UNICEF Organizational Review
Synthesis Report
Findings and Summary Recommendations

25 May 2007

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I. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW

In October of 2005, UNICEF announced the intent to conduct an independent review of the global organization to help assess UNICEF’s organizational health and to build a new foundation for continuous improvement going forward. Given the many changes internally (new senior leadership, growth and diversification of UNICEF resources, continued expansion of UNICEF field offices) and a changing external context (trends in the development and aid environments, as well as the renewed impetus for UN Coherence), this was an opportune time to conduct a broad-based strategic review. The Request for Proposal called for the review to focus on three main themes to help position UNICEF for maximum impact in the future: 1) a participatory organizational assessment to highlight strengths, weaknesses, and strategic opportunities; 2) articulation of a strategic direction built upon UNICEF’s comparative advantages and partnership opportunities; and 3) an organizational design that combines cohesive structures, efficient systems and processes, and robust internal capacity to deliver on the strategic vision. The Organizational Review would also provide an opportunity to integrate the multiple exercises underway that had targeted specific elements of the organization, including:

- Strategic Review of Human Resources
- Supply Function Evaluation
- Global Integrated Resource Mobilization Strategy
- Innocenti Research Centre Evaluation
- Civil Society Partnership Review
- Gender Parity Study
- Business Process Review

Following a competitive bidding process, GivingWorks Inc. was selected in March 2006 to conduct the Organizational Review. A dedicated counterpart team in UNICEF led by a senior UNICEF and UN colleague was also established to work with the consultants. While many organization-wide reviews are conducted in response to organizational crisis or major external discontinuity, UNICEF proactively initiated this review, not because it was in crisis, but rather to build on its numerous past successes and to capitalize on opportunities to achieve maximum results for children over the next 10 to 15 years, especially the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

This report, prepared by GivingWorks, draws on a year of extensive analysis, consultations, and reflection. The report highlights a number of emerging trends in the development environment and aid architecture, presents the assessment findings of the Organizational Review diagnostic, and provides a summary of the consultants’ recommendations and their underlying rationale. While the report has benefited from extensive comments from management, the views expressed here are those of the consultants and not necessarily of UNICEF.
II. EMERGING TRENDS IN DEVELOPMENT AND THE AID ARCHITECTURE

During the diagnostic phase, the Organizational Review highlighted a number of important emerging trends and issues in the broader aid and development environments that may substantially impact UNICEF’s priorities, engagement strategies and business model in the future. These key trends represent not only emerging issues for children and women, but also shifts within the aid architecture and the landscape of development actors.

Looking first at the well-being of children and women, a number of clear trends have emerged which will influence UNICEF’s programmatic priorities over the coming years. The world has seen much progress for children over the past 20 years, including a substantial reduction in the child mortality rates, a significant reduction in the number of deaths from infectious diseases, an increase in the number of children attending school, and a gradual recognition of child rights as a global commitment. There is also a renewed acknowledgment that issues of child health, education and protection are often intertwined, and that relevant solutions need to be articulated at all levels – from international and national policies to the community, to the household and the individual. The Millennium Declaration and the associated Millennium Development Goals have proven to be important expressions of this international consensus.

Other trends are not as encouraging. The need for humanitarian assistance is likely to continue and grow for years to come. Natural disasters have increased in incidence and severity in recent years, and current projections on climate change suggest increases in the number and frequency of extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and adverse impacts on water supplies and crop yields. Armed conflict and conflict-based instability represent a continued area of concern given the prevalence of sectarian violence, terrorism, and religious and ethnic tensions in many parts of the world, including the continued recruitment of youth and child soldiers into rebellion and resistance movements. Even in non-crisis situations, physical security of children and women is a critical concern, evidenced by the recent UN Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Children which highlighted the extent of physical abuse, sexual exploitation, and other rights abuses in the home, school and community. While mortality due to infectious disease continues to decline, injuries are gaining more attention as a cause of children’s deaths in certain parts of the world, particularly in emerging and middle income countries.

Middle Income Countries have grown as a group and have enjoyed a rising international profile in recent years. These countries represent a diverse group that face complex economic, social, cultural, political, and development challenges – and an unfinished social agenda that includes meeting and exceeding the Millennium Development Goals. Inequality remains a critical issue in several countries, as poverty and exclusion from social services tend to be regionally or ethnically concentrated. Many countries must also overcome significant capacity gaps in building transparent and accountable public institutions at the national and sub-national levels. The complexities associated with rapid economic growth, transition from state to market-

1 Number of annual disasters with 10 or more killed or 100 people affected grew from ~250 in the mid-1990’s to nearly 500 in 2004 (International Disasters Database: EM-DAT).
2 The World Bank defines middle-income countries as having a per capita income of between US$1,025 and US$6,055 for fiscal 2007.
based economies, and changes social norms and in young people’s behavior are further straining institutional and service delivery capacities. Furthermore, the drivers of economic growth in many of these countries are weak, and some of these countries are at risk of falling back into low-income status.³

Recent economic growth and private resource inflows have decreased the reliance of these countries on financial support from donors. Instead, they are increasingly interested in access to normative guidance and high-quality technical expertise tailored to their specific needs. Middle Income Countries also play an increasingly important role in the development of other countries, as repositories of extensive experience in what works and what does not, and as contributors to global public goods.⁴ The development context and in particular the issues of children in these countries are significantly different than those in the traditional “programme” countries. This provides UNICEF and its partners the opportunity to develop fresh thinking and more relevant models of engagement.

Disparities continue to widen both within and among countries, with poor, female, ethnic minority, and rural populations disproportionately excluded from coverage of critical social services and the benefits of economic growth.⁵ While the world has made significant progress in alleviating extreme poverty, progress of the world’s poor has lagged behind that of richer population segments, widening income gaps and contributing to instability and political tensions.⁶ Economic disparities and a globalized economy are also stimulating increased migration, with millions of people, including many children, crossing national borders each year. Migration is quickly emerging as a priority issue for the development community as a whole. While many migrants cross borders to escape political instability or to seek economic opportunity, in the process they often risk even deprivation of basic services – particularly if such migrants remain outside of the formal economy and social systems of their destination country.⁷

Demographic shifts present another cause for concern. Bulges in youth populations forecasted for several developing countries (such as Afghanistan, Colombia, Pakistan, and Yemen) will make problems related to youth employment, security, and economic growth increasingly relevant.⁸ Among regions, the youth bulge is a particularly pronounced trend in the Middle East and North Africa. At the same time, the aging of the population in affluent countries, especially in Europe and Japan, may strain these economies and impact ODA policies

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⁵ Exclusion and inequality have been the themes of several landmark studies, including UNICEF’s State of the World’s Children in 2006 and 2007, the World Bank’s 2006 World Development Report on Equity and Development, and the World Bank’s 2004 report “Inequality in Latin America & the Caribbean: Breaking with History?”
⁷ Net migration to Europe and North America more than doubled between the 1960’s and the 1990’s, with the majority coming from Asia and Latin America (World Bank 2006 Development Indicators). The impact of migrant parents and remittances on children who are left behind at home is not adequately understood.
⁸ These countries were highlighted in a 2006 World Bank scenario exercise.
and priorities. A significant aging of the population is also projected for China, raising concerns about dependency ratios and slowed economic growth.9,10

The aid architecture continues to undergo rapid change. Overall, the volume of Official Development Assistance (ODA) has continued to grow over the last decade, with net disbursements increasing from US$58 billion in 1997 to US$105 billion in 2005. Much of the recent growth, however, is comprised of debt relief (which accounted for 70% of the growth in ODA between 2004 and 2005) and responses to high-profile humanitarian crises. In terms of aid priorities, ODA to social sectors has risen significantly from US$6.7 billion (29% of ODA11) in the early 1990s to US$15.7 billion (52%) in the early 2000’s; ODA allocated to infrastructure and production sectors has dropped from US$12.3 billion (59%) to US$11.1 billion (38%) over the same period.12

Bilateral sources continue to predominate aid flows, with multilateral sources accounting for only ~30% of ODA.13 The importance of bilateral aid is likely to get a significant boost with the rise of China as a major donor. For instance, China has just recently pledged to allocate US$20 billion to development aid in Africa over the next 3 years.14 A number of non-traditional donors have also entered the picture, pushing the average number of institutional donors per country up from 12 in the 1960’s to 33 in the early 2000’s. Emerging, non-DAC, government donors have also brought resources to bear, both cash and non-cash, to aid the development of neighboring countries – suggesting an increasing trend toward South-South development cooperation.15 The earmarking of aid resources for specific uses or for special purpose funds and programmes persists as a trend, with almost half of multilateral ODA having some degree of earmarking by sector or theme.16 A large share of bilateral aid is characterized by restrictive covenants, especially around country of origin for products and services.

Capital investments from the private sector are playing an increasingly important role in development. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) generates employment, transfers skills and technology, builds infrastructure, and contributes to the long-term economic development of the world’s developing countries. FDI inflows to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) reached US$11 Billion in 2004, up significantly from US$6 Billion in 2002.17 Remittances from

9 For a discussion of demographic and other key trends, see “Rehearsing for the Future: The World Bank and Development in 2020”
12 Though there is a possibility that the pendulum could swing back to infrastructure in the near future with the IFI’s and some bilateral aid agencies’ increasing focus on infrastructure.
13 OECD-DAC 2005 Statistical Annex
15 A number of new middle income countries in East Asia and Eastern Europe, for example, are setting up their own bilateral aid mechanisms.
migrant workers to their home countries also represent an increasing resource flow for developing countries. According to the Inter-American Development Bank, overseas remittances to Latin America have increased from US$20 billion in 2000 to US$53.6 B in 2006.

Private philanthropists, including high wealth individuals and foundations, are increasingly addressing international development issues. The philanthropic investments and new funding mechanisms introduced by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and others are significantly transforming the international development landscape. This new generation of highly engaged “business-like” private philanthropists is changing not only the resource base for international development, but also of redefining the business model for international aid.\(^{18}\) Innovations are also happening at the micro-level. For example, Kiva.org allows citizens of affluent countries to invest directly in entrepreneurs in the developing world.

