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A. Introduction

1. Resolution 47/199 of the General Assembly on the Triennial policy review of the operational activities of the United Nations development system, adopted on 22 December 1992, together with the earlier Resolution 44/211, identify several steps to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of multilateral cooperation. Provisions are included in those Resolutions in order to ensure:

   (a) better integration with development efforts of recipient countries;
   (b) achieving greater complementarity and coherence as between UN system organisations and avoiding compartmentalisation and duplication;
   (c) generating a critical mass of support available from UN system organisations aiming at common goals through a more coherent and comprehensive strategy;
   (d) improving the linkages between emergency assistance and development resources; and
   (e) achieving better linkages between different types of assistance, ranging from financial/capital assistance to technical assistance and food aid.

2. Paragraph 9 of Resolution 47/199 introduces the Country Strategy Note (CSN) as an innovative instrument which will enable recipient governments and their United Nations system partners collectively to address these concerns. The CSN should be seen in the context of related efforts underway in the UN development system towards improved coherence, coordination and teamwork within the resident coordinator system, aiming at strengthening the consistency of the response of the UN system to the needs of the developing countries.

3. The policy parameters of the CSN are provided by Resolution 47/199 (see excerpts in section B) and the ACC Note on the CSN (ACC/1993/10), in section C, transmitted by letter of 3 May 1993 by Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, to all resident coordinators. Between 12 and 14 October 1993, a workshop on the CSN was organized by the United Nations (DPCSD) and the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, in order to develop implementation mechanisms from the perspective of senior national and UN system practitioners at the country level. The workshop was important to further the understanding of practical problems and opportunities created by the establishment of the new mechanism. Section D contains guidance elements for the use of all those who, on both the government side and in the UN system, participate in the preparation, design and implementation of the CSN, and translate the principles formulated by the GA, ECOSOC and ACC on this matter, into practical and operational elements. As more experience is acquired with this new process, this material will be revised.

B. Resolution A/47/199 of The General Assembly Adopted on 22 December 1992

4. Excerpts on the Country Strategy Note: “Triennial policy review of the operational activities of the United Nations development system” “The General Assembly, Emphasizing the importance it attaches to a more effective and coherent coordinated approach by the United Nations system to the needs of recipient countries, particularly at the field level,

   9. Stresses that, on the basis of the priorities and plans of recipient countries, and in order to ensure the effective integration of assistance provided by the United Nations system into the development process of countries, with enhanced accountability, and to facilitate the assessment and evaluation of the impact and sustainability of that assistance, a country strategy note should be formulated by interested recipient governments with the assistance of and in cooperation with the United Nations system under the leadership of the resident coordinator in all recipient countries where the government so chooses, taking into account the following:

   (a) The country strategy note should outline the contribution the United Nations development system could make to respond to the requirements identified by recipient countries in their plans, strategies and priorities;
   (b) The contribution of the United Nations system to the country strategy note should be formulated under the leadership of the resident coordinator, in order to promote greater coordination and cooperation at the field level;
The country strategy note should be transmitted to the governing body of each funding organization as a reference for the consideration of its specific country programme;

The specific activities of each funding organization of the United Nations system, within the broad framework of the country strategy note, should be outlined in a specific country programme prepared by the recipient government with the assistance of the funding organizations;

C. ACC Note on the CSN - 11 May 1993

The Country Strategy Note

1. Basic Principles

Purpose

5. The country strategy note should be formulated by interested recipient Governments with the assistance of and in cooperation with the United Nations system in accordance with the principles established in General Assembly resolution 47/199, paragraph 9. In particular, the country strategy note must be based on the priorities and plans of recipient countries and should be designed to ensure the effective integration of assistance provided by the United Nations system in the development process of countries. It should facilitate accountability and the assessment and evaluation of the impact and sustainability of United Nations assistance.

6. The country strategy note will be developed in all countries where the Government so chooses. It should be a mechanism for substantive assessment of key development issues of concern to the country and, above all, for mobilizing United Nations assistance in a collaborative manner. It should focus on areas where the United Nations system (collectively or individually) could make a significant difference.

Content

7. The country strategy note should truly reflect the national priorities of the recipient Government. It should also build upon and be consistent with internationally approved strategies such as the International Development Strategy, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, and thematic programmes of action emanating from the governing bodies of the United Nations system and the General Assembly.

8. The country strategy note should focus on those key areas for which the United Nations system collaboration will make a distinct difference and where the United Nations system has an advantage. It should be concerned with the full range of potential cooperation, not only technical cooperation (policy advice, along with substantive and management services), material and financial inputs, and human resources, but also food aid.

