of knowledge embedded in the UN system.

11. Noting that the initiatives contained in the proposal are very preliminary, the CEB Secretariat Director stressed the need for expert guidance from the Networks on how these initiatives should develop and that the HLCM was looking for a detailed proposal, including costs, to consider at its next meeting, scheduled for the fall of 2007. He expressed a desire for the network to focus on and provide expert advice about the items related to ICT, culminating in concrete proposals that can be presented to the HLCM. Stressing the need for a broader view of coordination, the CEB Secretariat director called upon the ICT community to go beyond a purely technical perspective on business issues, towards providing feedback through a dialog with the programmatic and management community on what is feasible to achieve together.
12. The ICT Network Chair welcomed the introduction by the CEB Secretariat Director and noted that the need for harmonized business practices has appeared in many contexts, citing as an example recent discussions within the One-UN pilot office planning that highlighted the importance of developing common business practices in order to facilitate the concept of delivering as one. She also stressed the need to work towards “enabling” business practices, and not simply common ones, stressing that a more structured and harmonized business practice approach acts as an enabler of the UN system delivering as one, pointing out that IPSAS compliance is one example of a driver in this direction.
13. FAO opened the discussion by informing the Network that, at the request of the ICT Network chair, FAO represented the ICT Network at the HLCM meeting, and noted that the HLCM welcomed the business practices proposal as a first step for a work programme for the HLCM. FAO also noted the importance of creating a link between the business practices proposal under development within the HLCM and its networks, and the existing UN System ICT Strategic Framework that currently guides the direction of the ICT Network. Also noted were the difficulties in making progress on major system-wide ICT initiatives due to the need for a business owner and funding, which the HLCM proposal might address.
14. The discussion within the network raised a number of issues, including the need to not only focus on longer-term strategic issues but also on smaller, achievable goals that can move coordination ahead in concrete ways. Also raised was the need to ensure a clear business case for the initiatives, many of which lacked the detail necessary for agencies to make informed decisions about the way forward. The network also pointed out that the two major ICT initiatives currently under way, the studies on common services in data centres and communications, were not represented in the proposal, and that the ERP initiative required modification. In addition, the Network discussed the need to include ICT-related standards and business-case development tools within a revised business practices proposal. In addition, Network members presented some specific proposals, including a call to move quickly to open up individual organizational intranets to UN partners, however it was noted that with this, and other, proposals, the obstacles have not been technical, but rather cultural and political.

15. It became clear during the discussion that while there may not be a direct link between ICT and some of the initiatives, for almost all of them ICT acted as an enabler; i.e. without the core infrastructure that ICT provides, the business units involved would have difficulty meeting the initiative objectives.
16. The outcome of the discussion was to follow a process that aligns the business practices proposal with the UN System ICT Strategic Framework to identify where work already performed could be incorporated into the response to the HLCM. A working group composed of FAO, CTBTO, and IMF, working with the CEB Secretariat, would complete this exercise shortly after the conclusion of the ICT Network meeting, whereupon the existing network working groups would complete the analysis as feedback to the HLCM through the Chair.

## **V. ICT Strategy: Development of Business Cases**

17. The network received an update from the CEB Secretariat on the status of the two business cases; Common Data Centres and Common Data Communications. The network noted that these two studies should be included as initiatives in the HLCM business practices proposal. The CEB Secretariat reported that the data communications project was progressing more quickly, and would soon be ready for release to vendors as an RFP while the data centre consolidation proposal still required additional work, and volunteers to work on the project. In response, UNICEF, UN, ICAO and PAHO all agreed to participate in a working group to develop the initiative. The update also noted that about half of all organizations had already committed to contributing funds for the projects.
18. As part of this discussion, the Network heard a presentation by Royal Dutch Shell on their transition from a highly decentralized ICT environment to one that provides high-level support to all their disparate business centers. With a federated business model with some similarities to the UN system, the network agreed that this was a vision that was worth pursuing, and would follow-up with Shell to learn about more of the details involved in creating this system-wide capacity.
19. The ICT Governance Working Group chair (UNDP) presented the need for agreement on standard policies and practices. Recommended that the group endorse at least the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) as a standard for service delivery and the Projects in Controlled Environments (PRINCE2) methodology for project management. The network agreed that these were important standards, agreed to endorse them, and urged organizations to consider adopting them. It was noted in the discussion that it would be useful for agencies to consider a gap analysis to discover the overall cost of bringing the system up to a standard maturity level for these. The network also noted that other standards, like COBIT (governance) and ISO17799 (security) should also be explored.
20. The network also agreed to include, within the ICT governance and best practice working group, the development of costing standards that will allow organizations to compare the costs of ICT activities across agencies.

## **VI. ICT and Development**

21. The Network heard and expressed appreciation for a presentation from the Director of the Global Alliance on ICT and Development to learn more about efforts throughout the system to bridge the digital divide.