As a result of the growing number of donors and channels, fragmented aid priorities, and extensive earmarking, the international development architecture has grown increasingly complex. The degree of complexity has increased transaction costs for donors and recipients, and adversely impacted the effectiveness of aid overall. Growing numbers of small volume aid transactions are taxing and straining the implementation capacity of recipient countries. The development community has responded with a number of new mechanisms and initiatives aimed at driving greater coherence and efficiency among donors, including widely adopted instruments for collaboration (e.g. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, Sector Wide Approaches, Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks, and National Development Plans). The Paris Declaration reaffirmed these shifts, emphasizing the importance of country ownership and donor coordination. While these new instruments and modalities hold potential for greater collaboration, they are also changing the rules and modes of engagement for individual agencies and organizations. The UN itself is also driving toward greater coherence within the UN System. Pilots are underway to test the viability of the “5 Ones” at the country-level.\(^{19}\) There is a considerable interest in articulating approaches to “Delivering as One” that capitalize on the unified presence and voice of the UN system while taking advantage of the distinct capacities and value-added of individual UN agencies.

### III. Findings of Organizational Review Diagnostic

The first phase of the Organizational Review (Org. Review) included an in-depth diagnostic and stocktaking of UNICEF’s status quo. The Org. Review team conducted several rounds of field visits and internal consultations, an extensive review of UNICEF literature, as well as multiple discussions with governments, key development partners, and donors. Throughout the process, the criteria for assessment was that of UNICEF’s performance relative to its own enormous potential and compelling mandate, and not primarily of a comparison with other agencies. In fact, among the development community, UNICEF is widely viewed as a

\(^{18}\) Nazir Ahmad, “Engaging Foundations: A Strategic Perspective.” A white paper prepared for the World Bank’s Department of Global Programs and Partnerships, November 2006. In addition to philanthropic foundations, a few entities like Google.org and the Omidyar Network are challenging the conceptual divide between for-profit and non-profits by focusing on enterprises driving positive social outcomes.

\(^{19}\) The Five Ones are: One Programme, One Leader, One Budgetary Framework, One Office, and One Administrative Management
high-performing organization that has made numerous contributions to the betterment of children and women across the globe. In the past two years, UNICEF has further strengthened its focus on achieving tangible and sustainable outcomes for children, and has placed a greater emphasis on deepening the analytical and evidence base for the policies and interventions it supports or promotes. The senior leadership of UNICEF has also stressed the value of innovative partnerships to achieve tangible results for children, and the desirability of “leading without owning” the children’s agenda.

The Organizational Review diagnostic identified a number of core strengths that will serve as the foundation for change as UNICEF positions itself to drive better results for children over the next 10-15 years. UNICEF’s key assets and performance strengths include the following:

- Normative mandate from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- Rapid and effective response to humanitarian crises
- On-the-ground experience and credibility
- High quality data and tools that are valued by the entire development community (e.g. MICS, DevInfo)
- Excellent examples of programme innovations in the field
- Multiple and growing channels for resource mobilization
- A network of UNICEF National Committees that generates relationships with and resources from committed individuals and the private sector
- Extensive relationships with civil society at both the global and local levels
- Strong brand and public trust
- Convening power
- Access to the highest levels of governments (National and Sub-national)
- Highly committed staff

In addition to these strengths, the Organizational Review also surfaced a number of critical issues with current organizational performance, and particularly its readiness to take advantage of emerging trends and opportunities. Based on input, consultations, and analysis, the Review Team has prioritized the following programme and management challenges as most critical. The recommendations of the Organizational Review have been designed to address these issues.

**Programme Effectiveness**

Expansion and fragmentation of the programme agenda. Over its 60-year existence, the organization has widened its aspirations and mandate, expanded its programmatic focus, and grown its human and financial resources significantly.20 The additive nature of UNICEF’s evolution has led to an agenda today that is quite complex and largely cumulative. While each of these past decisions may have been individually sensible at the time, the underlying rationale for today’s overall programme portfolio is unclear.

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20 The number of staff in UNICEF increased from 1,669 in 1975 to 9,590 in 2006. The income of UNICEF more than quadrupled in less than 20 years from $600M in 1986 to $2.8B in 2005. (SIAR Management Survey of UNICEF 1975, Booz Allen Management Effectiveness Study 1994, HR Database 24 July 2006).
**Insufficient exploitation of cross-sectoral synergies.** The current headquarters programme structure is siloed around traditional sectoral divides with little cross-unit sharing and integration. The lessons of development increasingly suggest that a holistic approach that addresses the multiple determinants of children’s issues in an integrated way is required to drive progress on results. For example, effective and sustainable approaches to reducing infant mortality can include components addressing immunizations, improved water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS transmission prevention, health services infrastructure, and girls education among others.

**Incentives and preoccupation with discrete projects impede focus on advancing systemic change.** UNICEF’s strengths have historically been on the ground, mobilizing and catalyzing large-scale and highly visible action campaigns.\(^2\) However, experience suggests that highly visible campaigns and stand-alone projects by themselves are not sufficient to sustain progress, and need to be complemented by reforms in policies, budget allocations, government capacity building and delivery system improvements. UNICEF’s expanding issue agenda combined with weak prioritization, competing demands from multiple stakeholders, and earmarked funding have led to a proliferation of disconnected projects. The management burden and detailed reporting associated with many small-scale projects has diluted UNICEF’s attention to strengthening its own capacity to drive systemic change in the societies and governments it serves.

**Insufficient segmentation and tailoring of UNICEF’s programmes to country contexts.** A uniform approach to programming fails to adequately address the underlying drivers of children’s issues in individual countries. At the same time, treating each country as entirely unique during country programme planning prevents the capture and sharing of learning among countries with very similar contexts, attributes and challenges.

**Under-investment in intellectual leadership and insufficient focus on where and how to rebuild this capacity.** UNICEF’s institutional capacity to generate new and innovative thinking around children’s issues has not kept adequate pace with the growing need. While a number of individuals at UNICEF make notable intellectual contributions,\(^2\) the formal research agenda has been weakly linked to core organizational priorities. There are insufficient mechanisms for providing adequate guidance, coherence, and quality assurance to the disparate research efforts across the organization. Projects and programs are generally not designed ex ante as “pilots” for learning – and thus do not deliver lessons on effectiveness and scalability. Finally, the demands of with time-consuming transactional processes and administrative compliance – and a culture too heavily weighed towards “doing” instead of “thinking” – result in less than adequate time spent on analysis and reflection.

**Systemic weaknesses in capturing, packaging, and sharing knowledge across the organization.** Throughout the organization considerable knowledge is housed and informally exchanged electronically, but due to a lack of synthesis and quality assurance of the knowledge that is shared, staffs derive inadequate value from it and are often overwhelmed by documents

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\(^2\) A prime example of this is UNICEF’s role in promoting immunization campaigns by mobilizing a large spectrum of government and non-governmental stakeholders.

\(^2\) For example, UNICEF’s contributions to the recent *Lancet* series on child and maternal health and nutrition.
and email. As there is no shared taxonomy to guide those contributing/accessing resources, locating specific expertise is often difficult – especially because much of UNICEF’s expertise is the tacit knowledge of staff. Knowledge sharing networks do exist but are largely informal and built around personal relationships, making it difficult for those outside of the network to locate and access expertise. There are variable quality standards, limited intellectual facilitation of these endeavors, and infrequent evidence-based debate on findings and especially alternative solutions.

**Complexity of the country programme planning and reporting processes hinders harvesting and application of strategic insights.** Even without common disruptions such as emergencies, and changes in government, the “standard” programme planning process is complex and time consuming. Within the typical five-year county planning cycle, Country Offices must complete and submit several planning and reporting documents, including Country Programme Documents, Annual Work Plans, Annual Management Plans, Mid-Term Reviews, Country Office Annual Reports, Donor Reports, and others. The collective burden of these mechanisms takes valuable time away from field visits, client interaction, capacity building, and programme implementation. In addition, the planning process instruments and mechanisms are not designed to facilitate adequate strategic thinking, learning and prioritization in programming.

**Highly variable quality of programme partnerships due to unclear results focus and weak selectivity.** The landscape of children’s organizations has grown more crowded over the last few decades, presenting challenges but also opportunities for greater collaboration and results. In testament to its stature and brand, UNICEF has a wide spectrum of relationships with groups ranging from implementation and advocacy NGOs to private sector companies to athletic associations. At the same time, the 2006 Civil Society Partnership Review and additional analysis by the Organizational Review have pointed to inconsistent approaches in partnerships and an emphasis on procedural aspects at the expense of focusing on results and capacity development aspects of partnerships. Partnership selection and design is not consistently driven by robust analysis of partner capacities and UNICEF’s comparative advantages, and partnerships often lack a clear vision of the intended results or the respective contributions of each partner. To date, UNICEF has not exploited the full potential of partnership opportunities with IFIs or emerging players in the private sector and philanthropic community.

**Management Effectiveness**

**Inadequate clarity and coherence in the distribution of roles and accountabilities within and among different levels of the organization.** Among staff there is confusion about the definition and formal endorsement of the accountabilities of various units and divisions in the organization. Staff members in different locations rely on different documents as the de facto standard for accountabilities (including the 1998 “Organization of UNICEF” and other internal documents). As a result, a number of functional gaps and overlaps persist among different layers of the organization. Furthermore, accountabilities have generally not been linked to adequate and consistent performance management practices.

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23 These have, in turn, contributed to perceptions that UNICEF is not truly collaborative.
Complexity and heaviness of business processes inhibit organizational performance. From a business process perspective, UNICEF is a taxing organization to work in and with. Excessive administrative burdens, redundancy, and complexity contribute negatively to the efficiency and optimal performance of the organization. Insufficient integration among the multiple operational management disciplines (Finance, HR, IT, and others) is one important factor, as business processes and systems have been developed in isolation without sufficient attention to synergies, redundancies, or their cumulative effect on field operations. On the demand side, many staff do not fully understand, or have not been trained or motivated to appropriately use management tools such as ProMS. Furthermore, clear service standards on quality and timeliness of response have not been clearly defined for the key business processes in the organization. Weak or absent service standards make it difficult to enforce accountability and manage for performance.