Coordination

9. In accordance with paragraph 9 of resolution 47/199, the contribution of the United Nations system to the country strategy note should be formulated under the leadership of the resident coordinator, in order to ensure greater coordination and cooperation at the field level.

10. In this regard, the country strategy note should serve as a broad framework for the project and programme preparation processes of the respective United Nations organizations. It shall not substitute for them. Each organization must remain accountable for the use of its funds in accordance with its mandates and procedures and through the established direct links with its Government counterparts. It is the responsibility of each organization to ensure that its analytical and operational projects and programmes are supportive and consistent with the overall country strategy note.

11. The country strategy note should be fully taken into account by United Nations system field representatives, when carrying out major programming exercises.
12. Necessary steps need to be taken to establish an appropriate field committee, in accordance with paragraphs 40 and 41 of resolution 47/199.

13. The resident coordinator has a special responsibility to ensure the coherence of the contribution of the United Nation system to the country strategy note. To this end, she/he should form subgroups focused on the key themes of the country strategy note. These subgroups should be chaired by the organization or individual best suited to the task (including the resident coordinator), and should operate under the overall guidance of the resident coordinator.

14. In order to cooperate with and support the Government in preparing the country strategy note and to accommodate the fact that no all agencies or United Nations bodies are represented at the country level, the resident coordinator will invite those organizations not represented to submit a written input or send a representative to participate in the drafting of a country strategy note.

2. Procedures

Team Effort

15. The country strategy note is prepared by Governments of interested recipient countries with the assistance of and in cooperation with the United Nations system under the leadership of the resident coordinator.

16. In carrying out his/her task, the resident coordinator should work with team of United Nations organizations present or actively involved in the country, working on a collegial and consensual basis, with the resident coordinator as the team leader.

17. In accordance with paragraph 9 of resolution 47/199, the Country Strategy Note should be transmitted to the governing bodies of United Nations organizations as a reference for the consideration of their specific country programme and projects.

3. Linking the Operational, Research and Regional Capacities

18. Full use needs to be made of the analytical and normative roles of the specialized agencies (for agencies without field representation, this should be drawn from their headquarters). Their work should be central to the contribution of the United Nations to the Country Strategy Notes, bearing in mind that some activities may have a regional or global dimension. Likewise, stronger links need to be made with the research work now being carried out by United Nations headquarters locations, which might also themselves benefit from stronger links with field practitioners. Finally, there is still untapped potential in the regional organizations and greater use should be made of regional networks.

4. Links with Bretton Woods Institutions

19. The United Nations team should have more extensive mutual consultation with the Bretton Woods Institutions. In accordance with national priorities, the contribution of the United Nations to the Country Strategy Note should be based, inter alia, on interaction with key exercises such as the formulation of Policy Framework Papers, Structural or Sectoral Adjustment Programme Loans, Public Investment Programmes and Public Expenditure Programmes. This interaction is to support both complementary roles and help bring to the fore viewpoints which United Nations organizations may be able to provide from their unique perspective. These links should also help ensure that Governments have access to a broad range of policy advice.

5. Links with Other External Donors

20. The country strategy note, along with the analytical work underlying its preparation, could help facilitate a more effective participation by the United Nations system in donor- wide groups such as consultative groups and round tables.

21. The country strategy note could also be useful to external donors seeking analytical advice and therefore help mobilize a wide range of donors behind key Government priorities.
6. Using Targets and a Programme Approach

22. To the extent possible, and as agreed by the Government, the country strategy note should highlight key development goals and targets that the United Nations system should help support. Many monitorable targets have already been established by universally agreed upon strategies. The country strategy note should help establish a process for reviewing and evaluating the degree to which United Nations system assistance is actually helping support progress towards these targets and thus being provided in a flexible and effective manner - a key part of moving to a programme approach.

7. Evaluation and Reporting

23. The utilization and impact of the country strategy note will be evaluated at the initiative of the Government.

24. Evaluations should ideally be carried out in cooperation with the United Nations system. These would provide a common basis for a review of progress made and problems encountered by the respective

D. Guidance Elements for the Preparation, Design and Implementation of the Country Strategy Note

1. Why A CSN?

25. As established in Resolution 47/199, it is the prerogative of a government to decide whether or not to prepare a CSN. When considering this decision, it is important to consider why there is need for such a new instrument, as compared with other existing planning and coordinating mechanisms, in relation to country specific situations. In general, the added value of the CSN process and substantive content for both the government and the UN SYSTEM includes the following:

(a) contributing to a more effective and efficient use by the government of programme resources made available through the UN system by prioritizing the need for and the allocation of those resources according to explicit objectives and policies of the country;

(b) enhanced relevance of the UN system goals and programmes to country specific priorities;

(c) achievement of better coordination among UN organisations at the country level through their combined pursuit of national development objectives and priorities within a commonly agreed strategy;

(d) improved cooperation between the UN system and the government;

(e) contributing to strengthen overall aid coordination and rationalisation of aid by upgrading, where required, the mechanisms adopted by the government to programme external assistance;

(f) facilitating resource mobilisation, where requested by the government, through a framework of agreed priorities and objectives;

(g) more effective UN system participation in donor meetings, including Consultative Groups and Round Tables, by presenting a consistent response of the UN system to the development plans and priorities of the country;

(h) strengthening the functioning of the resident coordinator system including coordinating mechanisms.