## **VII. Special Interest Groups: ICT Knowledge Sharing**

22. The Network heard updates from the three standing special interest groups; CABIO (Oracle/PeopleSoft users), SAP-SIG (SAP users group) and ITAG (telecommunications). The CABIO group reported working with Oracle Corporation on incorporating the specific requirements of UN organizations into the newer products, as well as working at a strategic level to provide long-term input to the product development. The Network thanked UNHCR for taking the lead on CABIO and looked forward to future reports as a standing item on the agenda.
23. Reporting for the ITAG, UNICEF noted that recent discussions centred on the need to arrive at a system-wide dialing plan for VoIP connections, an issue that will effect all organizations. With the change in ICT leadership at the current host for the ITAG (UNICEF), the network agreed that new leadership was needed for this important subgroup of the ICT Network. The United Nations offered to chair the ITAG, and the Network unanimously accepted this proposal.
24. The SAP-SIG reported that the last meeting brought business users together with ICT to determine requirements for IPSAS and reporting. The discussion also noted the need to select new leadership for the SAP-SIG, as well as to integrate its knowledge sharing mechanisms with that of the ICT Network. WFP offered to lead the SAP-SIG, and the Network unanimously accepted this proposal. In addition, the network requested UNICEF to work closely with the CEB Secretariat and WFP to migrate the material from the existing SAP-SIG web site to the ICT Network web site.

## **VIII. Other Matters**

25. The ICT Network agreed to create a community of practice for ICT Security Officers, as a way to build upon similar work coming out of the UNDG Working Group on ICT.
26. The ICT Network heard a presentation on the United Nation's participation in Internet2, a high-speed, research-oriented global network and agreed that this was an important initiative that all can benefit all organizations.
27. The Network discussed the date and venue of its next meeting. UNDP offered to host the meeting, possibly at a one-UN pilot country, as a way to expose all agencies to the reality of trying to deliver ICT services to country offices. After a discussion the Network decided that it would only pursue this option if the structure of the meeting allowed for a high degree of interaction with country office ICT

practitioners, and agreed to develop a draft agenda by the end of June for discussion. Other alternatives included the UNDP office in Copenhagen or the UN/DPKO facility in Brindisi. The Network proposed that members consider the week of November 5 as a recommended date, given the scheduling requirements of the chairperson.

Annex I

List of Participants

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
UN	Mr. Eduardo Blinder	Director, Information Technology Services Division
ILO	Mr. Nadim R. Habra	Chief, Information Technology and Communications
FAO	Mr. David Benfield	Director, Information Systems and Technology Division
UNESCO	Mr. Paulo Serra	Director, Information Systems and Telecommunications
ICAO	Mr. Pat O'Hare	Chief, Information and Communication Technology
WHO	Ms. Lynne Fairservice	Coordinator GMG/ITT/TIS, GMG/ITT/TIS
IMF	Mr. Soon Choi	Head, Information Technology Services, Technology and General Services Department
ITU	Mr. Stephen Geis	Acting Chief, Information Services Department
WIPO	Mr. Neil Wilson	Director and CIO, IT Division
IFAD	Mr. Jose Stigliano	Director, ICT Division
IAEA	Mr. Tomas Beas	Acting Director, Division of Information Technology
WTO	Mr. Ghassan Karam	Director, Informatics Division
UNDP	Ms. Michelle Maggal	Chief, Enterprise Production Support Services
	Ms. Shirin Hamid	Chief Technology Officer, Bureau of Management
UNHCR	Mr. John Serrato	Director, CIO, Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications
UNRWA	Mr. Suhail Katkhuda	Chief, Information Systems Division
UNICEF	Ms. Marjorie Newman-Williams	Acting Director, Information Technology Division

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
UNFPA	Mr. George Price	Technology Manager, MIS Branch
WFP	Ms. Susana Malcorra	Deputy Executive Director, Administration and Chair, ICT Network
	Mr. Ernesto Baca	CIO and Director, Information and Communications Technology Division
CTBTO	Mr. Joep Winkels	Chief, Computer Infrastructure Section
	Mr. Mensah Solomons	Chief, Network and Systems Support Section
ICC (Computer Center)	Mr. Andreas Christoforides	Director
ICC (Criminal Court)	Mr. Ian Blacker	Chief, ICT Section, Information and Communication Technologies
IOM	Mr. Dipti Pardeshi	IT Project Coordinator, Information Technology and Communication
OHCHR	Mr. Shinichi Kushima	Head, Information Management and Technology
PAHO	Mr. Tim Brown	Chief, IT Strategic Planning, IT Strategic Planning
UNAIDS	Mr. John Kromodimedjo	Coordinator, IT field services
UNJSPF	Mr. Paul Dooley	Chief, Information Management Systems Section
UNOPS	Mr. Karsten Bloch	Chief, Division for Information & Communication Technology
UNU	Mr. Ng Chong	Chief IT, Officer and Research Scientist, Information Technology Division
CEB Secretariat	Mr. Ken Herman	Senior Advisor on Information Management Policy Coordination, CEB Secretariat New York
CEB Secretariat	Mr. Richard Maciver	UN System Webmaster, CEB Secretariat Geneva