Another root cause of the excessive procedural burden is the relative absence of risk differentiation within the organization. After several high profile malfeasance incidents in the mid-1990s, UNICEF spent a decade shifting towards an official stance of strict risk avoidance through inspection and multiple verifications rather than through strategic risk management and mitigation through proper oversight, self-assessment, and training and selection of staff. Paradoxically, the layers of approvals and paperwork regulations even on minute transactions not only creates excessive procedural burdens but may also create a false sense of comfort. Most importantly, a preoccupation with administrative procedures crowds out time that would be better spent on programmatic work.

Insufficient focus on professional competencies as the foundation for managing human resources. From a global perspective, the HR systems data do not allow senior management to have a clear organization-wide view of the differentiated functions staff are performing or their levels of competencies and performance. People are classified by post levels, not specific competencies. Standards of required skills for different posts are not sufficiently defined, nor are existing mechanisms effective for assessing the performance of staff relative to those standards. This further limits the organization’s ability to evaluate performance, to optimally deploy and reprofile staff, and to design effective staff development mechanisms.

Gaps in the cycle of strategy, resource mobilization, allocation, and utilization. Due to the complexities and conditionalities associated with UNICEF’s multiple donors and income streams, the mobilization and allocation of resources often does not reflect the stated strategic priorities of the organization. In particular, “upstream” activities such as policy advocacy and capacity building have received less donor interest and have therefore been under-invested in globally. On the implementation side, a number of bottlenecks, including strict donor demands and the time and task requirements associated with processing many small, project-based transactions, often delay effective and timely resource deployment. To some extent, this imbalance is also caused by poor design of fund solicitations.

24 Many risk management experts now understand that a proliferation of transactions and procedures itself can be a source of added risk.

25 A preliminary analysis of these bottlenecks have produced some practical recommendations that are being reviewed by management.
Weaknesses of internal communications. The lack of a corporate-wide function for internal communications has led to a fragmentation of efforts and some disconnect of messaging among the various levels of the organization. While UNICEF has invested in technological solutions and systems for internal communication, they do not compensate for the lack of a clear communication strategy and a dedicated capacity to coordinate and guide internal communications. From a process perspective, UNICEF places great emphasis on participation in its internal communications, but the nature, purpose, costs, and expected outcomes of such participation are rarely well-defined. As a result, internal dialogue and decision-making can be slow, overly process driven, and often fail to produce clear decisions and commitments. This can also be costly due to the travel and time demands of obligatory face-to-face meetings. Inadequate attention has been given to the utilization of new distance learning and communications technologies that can help a global organization communicate and dialogue more effectively. There is a need to redefine internal communication protocols such that cost-benefits tradeoffs are explicit and participation is more clearly linked to better decision-making and heightened performance.

Cultural disincentives to change and heightened performance. In general, UNICEF staff stand out in their passion and commitment to the cause of children, and many staff work long hours and sometimes under risky conditions. While UNICEF is widely known and admired for its commitment to children and “can do” attitude, this sometimes translates to doing everything itself rather than working in collaboration with partners and devolving responsibilities to them. UNICEF staff tend to value action and activity over reflection and learning. As a result, they often try to tackle a full gamut of children’s issues rather than being appropriately strategic and selective in their programmatic engagement.

UNICEF, like many of its peers, has not paid sufficient attention to cost efficiency and performance as guiding cultural norms. Cost/benefit tradeoffs, an explicit consideration of future scenarios and options, and a managerial focus on results – not just inputs – have not been sufficiently infused into the organizational culture and lexicon. Both the Organizational Review and the Strategic Review of Human Resources have independently observed that there is a deep-seated cultural unwillingness to confront and discipline poor performers or to develop the evidence base that could allow for tough management choices.

IV. STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES FOR UNICEF

The realization of children’s rights as defined in the CRC remains at the heart of UNICEF’s mandate for children. This mission compels the organization to work toward the protection of children’s rights, the provision of basic services, and opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF continues to focus on children in emergencies, on the most disadvantaged and marginalized children, as well as the equal rights and full participation of women and girls. Given its standing with governments and the respect it receives from the public in many countries, UNICEF is in a particularly advantageous position to bring together governments, civil society, and increasingly the private sector to build a strengthened compact for children. While revalidating the core principles of UNICEF’s mandate and its fundamental
vision for children, the Organizational Review has focused its attention on the strategies and interventions that the organization undertakes to advance these goals – and how UNICEF’s engagement might be improved to achieve the best and most sustainable results for children. By steadily bridging the gap between its aspirations and its performance, UNICEF can improve as an exemplary rights-based and results-focused global organization.

Given these aspirations, the diagnostic phase of the Organizational Review identified a number of strategic imperatives for UNICEF. These include better positioning UNICEF to:

- Be a **partner of choice** across the whole spectrum of organizations (Public Sector, Private Sector, Civil Society) that have the potential to drive positive change for children.
- Be a **global, authoritative, and independent voice for children**. As a neutral, intergovernmental organization, UNICEF is in the unique position to speak freely on behalf of children, wherever they are and whatever their circumstances.
- Be a **global knowledge broker of choice for expertise on children**. With a global mandate for children and its rich data and experience base, UNICEF is well positioned to provide an intellectual framework and synthesis of knowledge around children’s issues.
- Be a **catalyst for innovations that benefit children**. UNICEF has an opportunity to support and shape the development of potentially “game changing” products, technology, and programming approaches.
- Be more **holistic and integrated in monitoring and diagnostics but targeted in programming**. UNICEF has a mandate, as steward of the CRC, to monitor the well being of all children globally – but decisions on what type of programming to engage in should be based on analysis of UNICEF’s comparative advantage as well as the availability and strengths of partner organizations.
- Be more focused on **advancing systemic change** for children. UNICEF’s core role, as the UN Agency for children, is advancing solutions for children that can be implemented at scale for the greatest number of children.
- Be more **flexible and adaptive** to an increasingly dynamic world. As the pace of change in the external environment accelerates, UNICEF should place greater emphasis on scanning the external environment and building the organizational capacity to more nimbly adapt.
- Improve **organizational coherence** among its various units and divisions. The challenges of development increasingly require integrative and multi-disciplinary thinking and solutions, which will be realized through much more networked, rather than siloed, internal structures and systems.
- Utilize **performance management systems at both the individual and departmental levels**, and utilize these tools to inform decision-making.
- Pay **greater attention to cost effectiveness and establish cost-effectiveness targets**. UNICEF is a steward of public resources and should place explicit emphasis on cost-benefit analysis of its financial and human resource investment and spending.
- Be **more efficient and nimble in its business processes**.
- **Proactively manage, rather than avoid, risk.**
Part Two: Organizational Review Recommendations

The recommendations of the Organizational Review were developed to help UNICEF deliver on these strategic imperatives, against the background of UNICEF’s vision and mission and the evolving context of UN coherence.

V. CONTEXT: SHAPE UN COHERENCE TO ENSURE DELIVERY OF RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

“The world needs a coherent and strong multilateral framework with the UN at the centre to meet the challenges of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment in a globalizing world.”26 The UN’s universal values and representative nature provide the political legitimacy to act on the national, regional, and global arenas. If the UN can combine this credibility with coordinated capabilities in thorough analysis, operational know-how, and advocacy to act coherently, flexibly, and responsibly, the UN can play a critical leadership role in mobilizing the development community to drive progress on internationally agreed goals, including the MDGs. Unfortunately, the UN system is currently hindered by fragmentation, duplication, and operational incoherence, which burden donor and recipient governments and undermine the efforts of agencies at country level.

Ongoing progress towards UN Coherence represents a shift for UNICEF, changing the mode of doing business at the country, regional, and global levels. As one of the UN’s largest operational agencies with a long record of on the ground experience and credibility, UNICEF brings valuable perspective and insights to the coherence process and therefore should play a more energetic leadership role. It is critical that UNICEF helps shape the UN Coherence process to ensure that as the system moves toward a harmonized agenda and programme, children and women remain a top priority. The “One UN” should enable UNICEF and the broader UN to better deliver on the children’s mandate. For this vision to be successful, UNICEF needs to continue to build its capacity and ability to produce results for children in partnership with others while maintaining its distinctive standing and independent voice.

While the dialogue and direction of what is meant by UN coherence continues to evolve, eight formally designated country pilots are currently underway in addition to a number of other country-based, regional and sub-regional efforts. If properly evaluated, these initial experiences should produce clear insights on what works and what does not – and under what conditions. Ultimately, the UN will be judged by the world’s public not on its organizational structure and internal arrangements but rather on its collective capacity to produce meaningful results on the ground.

The Organizational Review has recommended that UNICEF should continue to sharpen its focus on UN Coherence and invest in building internal capacity to be a proactive leader and valued partner to the wider UN family. In late 2006, the agency created a UN Strategy & Coherence Team (initially located in the Office of the Executive Director) to lead these efforts. This team is helping to bring clarity to UNICEF’s positions on the so-called “5 Ones” and the

26 “Delivering as One.” Report of the Secretary General’s High Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence; 9 November 2006; Page 8
broader UN reform agenda as well as greater coherence to UNICEF’s interaction with other agencies and inter-agency coordination mechanisms. This small team is leading UNICEF’s participation in and contribution to the different CEB/UNDG working groups, will monitor field implementation of the One UN pilots, and provide support and guidance to COs/ROs on UN Coherence issues. The team is also expected to bring together cutting-edge thinking on how UNICEF can most effectively partner with the broad UN family (including but not limited to the ExCom agencies) to best fulfill the needs and promise of children and youth.

UN Coherence is among the most important environmental factors and strategic drivers shaping the recommendations of the Organizational Review. The recommendations can be grouped into five key shifts that summarize the major directions of the change agenda.

Recommended Shifts:

1. Sharpen Programme Focus, Formulation & Strategy
2. Realign Structures and Systems to Deliver Quality Results
3. Position UNICEF as a Global Knowledge Leader for Children
4. Enhance Partnerships for Resources and Results
5. Manage for Performance

VI. SHARPEN PROGRAMME FOCUS, FORMULATION AND STRATEGY

The first major shift for the organization is to **Sharpen Programme Focus, Formulation and Strategy**. Going forward the organization must create greater strategic coherence and knowledge sharing among its many, geographically distributed locations to capitalize on the global nature and influence of the organization. However, given the increasing heterogeneity of countries within regions, UNICEF’s traditional geographic groupings by themselves are becoming less useful in providing opportunities for sharing and cross-fertilization among countries.