Guidance Elements on CSN
26. In addition to this generic description of potential benefits, there are likely to be country, sector and thematically specific advantages accruing from a CSN. To realize these benefits, the process of preparing the CSN - the stage at which information is exchanged, priorities established, linkages sought - may be as important as the final content of the CSN.

2. What is a CSN?

27. The CSN is, first of all, a government document, prepared with the assistance of and in collaboration with the UN organizations. There is, therefore, a need for a strong and direct involvement of the government in the process of formulation of the CSN and an effective process of consultation and collaboration between government and UN system. This involvement should not be limited to agreement to decision to start the CSN process and to the final approval of the CSN, but is essential throughout the course of preparing the CSN. All relevant government authorities responsible for the formulation of the main development policies should actively participate in the CSN process. Distribution of responsibilities among the various national entities participating in the CSN process should be identified at an early stage, in order to review the national development priorities, prepare the additional work of needs assessment, where necessary, participate in joint working groups with UN system to prepare outlines of the CSN and revise drafts and final texts of the CSN.

28. The CSN is the outcome of a process of consultation and collaboration at the country level between the government and the UN system led by the resident coordinator. Thus care should be taken by the UN system teams not to assume full responsibility for the exercise in an attempt to accelerate the CSN process.

29. It is equally important that all relevant UN System organizations are actively involved in the formulation process, within the resident coordinator (RC) system (20). The CSN provides a broad frame of reference within which individual UN organisations should programme their cooperation. The CSN is, thus, not a substitute for country programmes of individual organisations.

3. Purpose of the CSN

30. The purpose of the CSN is to establish a mutually agreed upon strategy for a coherent and coordinated UN system response to requirements identified by recipient countries in their plans, strategies and priorities, stipulating:

• priority areas for UN system support for national development efforts;

• the principal policy directions for operations and the respective roles of individual agencies in the overall UN system's development efforts.

The purpose of the CSN is to:

(a) for the government and the UN System
• state the government's development vision;
• state the government's development priorities and policies in the relevant areas for government and UN system collaboration;
• identify priority areas of the UN System operations on the basis of the comparative advantages and respective mandates of the UN organizations;
• achieve better coordination between the government and the UN System as well as enhanced integration of the UN system.

(b) for the United Nations System
• provide system-wide scope for dialogue and programmatic integration of the UN global agenda(s), at the country and inter-country level, in light of national development priorities;
• harmonize the UN system's thematic response to national development needs, indicating a possible division of labour and/or agreeing compatible policy approaches;
• provide a coordinated response from UN system organizations through the RC system.
4. What Are the Principal Characteristics of A CSN?

Policy Statement

31. The CSN is a policy statement of the government, which establishes priorities to be supported by UN system resources. As such, it should focus on strategic areas in its conception and approach, should be analytical in relation to relevant key development issues, while enabling practical forms of collaboration between the government and UN SYSTEM organisations. It should be visionary in its conception and realistic at the same time.

32. The CSN should be consistent with other major policy statements as adopted by the government and/or agreed with major donors, such as national development plans, economic rehabilitation or recovery programmes, structural adjustment programmes, national macroeconomic and social frameworks, human development strategies, etc., as they are reflected in the official documents of the government, trilateral Policy Framework Papers (PFPs) prepared by the government with the World Bank and IMF, Technical Cooperation Policy Framework Papers and Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCPFPs and TCPs, prepared within the NaTCPA exercises), or other similar documents (see points (b), (c), (d), (e) of para. 44).

33. The CSN should contain a very succinct statement of feasible and productive UN system interventions in support of the development process of a country. There should be built-in flexibility and a periodic process of review, which enables adjustments and fine tuning, as necessary. The periodicity of the CSN review should be explicitly defined.

34. In principle, the CSN should provide a broad frame of reference for all UN system operational activities for development. Agencies and organisations of the UN system, large and small, represented in a country or not, need to be included within the purview of the CSN, as determined by the requirements for which UN system support is expected.