To capitalize on these opportunities, **UNICEF should develop a country segmentation as a tool for strategic thinking, programme design, and continued learning**. Under the proposed segmentation approach, countries are classified into groups based on key similarities (see diagram below for an initial typology of countries), and indicative programme strategies are developed for each segment based on the archetypal country context. These segments are purposefully not defined around a single dimension, such as income, as evidence suggests that children’s issues depend on several elements. The strategies provide a baseline for the design of the appropriate form of UNICEF engagement and programme mix, and indicate the staff competencies and the nature of technical support required to deliver on the strategy.

An initial experiment at issue-based segmentation was undertaken in conjunction with the November 2006 All-Africa Meeting of Representatives, showing good promise. Such issue-based differentiation is an important building block for a corporate-wide country segmentation.

Similarities to be considered in the development of segments include factors such as key indicators for children, government capacity, political stability, civil society capacity, GDP, cultural norms, susceptibility to natural disasters, and endemic health challenges.
Implicit in the concept of segmented programme strategies is the idea that the nature and type of issues for women and children change as countries progress in their development. For countries enduring a crisis or beginning recovery, basic survival needs, including health, nutrition, water, sanitation, and physical safety, predominate. As countries progress, these basic needs are met for larger and larger portions of the population. UNICEF should continue to focus on the basic needs of marginalized and excluded groups who have not benefited from the progress, but should also shift greater focus beyond basic survival to other aspects of human development, including education, child protection. The graphic that follows presents an illustrative view of the changing relative focus on each of UNICEF’s traditional sectors from one segment to the next.

**Shifting Issue focus (illustrative)**

- In Distress
  - Protection
  - Education
  - WES
  - Nutrition
  - Health
  - HIV/AIDS

- Vulnerable
  - Protection
  - Education
  - WES
  - Nutrition
  - Health
  - HIV/AIDS

- Emerging
  - Protection
  - Education
  - WES
  - Nutrition
  - Health
  - HIV/AIDS

- BRIC+
  - Protection
  - Education
  - WES
  - Nutrition
  - Health
  - HIV/AIDS

- Stable
  - Protection
  - Education
  - WES
  - Nutrition
  - Health
  - HIV/AIDS
While Country Offices retain flexibility to adapt these baseline strategies, as informed by the Situation Analysis, to the unique needs of their countries, the indicative segment strategy provides a relevant starting point, which is informed by UNICEF’s experience in other countries with similar needs. A recent meeting of UNICEF Representatives in conflict-ridden countries from three different UNICEF regions underscored the power and potential of learning from similar contexts even if in different geographies. On a different part of the continuum, countries like Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, from different UNICEF regions, but sharing attributes such as large population, economic strength and international influence, present an opportunity for shared thinking around programming approaches and models of engagement on children’s issues in their own countries and beyond.

The mix of interventions that UNICEF employs to drive progress on these issues should also vary by segment. The graphic below presents a conceptual and illustrative view of how UNICEF’s five core categories of intervention (Service Delivery, Capacity Building, Advocacy, Monitoring & Assessment, and Resource Mobilization) should shift in relative importance for the various segments. For the less developed countries on the left side of the segmentation, service delivery activities, including the delivery of supplies and the design and management of pilot projects should be a core focus of the country programme to ensure that children have access to critical social services and supplies to meet basic needs. As countries develop, government and civil society institutions and systems increasingly procure and deliver critical supplies and services, but rely on UNICEF to provide expertise, knowledge and training to build national capacity to manage and scale up coverage of sustainable systems. The mix and locus of capacity building assistance among multiple levels of government and civil society organizations should depend on the effectiveness, credibility and responsiveness of governments in different settings.

![Changing Intervention Mix (Illustrative)](image-url)
Similarly, as UNICEF’s direct involvement in service delivery scales down, advocacy activities should also grow in importance. UNICEF should focus on promoting behavior and social change and, in settings with stable governments, advocate for critical policy changes affecting children. A core focus of UNICEF’s engagement in affluent countries is and should remain resource mobilization. However, UNICEF also has a key role to play in advocating for in-country policy changes as well as changes to affluent countries’ policies on international aid and development. With its normative mandate from the CRC, UNICEF has an obligation to monitor the situation of children and women everywhere. Accordingly, UNICEF should play a role in scanning, monitoring, assessing, and disseminating knowledge across all segments. In many middle income and affluent countries, however, many of these roles could be undertaken in partnership with reputable partners on the ground.

In addition to the changing substantive issue focus and intervention mix of the organization, the level of UNICEF’s engagement with counterparts also varies by country context. As UNICEF transitions towards advancing systemic change and away from managing many small projects, “upstream” activities such as policy, advocacy, and capacity building at the national level will grow in importance. However, systemic change is not synonymous with upstream engagement. Rather, advancing systemic change requires selective engagement with various levels of programme countries (National, Sub-National, Local/Community) based on the locus of key constraints and bottlenecks to the implementation of scalable and sustainable solutions for children. Due to its widespread presence, on the ground knowledge, its status as the UN Agency for Children, and access to governments, UNICEF is well-positioned to make valuable contributions at each of these levels. An effective transition to advancing systemic change will most likely require changes to UNICEF’s staffing profile. The right “triggers” for systemic change will vary country to country, driven by the underlying country context and the stage of a country’s development. The graphic below provides examples of UNICEF engagement and positioning at each level.

Finding the right triggers for systemic change is critical

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29 The 2006-2009 Medium Term Strategic Plan also positions the policy domain as an important area of UNICEF’s work
Building on these concepts and to provide further strategic guidance to the field, it is recommended that the segment strategies should develop and cost alternative typologies of presence in and effective engagement with countries. These typologies should provide various approaches for working with governments as well as different staffing and structural models for UNICEF presence, including a costing of various alternatives and an assessment of which models work most effectively in which country contexts. Typologies would be especially valuable for Middle Income and Affluent Countries where UNICEF’s traditional Country Office model is less appropriate and more innovative thinking around presence and engagement is required. As an example, the graphic below illustrates a few alternative models of UNICEF presence and engagement with Middle Income Countries.

The need for strategic options around UNICEF’s role and engagement in Middle Income Countries is becoming increasingly critical, as a number of programme countries are rapidly approaching currently accepted “graduation” criteria. Based on UNICEF Executive Board approved regular resource allocation policies, about 30 of UNICEF’s programme countries have already reached the income per capita and child mortality thresholds. Additionally, based on projections, another 23 UNICEF programme countries are expected to lower mortality rates below the threshold by 2015.

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30 According to the 1997 policy, Regular Resources are to be phased out to countries that reach a GNI per capita of US$ 2,895 and a child mortality rate of below 30.
31 Income per capita, the second threshold for graduation, is difficult to forecast with any accuracy beyond three years.
Looking to the future and given the changes, a rigid formulaic approach to graduation (which implies an “on or off” approach to UNICEF’s involvement in a country) may miss important dimensions of child rights and wellbeing in countries that have exceeded the basic thresholds of per capita income and child mortality.\(^{32}\) The question is less whether UNICEF should be engaged in middle income and affluent countries and more on the nature of this engagement. Increasingly, UNICEF is being sought out to provide both technical and normative advice to Middle Income Countries. Additional analysis should be completed as part of the development of the broader segmentation to define UNICEF’s role and value-added in MICs and implications for resource allocation priorities. An ongoing staff working group on this issue has initially identified a menu of potential roles for UNICEF in MICs, including:\(^{33}\)

- Monitoring, analyzing, and researching the situation of children
- Monitoring of progress and compliance with international norms
- Supporting the CRC reporting process, and reporting on MDG progress
- Advocacy to address persistent disparities and to promote the universality of children’s rights
- Advocating for government policies, budgets and programmes that benefit children
- Providing specialized technical expertise, and helping turn commitments into plans
- Mobilizing financial, human, material, informational, and political resources
- Mobilizing partnerships, including engaging the private sector in actions for children
- Convening actors to promote dialogue and action around children’s issues
- Encouraging South-South knowledge transfer to other developing countries

After the segmentation methodology has been initially validated and refined, the development of the baseline strategies for the various segments should be anchored in the experience of a set of representative countries. Ultimately, the segmentation approach should also influence the development of planning processes, implementation modalities, knowledge sharing, and the provision of technical support adapted to countries. For example, application of certain internal business processes should be tailored to the challenges faced by country offices in different settings. The initial set of representative countries for each segment would help in testing the validity of the indicative strategies and in adapting processes prior to rolling out the segmentation globally.

Another key element of sharpening programme focus, formulation and strategy is the development of a lighter and more strategic country programme planning process. The Organizational Review, through consultations with country and regional offices, raised several issues with the current process, including the uneven quality of Country Programme Documents, the short-term emphasis of the planning horizon, the operational rather than strategic focus of plan content, and the lack of systematic attention to key in-country risks. Additionally, the plans often reflect weak prioritization among outcomes and an emphasis on managing against inputs and outputs as opposed to results. As illustrated in the graphic on the next page, the burden of multiple planning instruments and mechanisms, as well as poor harmonization of cycle timing

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\(^{32}\) Other institutions, such as the World Bank, are also advocating continued engagement with Middle Income Countries, given the disparities, vulnerabilities, and social dislocations associated with their economic transitions.

With resource allocations, National Development Plans, and other agencies add undue complexity and dilute focus on fieldwork, client interaction, and programme implementation. UNICEF’s multiple budget systems (Support Budget, Regular Resources, Other Resources) further complicate the process, as country offices must set their strategies upfront even though Other Resources, often a significant share of a country’s total resources, are highly variable and difficult to forecast. And finally, as many staff have made clear, the current planning requirements are extremely time intensive and place more emphasis on the process compliance than on the strategic content of the programme being planned.

In addition to UNICEF’s internal planning process requirements, Country Offices also contribute to the collaborative UNDAF process. The UNDAF is critical to building a coherent plan of engagement and leveraging the unique capacities of multiple agencies at the country level, but also adds substantial time and administrative burdens on CO staff. Joint planning and programming mechanisms will require reduced transaction costs in order for the UN System to efficiently and effectively deliver as one.34

The tools and templates for a refined planning process will have to be further developed, but the Organizational Review has outlined some key directional improvements. The four

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34 The risk of process proliferation and high coordination costs associated with UN Reform was one of the most cited fears by UNICEF and other partners in our field interviews.
directional improvements directly below complement a number of specific recommended changes, which are described in greater detail further below.

- Transition to a rolling plan that emphasizes an efficient annual stocktaking of lessons learned and provides for adaptation and continuity rather than reinvents the country programmes every 3-5 years
- Allow for greater flexibility in the use of core resources (Support Budget & Regular Resources) to enable tailoring of UNICEF’s presence and engagement to diverse country contexts
- Encourage a longer-term perspective in planning to drive awareness of emerging trends and risks and build readiness for discontinuous change
- Place greater emphasis on strategic intent and rationale rather than procedural compliance

Specifically, UNICEF should revitalize the Situation Analysis of Children (SITAN) as the foundation of its strategic thinking and advocacy. If UNICEF is to deliver on its mandate of the achievement of children’s rights, the SITAN methodology should be redesigned to be a more robust and strategic analysis with a prioritized view of children’s and women’s issues, and a frank assessment of the underlying constraints to progress. UNICEF’s contribution of the Situation Analysis, distinct from but contributing to the UN Common Country Assessment, can inform the national development plans and be valuable input to the development of the UNDAF, as well as an authoritative resource for the entire development community.35 A high quality SITAN should help ensure that children’s issues remain at the top of the country’s and the donors’ agendas.

The revamped country planning process should incorporate a scenario approach to facilitate a longer-term planning horizon and an explicit emphasis on risk analysis.36 Country Offices could use scenario tools to consider both plausible and possible changes over a 10-15 year period and to think through the implications of these changes for children and for UNICEF strategies. In formulating programme strategy, Country Offices should also pay explicit attention to UNICEF’s comparative advantages in-country and perform an analytical assessment of potential partner capacities. This approach ensures that Country Offices are selective and strategic in their engagement and that UNICEF relies on its broad network of partners when they are better positioned to deliver results.

Country offices confront considerable funding uncertainties when they plan, and the Organizational Review recommends a two-pronged approach. First, the donor countries should increase the predictability of core programme funding by increasing the proportion of allocations

35 Several non-UNICEF experts we interviewed indicated that this would be a valuable contribution that UNICEF is uniquely positioned to make.
36 As part of the Organizational Review, GivingWorks in collaboration with the World Bank led two scenario workshops for senior and recently-recruited UNICEF staff which stimulated some fresh thinking about the political, social, economic, technological, environmental and demographic factors and “wild cards” that could influence the condition of women and children in the coming decades. An interactive scenarios page on the Review 360 site was the most popular destination on the intranet – suggesting a large latent appetite on the part of staff to explore creative possibilities about the future.
to Regular Resources and designated thematic funds.\(^{37}\) Second, the proposed planning process is intended to encourage the design of distinct *country programme strategies that are tailored to different levels of incremental funding*. For example, a Country Office would first define its basic portfolio on the assumption that it would operate only on “core” resources (SB & RR), listing priorities and expected results achievable with only those resources. This “core” portfolio would be accompanied by additional portfolios that assume varying levels of Other Resources (OR) funding in addition to core resources, with potentially different priorities and engagement plans. Even a high-level articulation of what would be desirable and feasible at different resource levels will enable country offices to assess the relative benefits to children of differing levels and types of investment and programme engagement, and to better prepare for whatever level of resources ultimately become available.\(^{38}\)

In order to capture programme knowledge in a thorough and systematic way, programmes in the future should be planned with benchmarks for evaluation. From the beginning of the design stage, *programmes should include clear and testable hypotheses, an explicit learning agenda, and evaluation measures*.

The graphic below summarizes the proposed changes to the programme planning process. Despite the additional components, through the use of streamlined tools and templates the planning process overall can be both less burdensome and more strategic. On the recommendation of the Organizational Review, the 2008-2009 Country Programme Management Plan (CPMP) Guidelines have already been streamlined to lighten the burden on Country Offices and to focus on strategic content.\(^{39}\)

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37 Increasing in the predictability of core resources has been supported by a number of donor countries. The High Level Panel on System Coherence stated, “The exponential growth of extra-budgetary (non-core) versus core resources has encouraged supply-driven rather than demand-driven approaches to assistance, undermining the principle of country ownership.”

38 It is, however, important that the planning for three scenarios does not lead to three detailed proposals. The purpose of this exercise is to aid the thinking and to stimulate consideration of different programme design and investment approaches.

39 Based on the recommendations of the Organizational Review, comparable streamlining of the Office Management Plan guidelines for HQ and Regional Offices has also been implemented.
Over the past year, the rotation and assignment of Representatives has been made much more systematic and deliberative. Building on these process improvements, UNICEF should also address the continuity and consistency of programme leadership. Country Representatives, where the majority of strategic oversight and decision-making authority at country level is concentrated, are often rotated to different duty stations mid-stream in the programme implementation cycle. Succeeding Representatives may reprioritize and substantially restructure the work programme, causing significant disruptions and impeding delivery of results. Going forward, the timing of rotations of senior country office personnel (Representative, Deputy Representatives, Operations Officers) should be more closely tied to appropriate milestones in the country planning cycle. Additionally, key management roles (e.g. relationships with key partners and counterparts, programme leadership responsibilities) should be more widely shared beyond the Representative with other members of the Country Management Team to promote continuity during senior staff changes. Regional Offices should also be more proactively involved in ensuring effective transitions at country level.

VI. REALIGN STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS TO DELIVER RESULTS

The next set of shifts is designed to Realign Structures and Systems to Deliver Results. Restructuring efforts should focus on improving service and support to Country Offices as well as realigning internally to more effectively focus attention on achieving results for children. It is important to caution that these recommended structural changes are not intended as stand-alone actions, but will only succeed if accompanied by business processes and managerial commitments that also support the heightened results expectations. In designing these structural proposals, the Organizational Review team has focused on two aspects of the organization. First, what specific functions should be clustered in order to avoid overlaps and to best capture synergies? Second, what management mechanisms and accountabilities can help build a more coherent UNICEF?

Programme Functions

The first element of change is the proposed realignment of programme-related functions in headquarters around outcomes and key expertise areas. The Organizational Review diagnostics identified several issues with the current structure of the programme-related functions in UNICEF. Rigid sectoral silos within the Programme Division, as well as insufficient linkages between PD, EMOPs, IRC and the Supply Division, have led to considerable fragmentation of efforts and a lack of integrated thinking about solutions for children. Unclear accountabilities between Programme Division and the Division of Policy and Planning in critical areas such as programme and policy guidance, environmental scanning and trend analysis, and the sharing of best practices and knowledge have inhibited the effectiveness of global leadership and the provision of support to Country Offices. To address this, the Programme Group should be reconfigured to address some of the structural impediments to performance and reduce overlaps and disconnects.

40 The Organizational Review team has proposed a number of structural alternatives for key functions which are being reviewed by management and informing the design of Support Budget submissions.
The proposed reorientation of the key programme functions currently carried out by Programme Division, the Division of Policy and Planning (DPP), and the Innocenti Research Center (IRC) is conceptually depicted in the graphic below. New linkages should also be developed among Programmes, Emergency Operations (EMOPS), and the Supply Division (SD).

The Organizational Review recommends that the individual sectoral expertise areas currently in Programme Division should be clustered in support of the following four strategic outcomes for children:

- **Survival, Growth & Development** – To combine expertise in Child and Maternal Health, Nutrition, and Water & Sanitation to drive progress on Child Survival and Infant Development Goals
- **Quality Education & Gender Equality** – To integrate expertise on Primary and Secondary Formal Education, Early Learning, and Life Skills to extend the focus beyond education access and attendance to include learning achievement. 41
- **Child Protection** – To bring strategic clarity and coherence to the multiple issues and aspects of a protective environment for children (e.g. physical safety, social protection, cultural practices)
- **HIV/AIDS** – To cover Pediatric Treatment, PMTCT, Adolescent Prevention, and Children Affected by AIDS. It is recommended that this unit be structured as cross-cutting due to obvious linkages with the other three outcome areas.

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41 Pritchett, Filmer and Hasan have recently shown evidence that even in countries which are fulfilling the MDGs the vast majority of children not only do not learn what is necessary for successful employment in the competitive, globalized economy but do not even achieve a minimum competency level (“A Millennium Learning Goal Measuring Real Progress in Education,” Center for Global Development, 2006). This added focus on learning outcomes is consistent with the vision of the Millennium Declaration.
The goal of the outcome clusters is to promote greater integration, synergy, and mutual learning among the various sectoral expertise areas. In each outcome cluster, planning and strategic thinking should be done at the broader outcome level to ensure that sectoral interventions prioritize bottlenecks to achieving outcomes – and leverage opportunities presented by related sectors. According to this proposal, staff in outcome areas would perform the following critical global functions:

- Global technical leadership and strategic guidance on achieving outcomes
- Development of programme policies & standards
- Analysis of progress on global outcomes
- Scanning of external environment for emerging knowledge and innovation
- Relationship building with external centers of sectoral expertise
- Vetting and integration of UNICEF intellectual capital (staff and consultants)
- Global representation at technical fora
- Management of global programmatic partnerships (guided by the overall partnership framework)

Another key recommendation of the Organizational Review is the establishment of cross-cutting Policy and Practice teams, which embody the global expertise in the various strategic interventions that UNICEF employs to achieve results for children. While the Outcome Areas described above are built around sector-specific technical expertise (the what), the Practice areas should instead focus on how the organization promotes and brings about change. These include:

- Social & Economic Policy Analysis
- Policy Advocacy
- Gender & Rights
- Youth & Adolescent Development & Empowerment
- Behaviour & Social Change
- Capacity Development

Although the exact responsibilities of each area could vary, each of these cross-cutting Practice Areas should all generally have four functions. The first is to develop and refine UNICEF’s analytical methodologies on the practices and disciplines of the particular cross-cutting area. Second, they would serve as a resource for sector specialists as they develop frameworks, implement modalities, and synthesize best practices. They would also develop toolkits and training resources in their practice area and adapt them as needed for use by multiple technical sectors and in various country contexts. Finally, they would be accountable for monitoring and disseminating emerging trends and best practices in their areas of expertise.