Range and focus

35. The CSN should be concerned with the full range of resources and services of UN system organisations - capital, technical, and food. The government might wish to describe the way in which these resources are integrated, together with the other domestic and external resources, into overall government development strategies.

36. The CSN offers the opportunity to focus on specific key themes and priorities for utilisation of UN SYSTEM resources and services in areas where the system has particular mandates, strengths and capacities. Among possible broad areas of thematic and subject focus are: Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development; Poverty Reduction; Economic Growth; Human Development; Population; Good Governance and Development Management; Humanitarian Issues and Agenda for Peace. There could be other cross-cutting appropriate themes on specific problems as food security, rural development, gender issues, agricultural development, drug abuse control. These themes and priorities should be based, as far as possible, on all available analyses of the development problems of the country, including situation analysis and needs assessments.

37. Special attention should be focused on the relationship between government's development strategies, global UN SYSTEM themes, standards, norms and goals - i.e., International Development Strategy, UNCED Agenda 21, Plan of Action for LDCs, Education for All, World Population Plan of Action (WPPA) and outcome of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Global Programme of Action in drug abuse control - and other programme interventions sought within the CSN framework. Thus the CSN provides an excellent opportunity for a government to indicate its response to global norm-setting in a country-specific development context, taking account of the relevance of the global/regional and multilateral issues in the specific country context.

38. The CSN should, as far as is practicable, adopt a cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary approach, in which solutions to development problems and constraints are sought, through integrated strategies. This could be a particularly important contribution, through which UN system resources can be brought together.
39. The CSN should take note, as appropriate, of cross-border perspectives, especially in those areas and activities which lend themselves to efficient forms of sub-regional and regional cooperation - for example, trade, environment, industrial development, meteorology (weather), hydrology.

40. The CSN should also provide an opportunity to discuss the development assistance provided by the UN system within the framework of the overall external assistance received by the country, taking account of the existing mechanisms of aid coordination adopted by the government.

41. The specific priority areas should be presented by briefly providing the necessary background elements, outlining the government's policies and objectives as well as current programmes in those areas, describing alternative strategies available to achieve those objectives and identifying the specific contribution that UN agencies could provide in operationalising those strategies. Mechanisms to coordinate the UN action in those areas and an outline or matrix of the funding mechanisms should also be included.

Time-frame

42. The CSN should cover a time period of four to five years, trying to be consistent with the normal time frames of national development plans and similar exercises. While the CSN timeframe is normally medium-term, it should, nonetheless have a longer term perspective and project a vision for achievement in the future. Periodic reviews should be agreed in order to ensure flexibility and adjustment to changing conditions and prepare the way to more flexible mechanisms of development planning.

43. Efforts should be made to harmonise the time period of the CSN with country programmes of individual agencies and organisations and vice-versa; the on-going efforts to synchronize programming cycles should be accelerated, where needed.

5. What should be the Content of the CSN?

44. The CSN should be a concise document, normally not exceeding 20 pages or 7,000 words. The following ten-section structure might be followed in its preparation:

(a) Introduction and purpose of the CSN;
(b) Situation analysis of the country's economic, social, environmental and cultural circumstances;
(c) Identification of principal development issues;
(d) Relevance of global/regional and multilateral strategies;
(e) Statement of the government's development strategies and priorities to respond to the principal development issues;
(f) Review of current external assistance, including UN system;
(g) Identification of thematic areas for United Nations support;
(h) A strategic presentation of the demand for support from the UN system as identified in national plans and strategies, and further definition of the priorities for UN cooperation, including identification of support from UN agencies;
(i) Implementation arrangements;
(j) Monitoring arrangements and evaluation.

45. This suggested structure for the CSN is consistent with the purposes which the CSN is expected to achieve and responds to the salient characteristics that should inform its preparation and design. In allocating space, it is suggested that 30% of the document be apportioned for the first seven (a-g) of the ten sections outlined above and 70% of the document should concentrate on the last three sections, primarily section (h).

46. The content of the CSN will of course be driven by country-specific considerations. The recommendations that follow for each suggested section of the CSN document are, thus, only indicative, and in the nature of annotations which need to be flexibly adapted to the circumstances in each country.
Introduction and purpose of the CSN

47. The purpose of, and the context in which, the CSN was prepared might be briefly described, including the collaborative arrangements between the government and the RC system, and any linkages with other activities that are relevant for aid coordination, such as Consultative Group and Round Table processes and NaTCAPs (National Technical Cooperation Assessment and Programmes). The purposes which the government seeks to achieve through the CSN might also be briefly described. The structure of the CSN, and its thematic emphasis, if any, should be set out in this section.