Given the proliferation and complexity of policy and process instructions, the consultants recommend the establishment of a single Programme Policy & Planning Guidance Unit to bring greater coherence to the wide array of policies and guidance emanating from all parts of headquarters to the field. This unit should serve as a “clearinghouse” for all policies (programmatic and operational) in order to give field offices a comprehensive view of current requirements and guidelines. In turn, it should also gather and analyze feedback from the field to

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42 For instance, the Program, Policy, and Procedure Manual, revised in 2007, is 314 pages.
headquarters divisions on the practicality and cost effectiveness of new policies. One of the first tasks of this proposed unit should be to conduct a “zero-based” review of the full set of programme and administrative policies and only retain those whose rationale is compelling.

The Knowledge and Research functions are discussed in greater detail within the next strategic shift, “Position UNICEF as a Global Knowledge Leader for Children.” Both of these functions should be given greater priority and investment. To be successful, Knowledge and Research require extensive collaboration and integration with one another, the Outcome Areas, and the cross-cutting Policy and Practice Areas. In addition, the Organizational Review has recommended that far greater emphasis be placed on designing programs for evaluability, and this global expertise should be embedded either in the knowledge function or in the programme guidance function. It is impossible to verify the attainment of results unless proper baselines and benchmarks are established ex ante. Evaluation is also a rich source of knowledge that needs to be rendered user-friendly and contribute to the active knowledge-base of the organization and of the development community at large.

UNICEF should also pursue non-structural approaches to strengthen coordination and integration between the Programme teams and two of the key field implementation groups, EMOPS and Supply Division. At a time when demand for emergency response capacity is continually increasing, effective humanitarian response needs to become an organization-wide responsibility. Accordingly, the technical capacity for humanitarian response should exist within each of the Outcome Areas to fulfill the Core Commitments for Children (CCC) and other commitments to the humanitarian reform agenda, specifically the IASC cluster approach. While a separate humanitarian response unit may not be required within the Programme Group, each of the Outcome Areas should be accountable for developing, infusing, and retaining dedicated technical capacity for humanitarian response. Post-crisis recovery and transition is a particular area where UNICEF needs to deepen expertise internally and embed it into programming. Specialist expertise in this important area should be expanded within EMOPS and should work closely and collaboratively with the Programme Group. Like the Outcome Areas, each of the Practice Areas and Knowledge Areas should also systematically include the development of strategies and tools for humanitarian and post-crisis recovery in collaboration with EMOPS. As part of the realignment of Programme Group, responsibility for a number of programmatic functions currently in EMOPS, including Small Arms and Landmines, should be shifted to the Child Protection Outcome Area in the Programme Group.

The Programme function and the Supply function should also collaborate more effectively to ensure the optimal role of supplies in achievement of programme outcomes. Better integration will ensure that a strategic view of programme needs are defined and incorporated in supply chain planning and that design of programmes address in-country distribution bottlenecks and ultimately, outcomes for end-users. The two groups should also work together in scanning for emerging products and technologies that have potentially significant benefits for children and then facilitating the market development and adoption of the most promising and innovative products.43 For example, UNICEF could play a role in advancing product innovations such as

43 Increasingly, it is recognized that there is in fact a market for low cost, high impact products. This line of thinking was initially sparked by C K Prahalad and Allen Hammond’s article “Serving the World’s Poor, Profitably” in the Harvard Business Review.
new learning technologies for schools, new vaccine delivery systems, therapeutic foods, improved cold chains, and water chlorination technologies. A more detailed discussion of UNICEF’s potential role in promoting innovation is presented in the section on knowledge leadership.

In addition to a greater focus on product innovation and integration with programmes, the supply function should also pursue other opportunities to enhance both its impact and efficiency. Building on the recommendations of the 2006 evaluation of the Supply Function, the range of supplies currently made available through the Supply Division should be substantially reduced. The supply function should narrow its focus to strategic and essential supplies, and enter into partnership agreements with third party providers to procure non-standard, supporting supplies. For instance, UNICEF’s direct role in the procurement, quality assurance and supply of products such as vaccines, anti-malarials, HIV testing kits, and pediatric ARVs is entirely appropriate because these products are both essential to children and these critical needs are not currently being met by the market on its own. It is not evident, however, that UNICEF needs to participate in the supply chain of vehicles or office supplies – which can be outsourced to other procurement facilities. With a more manageable span of inventory, the supply function can continue to excel in quality assurance and make more efficient delivery of strategic, essential supplies for children. The Supply Division should also take steps to improve the overall cost and performance efficiency of its supply chain. Potential approaches include redefining key performance indicators to focus management attention, leveraging external technical expertise (e.g. a DHL for logistics), and increasing the use of distributed and virtual supply chains (e.g. supply hubs strategically located around the globe; contracts with local vendors in programme countries).

Revitalizing the Regional Offices:

A key set of proposed structural realignments focus on the Regional Office. Although their accountabilities have expanded and evolved over time, Regional Offices were initially intended principally to give UNICEF a management, oversight, and support capacity that would be closer to the field locations. Historically, Regional Offices have been expected to serve three core functions: 1) Oversight and quality assurance of Country Programmes, including supervision of Country Representatives; 2) Technical and operations support to Country Offices as they design and implement programmes; 3) Management of region-wide programmes that address cross-border and/or multi-country issues. Regional Offices now also assume the additional and demanding role of coordination and management of ongoing efforts around UN Coherence. Through a series of consultations with staff in Regional and Country Offices, the Organizational Review highlighted two critical issues with current Regional Office performance: Insufficient Programme Oversight, Quality Assurance and Monitoring. As the accountabilities and size of ROs have grown over time, the management burden on Regional Offices has

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44 In the same vein, there is probably no need for other UN agencies to be in the business of supplying insecticide treated bednets, vaccines, or “school-in-a-box” kits.

45 The pharmaceuticals quality assurance functions of the UNICEF Supply Division are highly respected in the industry.
increased considerably. The time and attention required to oversee and manage the broad range of RO roles listed above have diluted the focus on country programme monitoring, oversight and quality assurance.

*Uneven Quality of Regional Technical Support.* The capacity of advisors and, therefore, the quality of support delivered is highly uneven, itself a reflection of weak human resource planning and performance management. The provision of support is too often “supply-led” by the availability of advisors in the Regional Offices rather than initiated in response to an expressed need from Country Offices. Technical support is frequently “silhoed” according to geographic regions, limiting cross-regional fertilization of ideas and access to global expertise. The definition of roles between regional advisors and technical experts in HQ Programme Division is generally not clear or well understood, leading to gaps and overlaps in the provision of technical assistance and poor linkages between programme technical leadership in New York and advisory capacity in the field.

While some individuals persist in advocating strict geographic accountabilities for technical assistance, the experience leading up to UNICEF’s 2006 All Africa Meeting and its follow-up suggests the high value of drawing upon the expertise distributed across the organization. In the changing aid architecture, arguably UNICEF’s most valuable contribution to governments and other partners is its global knowledge and local know-how. This will be even more critical as UNICEF evolves from a primarily project-based organization to one focused on systemic change and leveraging the resources and efforts of others. Given the high stakes and the fact that many programme countries have also enhanced their own skills profile, the minimum quality benchmarks for internationally provided technical assistance are also much higher.\(^{46}\) To meet these imperatives, **UNICEF should urgently retool and modernize its capacities for technical assistance.**

The nature of knowledge and technical collaboration is changing rapidly and UNICEF has the opportunity to embrace these new possibilities. Technological advances have enabled global connectivity and access to widespread sources of expertise. Continued growth in virtual communications is enabling alternatives to costly and travel intensive face-to-face meetings. At the same time, advanced tools and functionality for knowledge sharing, including online collaboration tools (wiki), information management and search functionalities, and user feedback and reputation systems, are enhancing the accessibility, relevance, and value of knowledge resources.

The Organizational Review has considered a number of alternatives configurations on how best to organize UNICEF’s technical assistance. Options that were discussed ranged from a virtual rolodex to a completely centralized expert team at HQ. Based on these considerations and recognizing these various trends the Organizational Review has recommended the piloting of a distinct technical support hub as the locus of a global network of vetted internal and external subject matter experts who can be teamed and deployed to meet the specific technical assistance needs of countries.\(^{47}\) Key elements of the proposal are presented in the box below. Irrespective

\(^{46}\) This is particularly true for the Middle Income Countries, but generally true for most countries.

\(^{47}\) The hubs would be, according to this proposal, managed as a global resource accessible to all countries that fit the client profile of a specific technical service.
of the specific structural models that are pursued, the Organizational Review recommends the incorporation of these design principles.

### Proposed Design Principles for Effective Technical Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technical Assistance as a Global function</strong></td>
<td>Management of the support network centrally ensures better linkages between technical leadership in HQ, support capacity in the hubs, and practitioners in COs (“extended cluster”)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Networked Support</strong></td>
<td>Users have a choice between all “nodes” in the support network, enabling access to global expertise</td>
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<td><strong>Stronger External Linkages</strong></td>
<td>Advisors have responsibility for building an extended support network with Academia, Private Sector, and Research Centers</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Mass of Expertise</strong></td>
<td>Consolidation of a core team of practitioners in a location enables better integration and cross-fertilization across experts, as well as better coordination, quality control, and deployment of advisor capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Specialization According to Segmentation</strong></td>
<td>Individual hubs specialize in the segments and issues most relevant to the countries nearest their geographic locations, but Country Offices have access to the entire support network, including all hubs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Virtual Teaming of Complementary Skills</strong></td>
<td>A networked approach that leverages communications technology allows for packaging of distributed expertise to assemble an advisory team that meets Country Office needs</td>
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<td><strong>Dedicated Support Capacity</strong></td>
<td>Devotes capacity to the art and science of delivering support, coaching, and building internal capacity, that is not diluted by competing demands</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Alumni Network</strong></td>
<td>Former hub advisors continue to serve as a valuable and experienced support resource even after they have moved on to other parts of the organization</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Demand-driven Support</strong></td>
<td>Ongoing balancing of advisor capacity with Country Office support needs, and use of market mechanisms (e.g. advisory credits(^{48})) for matching CO demand with advisor capacity will ensure that support is valued by COs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Standards and Feedback Mechanisms</strong></td>
<td>Effective feedback mechanisms from users and clear service standards for advisors will promote continued performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The technical support hub proposal has stimulated a rich debate not only on technical assistance but also on the role and prerogatives of the Regional Offices in a decentralized organization. Thinking is now underway within and among several Regional Offices on how to improve the technical support function.

It is recommended that the multiple technical support models being considered by UNICEF Headquarters and Regional Offices should be fleshed out in the 2008-2009 biennium support budget submissions so that UNICEF can test and learn from different approaches. The critical element of these various concepts is that in the future UNICEF’s technical assistance models should exploit synergies between its global expertise and local knowledge.

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\(^{48}\) A similar system is currently being contemplated in the MENA Region.
The Organizational Review has also recommended that Regional Offices be substantively refocused on monitoring the quality of strategic thinking in Country Programme Documents, ensuring consistent progress on results from Country Offices, and strategic representation of the children’s agenda through region-wide advocacy and partnerships. Regional Directors also have growing responsibilities for Resident Coordinator performance assessment and UNCT progress oversight, which are critical. The proposed re-profiling of Regional Offices is intended to ensure that ROs have the required senior staff capacity to deliver strategic leadership in these areas, and to reduce the transactional and procedural burdens that often crowd out strategic leadership.

The Organizational Review has recommended that Country Offices and Regional Offices should consolidate and cost-share some of their transactional (so-called “back-office functions”) functions, and reinvest the savings back into innovative programming, knowledge development and advocacy. Recent improvements in technology, for instance, now make it feasible for many Country Offices to delegate financial transaction tasks to other Country and Regional Offices without a loss of security.49

In regard to the ROSA and EAPRO regional offices, UNICEF should gradually adapt and integrate its regional focus and presence in Bangkok and Kathmandu. The Bangkok and Kathmandu offices are currently working together to prepare a joint support budget submission intended to streamline financial and human resource requirements and maximize efficiency and impact. The joint biennium preparation should also take into account the organizational set up of sister UN agencies and the move towards UN coherence.

VIII. POSITION UNICEF AS A GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE LEADER FOR CHILDREN

As an intergovernmental organization with a global mandate for children, UNICEF is uniquely positioned to provide an intellectual framework for the synthesis of knowledge around children’s issues. The UN’s financial resources make up only a small portion of the total aid available to countries, particularly in the many emerging and stable countries in which UNICEF currently works. In fact, the value UNICEF delivers to government counterparts needs to be increasingly knowledge-driven. Countries look to UNICEF for technical expertise and guidance on designing and implementing innovative, government-funded solutions for children’s issues. In order to leverage a global knowledge base in UNICEF’s partnership with governments, the organization should make knowledge generation and management a major priority, supported by appropriate levels of investment.

The Organizational Review identified several issues regarding the knowledge management capabilities of UNICEF. While the organization has had success in developing creative approaches to programming, these are not systematically shared or taken to scale across the organization, even where country contexts are very similar.50 In the same way, lessons learned from programme implementation and evaluation are not adequately documented or

49 The main determinant of feasibility is the availability and reliability of appropriate banking networks.
50 Each year, a number of innovations reported in Annual Reports of individual Country Offices are extracted and compiled into a separate document, but the basis for selection and the quality of the write-ups are highly uneven from the perspective of potential adopters of innovation. There is also little evidence of systematic follow-up.
disseminated and thus have limited impact on programme design and strategy. The lack of sharing and communication is driven, at least in part, by the tools, technology and fora currently available. Although significant amounts of knowledge are available in the form of reports and documents, without vetting and quality control country offices cannot easily identify relevant knowledge resources and find the expertise they need. In addition much of the knowledge in the organization is tacit, held by staff with years of experience and accumulated knowledge who have little time and few incentives to make what they know available to others.

To reposition UNICEF as a global knowledge leader for children, UNICEF should improve the documentation of emerging knowledge, expand linkages to external knowledge centers, enhance vetting and quality control of knowledge resources, and systematically share and scale up good practices. Recognizing that UNICEF will not become a knowledge organization by improving knowledge management tools and systems alone, UNICEF should create a Global Knowledge Function around children’s issues that strengthens the multiple facets of knowledge generation, acquisition, management, sharing, and utilization. Key proposed elements of the Global Knowledge Function include:

Knowledge leadership and management should be prioritized via enhanced capacity and strengthened accountabilities in Headquarters. The knowledge management function is ultimately responsible for facilitating the creation of knowledge and linkages to its intended usage. This should encompass critical synthesis, standard setting, quality assurance, service, and support roles, in addition to the connectivity of knowledge providers and users throughout the organization.

Improved Modalities of Technical Assistance. As technical advisors are a core channel for knowledge synthesis and dissemination in UNICEF, the proposed changes to technical assistance explained above are critical in positioning UNICEF as a knowledge leader. Technical assistance should be transformed into a globally networked support function with strong linkages to external sources of expertise. Advisors in individual regions should be much more closely linked not only to external experts and one another, but also to UNICEF’s technical leaders in HQ Programme Group, forming a global resource base for Country Offices. Technical Advisors should also have clear performance standards and ongoing channels of feedback to ensure that the knowledge support they provide is valuable to Country Offices.

Revitalized Research Function. UNICEF should invest in professionalizing the research function as a key strategy in providing global knowledge leadership for children. This is discussed in more detail below.

Communities of Practice and Peer Networks. Groups of staff with relevant expertise should form virtual communities around certain issues to discuss emerging knowledge and potential programming strategies and approaches. The groups could synthesize their findings and analysis into user-friendly knowledge products. For example, a community of practice around health issues may develop fresh thinking on best practices in Health System Reform in countries in post-crisis recovery where the challenge may be to build up public sector capacity in a rapid but targeted manner. Once screened for quality, the resulting practice toolkit can be made available to the broader organization and the larger practitioner community via a global resource database.
A number of communities of practice and peer networks are currently under development, but experience in other organizations suggests that they tend to stagnate unless they are skillfully led and there is a high perceived value of their collective output. Truly successful communities balance continuity of membership with the purposeful infusion of new thinking and participants.

**Knowledge Taxonomy.** A shared global taxonomy and common lexicon should serve as the foundation for organizing the wide variety of knowledge and expertise in the organization. A taxonomy guides individuals in tagging and organizing their own contributions to the global system, and directs those seeking resources on where to look.

**Global Resource Database.** Built on the underlying taxonomy, a global database would enable staff to search the organization’s collection of programming policies, best practices, relevant research, and development data and trends. The database should also contain a vetted directory of internal and external consultants and technical support resources.

Collectively, these proposed elements will form a Global Knowledge Network that brings together knowledge acquisition, generation, management, and dissemination mechanisms into an integrated whole so that staff anywhere in the organization can access a pool of vetted, internal and external expertise and knowledge.

The Organizational Review has also proposed a set of specific recommendations to enhance the generation and cultivation of new knowledge. In order for UNICEF to be recognized as a knowledge leader, it should become a source of on-the-ground intelligence about what is happening to children at the local level, as well as a promoter of new ideas and solutions.
to children’s issues. To this end, the Organizational Review has proposed new approaches and mechanisms to improve UNICEF’s role in research, data monitoring, and innovation.

It is recommended that UNICEF should invest considerably more attention and resources in the research function. The quality, dissemination, and use of research to date have been highly uneven while the latent demand for UNICEF’s intellectual leadership remains. The research agenda overall is not adequately linked to strategic organizational priorities, and the implications of research findings for programming (by UNICEF and partners) are often either not clear or not acted upon. The Organizational Review’s recommendation to revitalize the independent research function includes several components intended to address these issues.

A Global Research Advisory Board, with internal and external thought leaders, should be formed to help shape the research agenda and provide quality assurance. The mix of internal and external advisors ensures that research addresses issues of relevance to the organization’s stated priorities while also leading the thinking on emerging issues for children that are not yet in the organization’s programme portfolio.51 UNICEF should also help to bring together preeminent universities and institutes from both the developing and developed world, which will enable UNICEF to stay abreast of insights that are emerging from the research community. A few scholars (possibly post-doctoral and dissertation fellows) could be brought into the organization as research fellows to collaborate with UNICEF country offices on high priority research questions.52 UNICEF should also explore multiple channels to improve external dissemination and use of its research findings, potentially including an academic-oriented website, peer-reviewed e-Journals, and resource toolkits for libraries and universities. In each of these, relationships should be developed with leading academic institutions in both developed and developing countries. Relationships with established channels and networks (e.g. Development Gateway, Global Development Network) should also be strengthened.

Another key shift in positioning UNICEF as a knowledge leader is for the organization to play an active and targeted role in promoting innovations for children, through products, technology and programming models. Many opportunities exist for UNICEF to invest its credibility and market positioning (especially with products and supplies) in shaping and promoting innovations that have significant potential benefits for children. UNICEF should investigate a range of mechanisms to promote innovation, including provision of funding, the use of UNICEF’s convening power, public recognition of achievements, and participation in market development.53 On the programming side, UNICEF can play an important role in designing and

51 A key attribute of an independent research function is the ability to revisit and analyze the evidence behind some of the widely accepted beliefs and assumptions of the organization, without pre-judging the conclusion of the research.
52 This promises to be a major attraction for academics interested in field-based research who can benefit from UNICEF’s extensive field presence and experience. Country Offices would also benefit from the intellectual stimuli provided by such visiting researchers. These researchers could also help build stronger ties between UNICEF and academic institutions.
53 An interesting recent (and replicable) example of this is the introduction of therapeutic foods (Ready-to-Use Foods) manufacturing in Ethiopia which was facilitated by UNICEF’s expertise and brokering of relationships, but did not require any direct financial subsidies from UNICEF (other than the purchase of most of the output at competitive prices). UNICEF has also worked with governments, the media, and the private sector to play a catalytic role in the introduction and popularization of salt iodization.
testing innovative programme approaches and models, particularly in areas like child protection where new and innovative thinking will be required to accelerate progress and where UNICEF is a leader on the issues.