Situation analysis of the country's economic, social, environmental and cultural circumstances

48. The relevant current economic, social, cultural and environmental situation should be described briefly. Particular attention might be drawn to those macroeconomic indicators crucial for human development - allocations of public resources to health, population and education and especially to primary education and primary health care. The state of poverty in the country - income distribution patterns, absolute poverty levels, issues such as food security and employment - may be relevant issues. Implications of macroeconomic policy on gender-related issues should be particularly noted. Linkages between economic, social and environmental issues might be briefly referred to. This section should draw from situation analyses, needs assessments and other analyses of UN system organizations as research document, studies and reports, developed by these organizations, which outline sectoral and across-sectoral strategies, priorities or objectives, and have been endorsed by the government, as well as other concomitant analyses conducted by the government and other donors in assessing the development problems of the country.

Identification of principal development issues

49. The principal development issues which confront the government (and the donor community) should be concisely set out and should flow from the earlier section on situation analysis. These issues could range from agricultural productivity, industrialisation, education and health standards, to the role of women, social aspects of structural adjustment, protection of children, environmental questions and macroeconomic constraints. These issues should be the foundation of the overall framework of development objectives indicated in paragraph 22, to which the CSN attempts to provide a response.

Relevance of global/regional and multilateral strategies

50. In addition to the development objectives that are identified in situation analyses and needs assessments (paragraphs 19 and 20), on the basis of assessment of prevailing national conditions, the CSN might also set out government responses to multilateral norms established over the years by the international community in both economic and social sectors - the International Development Strategy for the 1990s, the Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries, Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit, The World Population Plan of Action (WPPA), other declarations and norms established for children, and in education, primary health care, water supply and sanitation, international labour standards and for minimum levels of food supplies and of nutrition, to the extent that those norms are considered relevant by the government for the development of the country. This section, should primarily serve as the bridging mechanism between multilateral, global and regional norms and their achievement through national policies. Reference should also be made to the status of ratification of key international conventions adopted in the United Nations organs, particularly when the standards are relevant to the identified objectives of the country strategy.

Statement of the government's development strategies and priorities to respond to the principal development issues

51. A brief description is appropriate of the government's development strategies aimed at responding to the major development issues that have been identified. This section should be primarily an overview of government's development priorities, including a realistic presentation of achievable aims, goals or targets. Quantitative information on domestic and external resource requirements and allocation to address these development issues, articulated both sectorally and thematically, could be provided.

Review of current external assistance, including UN system

52. Current patterns of development assistance from all donor sources in the identified priorities might be described, including conclusions of various evaluation reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of these
flows in relation to key development issues identified in earlier sections. The current sectoral and regional allocation of external assistance, from all sources, as well as the UN system, should be here briefly analyzed and compared with the, identified development priorities. Governments should be encouraged to assess the quality of development assistance obtained through the UN system and any remedial measures required to strengthen development cooperation arrangements. An overview of UN system resources should be included in this section.

Identification of thematic areas of United Nations support and definition of the priorities for UN cooperation

53. This section should be the most important and elaborate one of the CSN. Following from the earlier sections, it should present the priority areas for government and UN SYSTEM collaboration and the manner in which UN SYSTEM interventions will be utilised within these priority areas. It could describe each of the programme areas for which UN system support is required and the linkages with national development programmes and those of other donor agencies. Development objective and priorities should be translated into specific targets and goals, in order to allow a more adequate monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the CSN. Based on comparative advantages, mandates and capacities of UN system organisations, this section should identify the relevant thematic areas of UN system support. These themes can be either broadly or more precisely defined - for example, it could be human development, or more narrowly it could be the eradication of illiteracy or access to water supply and sanitation and others. These areas should respond to the country's development priorities and strategies described above.

Follow-up arrangements

54. Linkages between the CSN and the strategies and country programmes of individual agencies, funds and programmes should be set out. The planned programme of work to give effect to the strategy of the CSN through various country programmes should be described, including the collaborative arrangements between the government and relevant UN system organisations on the basis of specific mandates. The implementation arrangements should include references to the establishment of working groups, linkages with other donors, as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

6. How should the process be organized?

Preparation

55. The CSN, as a new instrument, should not be seen as an additional bureaucratic burden that is added to the already heavy workload of external assistance management. It should not duplicate activities such as needs assessments and development programming that are already being conducted in all developing countries. Based on such exercises, it should be seen as a mechanism to enable the establishment of more linkages between and among country programmes and strategies of government institutions and individual UN SYSTEM organisations. It is therefore important that the purpose of the CSN, the process for its preparation, its design and content and its value and utility, be clearly understood by all the participants. One of the first actions in the process of preparing a CSN should, thus, be to disseminate appropriate information on all aspects of the CSN to a wide constituency, not only within the public sector, but, as appropriate, to the private sector, research and academic institutions, NGOs, and local communities, in countries where this is in line with stated government policy. A workshop, involving all participants to be convened by the government with the United Nations system, under the leadership of the resident coordinator, might be a suitable mechanism for this purpose. Other donors may be involved in the preparation exercise, as required, on a consultative basis, in agreement with the government and donor briefings may be organized at appropriate stages to ensure support and to start the process of mobilizing resources, supplementary to those available through the core resources of the operational agencies and the regular budgets of the UN organizations.

Government

56. Discussions with the relevant counterpart agency of government on its intentions regarding the preparation of a CSN SHOULD be initiated by the UN SYSTEM under the leadership of the resident coordinator, in an appropriate manner. These discussions should focus in the first instance on whether to undertake a CSN and, if the government so decides, on the process leading up to it, including a tentative time schedule.
57. The leadership of the government should be ensured also during the various phases of the preparation of the CSN, identifying the level of authority and/or the specific entity that will lead the process of coordinating the governmental role in the CSN exercise, identifying specific responsibilities on the government side, setting up adequate mechanisms of consultation between sectoral and coordinating authorities.

58. The consultation arrangements should also indicate, in general terms, the mechanisms for communication and modalities of collaboration between the government and the UN organizations during the formulation of the CSN. These mechanisms should also specify the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the CSN during its implementation. Existing mechanisms should be used, whenever possible, in order to avoid the establishment of excessive bureaucratic layers.

UN system consultations

59. The RC should initiate discussions with all UN system organisations in the country and, when not represented, with UN organisations' regional or head offices, as appropriate, on the establishment of a programme of work for the preparation of the CSN and the arrangements to undertake its substantive preparation. Whenever possible, it is expected that existing structures and arrangements would be utilized. Full and active use of the RC system should be made throughout the entire process of preparation and implementation, including the use of effective, substantive sub-groups focused on key themes with lead-agencies for designated themes and areas, allowing for the full participation of all relevant UN organizations. The analyses in the area of development needs assessment already conducted by individual UN organizations with national counterparts should be fully used to the extent that they are relevant for the CSN, in order to avoid duplications. The possible contribution of specialized UN ORGANIZATIONS in certain parts of the development needs assessment in their respective fields of specialization should be considered as a possibility of maximizing the available expertise and improve the quality of the work conducted in the preparation of the CSN.

60. Special attention should be given to the consultation with smaller technical specialized agencies of the UN system that do not have field representation and the need of adequate exchange of information and active participation in the CSN process through the RC system.

Linkages with other processes

61. Joint government and UN mechanisms, such as working groups on thematic issues, sectors and sub-sectors, and cross-sector cluster groups need to be established, or existing ones need to be reinforced, as required, to develop the technical inputs into the CSN preparatory process. The RC should initiate action in this regard. Existing mechanisms of consultation should be used to the maximum possible extent, in order to avoid duplications.

Research and documentation

62. As the CSN should describe each of the programme areas for which UN system support is required, it should also stress the linkages with national development programmes , and those of other donor agencies. Though the process of preparing a CSN constitutes a distinctive set of activities, it should be linked to the government planning, programming and budgetary processes and with other important events, such as meetings of Consultative Groups and Round Tables, NaTCAP meetings and other consultation arrangements. The CSN process should also be linked to other efforts underway in the UN system towards improved coherence and coordination, including workshops on management of field coordination that should increasingly address country trend processes. Not only will such connections increase the relevance and efficiency of planned UN programmes, but it will also assist in establishing linkages with other donor activities and sources of information and analysis. In particular it is important to pursue desirable complementarity and consistency between the objectives and strategies set out in the CSN and those agreed by the government in the context of other global exercises, such as the World Bank/IMF Policy Framework Papers (PFPs), in the Technical Cooperation Policy Framework Papers (TCPFPs) and Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCPs), elaborated by the government within NaTCAP exercises with the support of UNDP, social development programmes or strategies agreed by the government with institutions such as UNICEF, WHO, ILO and UNESCO, sectoral programmes involving specialized agencies.

63. An early review of relevant available documents which are suitable as background material for the preparation of the CSN should be undertaken. These might include: governments' own plans and programme documents and statements of policy; programmes, strategies and situation analyses of UN
system organisations, including TCPFPs and TCPs from the NaTCAP processes and reports from regional commissions, especially in the case of economies in transition; Country Economic Memoranda, PFPs, national investment programmes, public expenditure programmes, and other similar documents prepared by the government with the World Bank and the IMF, documents of similar nature of regional banks, bilateral donors and the private sector and NGOs, all existing research, reports and documentation on the relevant thematic sector or cross-sectoral issues. The RC system should be used for this purpose, in conjunction with all UN organizations and the government, and in collaboration with all other relevant local and international organizations. All these documents might be included, if the government so wished, in the general background information available in the preparation of the CSN. They would be treated as analytical and advisory support documents.

64. Based on this early review, action might be required, though this will not be necessary in many countries, to commission special studies on key issues and specific sectors likely to be addressed in the CSN. Many such studies could probably be commissioned within the framework of ongoing and planned UN system and government collaborative arrangements. The RC system can draw on the research carried out by UN system organisation headquarters and regional offices, as well as regional commissions, when preparing country analyses in order to avoid duplication of activities and to emphasize the coordinating nature of the CSN process, instead of conceiving it as a mere additional planning procedure.

Resource requirements

65. The RC should initiate discussions and reach an agreement among the UN SYSTEM and with government, on the technical and financial resources required for the preparation of the CSN. In-house resources of government and the resident coordinator system, which do not require additional funds, should be utilised to maximum effect. Where extra resources are required, the government and the resident coordinator system should agree on mechanisms to generate these resources, either from their own budgets or through extra-budgetary resources of funding agencies, both within, and outside, the UN SYSTEM. The participation of smaller UN agencies should be ensured, when required, using appropriate interregional or sectoral support resources.

Establishment of priorities

66. The government should be encouraged, from the start and subsequently during the preparation of development needs assessments and the definition of resource gaps, to identify the relevant national programmes, priorities and strategies that the government intend to pursue with the support of the UN system, so that a clear understanding on feasible areas of collaboration emerges.

67. In parallel, the UN system should indicate on its part the prospective magnitude and types of resources available to the country from various organisations, so that resources planning can be undertaken on a realistic basis.

Consultations with other sources

68. Special consideration should be given, since an early stage, of establishing appropriate consultative arrangements with the Bretton Woods institutions and regional banks, to facilitate exchange of ideas, information and feasible linkages between their programmes and UN system activities enhance complementarity and collaboration with these institutions, and favour the harmonization of the government's policies with all external funding institutions. Although the situation will vary with each country, the arrangements to collaborate with these institutions should be allowed to evolve on the basis of practical experience. To the extent possible, where the government agrees, having entered into agreements with the Bretton Woods institutions, the representatives of the World Bank and IMF should be invited to participate in the preparatory process, in order to draw attention to capacity building and other implications of the agreed programmes which the UN system team and the government intend to address. Similar arrangements could be envisaged with the regional development banks, especially in those countries where they represent a substantial proportion of the funds channelled through the UN system.

69. It is desirable that agreement be reached on an appropriate consultative process to be instituted with all donors, so that the CSN framework that is being evolved can be brought to the attention of these donors, with a view to establishing productive linkages with their own programmes, favour a global programming of external assistance for the government, and, as a consequence, avoid duplication and overlap of activities (see above paragraph 33)
70. As development is not a merely political mechanism in the hands of public institutions, but is substantially a participatory process that involves all social sectors of the society, the government may want to ensure the CSN process involves also the private sector and non-governmental institutions in developing and outlining the major development issues of the country. Appropriate mechanisms and forums for this purpose should be considered, depending on the circumstances in each country.

Finalization of CSN

71. Based on the work of the subject groups that have been engaged in the detailed preparation, the government in collaboration with the United Nations system under the leadership of the resident coordinator should proceed to prepare a first draft of the document. Following consultations with all concerned parties, a revised draft will then follow, to be reviewed by government and the resident coordinator system, with a view to its finalisation.

72. The final document, approved by government and which is then a government document, should be submitted to headquarters of UN system organizations for their attention. They will take appropriate action to bring the document to the notice of their governing bodies at the time of the consideration of the relevant country programme.

7. CSN as a Broad Frame of Reference for Programming

73. Country programmes and strategies of individual agencies and organisations should be prepared within the broad frame of reference of the CSN. The use of the strategy described in the CSN for programming should be a task of the highest priority for UN system organisations.

74. The broad framework provided by the CSN, and the related situation analyses, should become an integral part of the process of preparation of country programmes and strategies of individual organisations and agencies. When country programmes are already under implementation before the CSN process starts, the preparation of the CSN might require some procedural adjustments, in the attempt of making use of all the useful strategic elements already present in the ongoing programmes. Throughout, the provisions of para 39(g) of GA resolution 47/199 should be borne in mind as concerns the possibility of proposing amendments, in full consultation with the government, of country programmes, where required, to bring them into line with the Country Strategy Note. Whenever possible, opportunities should be used for co-financing and parallel financing of development programmes.

Monitoring and evaluation

75. The CSN should address the issue of assessing progress towards the strategic targets established therein, including arrangements for this purpose and suggesting adequate indicators and evaluation criteria. Themes, targets and goals should be monitored jointly by the government and the RC system through such mechanisms as joint periodic reviews, and mid-term reviews. Country programmes of individual agencies should be assessed, in the context of these periodic reviews, as to their conformity with CSN objectives (see also para. 41 of GA resolution 47/199), as one key indication of achieving the goals set in the CSN. The results of the evaluations of the various country programmes taken together should be used as inputs to the evaluation process of the CSN. In addition to terms of reference that are adapted to the country's specific situation, the generic terms of reference of the evaluation process of the CSN should also include a focus on the coordination of inputs and actions of the various agencies, linkages with the various themes, and complementarity of assistance among agencies, government and UN system, in addition to the impact assessment of the development strategy.

76. Updating of the CSN should be considered as and when appropriate, though normally not later than two years from its inception (see above paragraph 13).
**CSN CONTEXT**

- Global Agendas
  - International Strategies
- National Development Plan Priorities
- Elements of Joint Situation Analyses Needs Assessment

**Programme Cycle**

- Programme Development
  - CP
  - CP
  - CP*
  - CP
  - CP

- Implementation
  - Joint Review

CSN

* Country Programme or equivalent
8. The CSN Process: Suggested Sequence of Activities

77. The CSN process can be articulated as a sequence of activities. Although the specific conditions prevailing in each country require the adaptation of the procedures to be followed according to field specific situations, it is here suggested, for indicative purposes, a possible generic sequence of activities that describe a typical CSN cycle, with an estimated time frame required for its implementation:

(i) Preliminary steps (2 months)
   1. Information about what is a CSN is distributed to all concerned parties by the resident coordinator.
   2. The government decides to carry out the CSN process for country X.
   3. Identification by the government and the resident coordinator system of main contributors and lead organizers of the preparatory process.
   4. Agreement with the government and all participating organizations on the preparation of workplan, timing and a budget for CSN work, as well as organizational questions (with support and cooperation of resident coordinators).
   5. Agreement by all participating organizations and the government of financial provisions for CSN process.
   6. Determination of how best to involve non-resident organizations in the preparation process of CSN.
   7. Establishment and setting of TORs of joint government/UN mechanisms and working groups.

(ii) Preparation of CSN (4 months)
   8. Summary review of relevant country information (country development plans, country programme, projects, loans, grants, etc. of UN system and others, including World Bank and bilaterals).
   9. The government establishes a preliminary list of national priorities to be basis of UN system response, to be shown, if so desired in Matrix form and/or a checklist.
   10. Preliminary outline of the CSN drawn up.
   11. Establishment of thematic groups within the resident coordinator system; preparation of sectoral and multi-sectoral elements.
   12. Where agreed, consultations with Bretton Woods Institutions and other MFIs/UN agencies/government/bi-laterals/NGOs and others are undertaken in order to discuss preliminary work and plans.
   13. Where agreed, cross-border, sub-regional and regional dimensions are taken into account.
   14. Preparation of document:
      • first draft
      • review of first draft by Govt./UN
      • second draft followed by review by Govt./UN
      • final draft
   15. The resident coordinator transmits final draft to the UN Agency HQs for their attention.
   16. Final approval by the government of CSN.

(iii) Action Programme (Cooperation cycle on the average 4-5 years)
   17. The CSNis submitted to UNHQs in conjunction with UN ORGANIZATIONS’ country programmes.
   18. Country programmes (CPs) and equivalent exercises pick up those parts of national programmes in the CSN which pertain to their mandate.
   19. Where agreed, complementarities with Bretton Woods’ Institutions and Regional Banks are identified and strengthened and operations are harmonized to the extent possible.
   20. Where agreed, assistance is provided in identifying areas for co-financing.
(21) Implementation through country programmes, using programme approach and projects.

(iv) Monitoring and Evaluation (on-going and towards end of cooperation cycle)

(22) CSN themes, targets and goals monitored throughout (use joint mid-term reviews and other review mechanisms).

(23) Periodical reviews of the CSN; joint annual comprehensive review of Country Programmes; joint monitoring and impact assessment of the CSN process.

(24) Updating of CSN on bi- or tri-annual basis or in response to unforeseen major events, and repeat steps 11 to 15 if necessary.

Notes:


20. The RC system includes, in addition to all UN organizations represented in the country with their own offices or representatives, also those specialized agencies without field representation.