UNICEF already plays a key role in knowledge generation through monitoring and analyzing the situation of children and women.\textsuperscript{54} Although UNICEF has already made significant and well-recognized contributions to the collection and presentation of national and regional data through MICS and DevInfo,\textsuperscript{55} there are still significant gaps in community-level data, especially on disparities and sensitive issues such as domestic violence. Furthermore, many of these data are currently collected in isolated pockets by a range of NGOs, local governments and academic researchers, but are not properly aggregated to reveal systemic patterns and insights. In the medium term, UNICEF, through its widespread field presence and network of on-the-ground partners, is well positioned to address these gaps by facilitating the capture of community level “pulse” data around a common taxonomy and data architecture. The role of UNICEF would not be to implement the data collection, but to provide technical assistance and a set of global standards and data protocols on critical children’s issues. UNICEF should lead in the development of an architecture and “ready to use” monitoring tools for local partners and intermediaries (e.g. local governments, NGOs, schools) who in turn can more efficiently collect community and family-level data.\textsuperscript{56} UNICEF should also provide capacity-building assistance to governments and citizen groups involved in the collection of these data, supported by global standards of data quality. These partners can then feed data back into national and global repositories for broader access and analysis. These data will provide early warning signals on emerging and potential crises, deliver feedback on programme effectiveness, and shed light on protection issues and other sensitive issues that have thus far been difficult to gauge. Though this type of effort takes time to mature, such on-the-ground intelligence has the potential to significantly enhance the effectiveness of UNICEF, and indeed, of the development community at large.

In addition to the recommendations above, many of the strategies outlined elsewhere can contribute to UNICEF’s successful renewal as a recognized knowledge leader. The proposed realignment of the HQ programme expertise around outcomes and key expertise areas, country segmentation, modalities for improved technical support, and mechanisms for greater coherence among various departments and teams should be designed to greatly enhance the effectiveness of the knowledge function in UNICEF.

\textsuperscript{54} A new and promising example of this is UNICEF’s ongoing collaboration with a technology company consortium to develop an early warning information system for emergencies. Google is an active member of this consortium.

\textsuperscript{55} DevInfo, managed by UNICEF, was initially known as ChildInfo. As many more UN agencies began to use it as a source of data, it was renamed as DevInfo to recognize the wider scope of its data and the expanded user community.

\textsuperscript{56} The rapid growth of mobile phones and other mobile data devices has the potential of vastly multiplying the capacity to capture micro-level sensitive data in real-time. UNICEF’s collaborations with partners has the potential to revolutionize and popularize this approach, especially if tools can be developed to quality-check the data and turn data into advocacy tools at the community level. For an example of a data-enriched advocacy tool developed by UNICEF with partners, see \textit{Countdown to 2015: Child Survival}, which provides a visually compelling depiction of the progress and constraints to child survival at an aggregated country level.
IX. Enhance Partnerships for Resources and Results

Over the last 10 years, the partnership landscape of organizations working to address children’s issues has changed dramatically. Once the undisputed leader for international children’s issues, today UNICEF is one of many actors driving results for children.57 The Millennium Development Goals, many of which were first articulated in the 1990 Child Summit, have now been embraced by the international community at large. A number of new and influential players have emerged, including foundations, private philanthropists, and identity-based organizations. Simultaneously, large international NGOs and other traditional development players have intensified their focus on children’s issues. This emerging alliance for children presents numerous opportunities for collaborative effort and teaming of resources, but at the same time, highlights the need for greater clarity on the roles, responsibilities and value-added of each partner organization active on the ground. This suggests that partnership decisions across the organization should be based on a more rigorous assessment of the comparative advantages of the various players. Equally importantly, the thinking on partnerships should be explicitly situated in the overall framework of results and complementary contributions.

While partnerships have been a major theme in UNICEF’s work for several decades, so far the approach has often been more opportunistic than strategic. A large number of partnerships focus on fundraising, and, while there are also many programme partnerships, they are of highly variable quality since the expected results and the criteria for the selection of partners are often unclear. Partnerships are often initiated without adequate due diligence of partner capacity and with insufficient attention paid to setting objectives, monitoring progress, and understanding the respective roles of UNICEF and its partners. In addition, there is often little differentiation among partnerships where UNICEF and the partner work in tandem to achieve strategic results, and those relationships where partners are in fact implementation sub-contractors, as is the case today with many field implementation NGOs.58

The Organizational Review has put forward a more disciplined and strategic approach to partnerships based on the concept of specific and mutual value around the achievement of particular results. This should help ensure that the desired outcomes of the collaboration are clear and that the value propositions to both UNICEF and the partner are compelling. Active management of partnerships implies employing appropriate criteria for entering into and exiting from partnerships, and monitoring systems that enable continuous assessment of the benefits of partnerships. More rigor should be applied to analyzing the comparative advantage that UNICEF brings to a partnership as well as the strengths and weaknesses of potential partners.59 Partnerships should reach beyond fundraising to drive progress on advocacy, policy, and other programming goals.

57 During the 1990s the number of social service, health and law/policy/advocacy civil society organizations grew by 79%, 50%, and 43% respectively (Global Civil Society 2003).
58 The draft recommendations of the Business Process Review address the streamlining of the contractual and transactional aspects of this relationship.
59 The Organizational Review consultants have developed and presented an illustrative assessment methodology.
To facilitate these shifts, UNICEF should create an expert, in-house capacity to conduct analysis and provide strategic guidance across the full spectrum of UNICEF’s partnerships. This proposed Partnership Advisory function would serve as an organization-wide, cross-cutting resource for the effective design and management of partnerships, developing and disseminating analytical and management methodologies and tools, and monitoring UNICEF’s partnerships through periodic surveys and quality assessments. Individual partnerships should continue to be implemented and managed by the relevant unit in the organization based on the substantive content of the partnership. This specialized unit, however, should play an advisory and support role to enhance partnership performance – and to foster opportunities for collaboration by partners across the private, public and nonprofit sectoral divides.

UNICEF also needs to develop a Global Partnership Framework to guide the organization’s strategic engagement with government, private sector, civil society, as well as UN and IFI partners. An effective partnership framework should outline a global strategic agenda for each of these partner segments and provide the tools and methodologies for selecting, designing, and managing this range of partnerships. The tools and templates should be designed to help staff define desired outcomes, analyze the capabilities of recommended partners, and assess mutual value. While the proposed partnership advisory function is expected to provide tools and guidance on the methodology and portfolio of UNICEF’s partnerships, the agency also needs to deepen its expertise of and relationships with specific categories of partners. These include the UN sister agencies, government stakeholders, civil society, foundations, corporations, and the International Financial Institutions.

UN Engagement – In an era of heightened aspirations for UN coherence, the Organizational Review has recommended a tighter integration and guidance on UNICEF’s ongoing relationships across the relevant spectrum of multilateral actors. Effectively and proactively engaging and supporting the work of the UNICEF Executive Board is obviously central. In addition, the Organizational Review recommends a more coordinated approach to UNICEF’s political representation and collaboration with key UN organs that influence and shape the humanitarian, development, and security contexts in which UNICEF operates. The insights and inputs of member states (and their various groupings) could also be gathered and synthesized in a more systematic manner so they can inform the evolving strategic perspective of UNICEF management.

Civil Society – UNICEF should develop greater strategic clarity and coherence in its multifaceted engagement with civil society, with particular emphasis on identifying opportunities for multi-sectoral partnerships (government, civil society and private sector). The role of civil society as agents for change at both the global and national levels continues to grow in prominence, and there is a need to more proactively and systematically engage with leading CSOs on a common advocacy and programming agenda. In developing countries, UNICEF’s serious focus on capacity building has the potential to truly innovate in this arena -- building on its long-standing involvement with civil society and its standing with governments. The chart below conceptually illustrates some of the dimensions of engagement with government and civil society in developing countries around the achievement of specific outcomes and capacity building.
**Corporations & Foundations** – Given the emergence of several influential and well-resourced foundations and the private sector’s growing interest in contributing to development, UNICEF is in the position to enhance its capacity for both fundraising and programmatic collaboration with these partners. UNICEF’s tools and programming expertise on children and its normative standards can be particularly useful to companies that view support for children as an important expressions of their corporate citizenship.

**International Financial Institutions (IFIs)** – International Finance Institutions, and particularly the World Bank, have substantial expertise on policy issues. Through their advice and technical assistance, these institutions are increasingly influencing the national budget priorities and policy choices of Governments. UNICEF should make a conscious effort to partner much more closely with IFIs to ensure that they engage fully on the human development issues that complement UNICEF’s agenda.60

**National Committees**: One of UNICEF’s most important and multi-faceted donor relationships is with the network of UNICEF National Committees (NatComs).61 NatComs constitute a unique part of UNICEF – legally distinct entities that share UNICEF’s brand and representational role and contribute to UNICEF’s private sector expertise and knowledge of the political and social context of donor countries. The Organizational Review, noting the significant variability in the capacity, contributions, and support needs among the National Committees, highlighted several issues with the quality of support delivered by UNICEF to NatComs. Despite recent improvements, an unclear division of support responsibilities between the current Geneva Regional Office (GRO) and the Private Sector Division (PSD) has led to insufficiently

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60 GivingWorks’ interviews with a cross-section of World Bank Country Directors suggests an appetite to collaborate with UNICEF on the ground. UNICEF is regarded as one of the most focused and knowledgeable UN agencies on the ground offering practical approaches to children’s issues. There are questions, however, about whether UNICEF staff would be predisposed to engage in policy dialogue.

61 In 2005 National Committees raised nearly 37% of all UNICEF resources. (UNICEF Annual Report 2005)
coordinated support with frequent gaps and overlaps. Today, the support for the advocacy and education for development (E4D) efforts of National Committees are delivered by GRO and PSD rather than by UNICEF’s primary programme and communications divisions. As a result, both the level of expertise available to the NatComs and the consistency of strategies and messaging between NatComs and UNICEF have been uneven.

To address these issues the Organizational Review has recommended the current GRO and PSD functions related to the National Committees should be integrated and reprofiled into a single “One Stop Shop” offering integrated support to National Committees. As envisioned, this unit should directly assist NatComs with fundraising needs and, for programmatic and advocacy issues, identify the appropriate expertise in UNICEF. The graphic below, developed in close consultation with the NatCom Standing Group, illustrates the proposed redesign of NatCom support.

The Organizational Review has recommended that UNICEF rationalize the “non-strategic” functions of the Cards and Products business in the current PSD to improve cost efficiency and expand the brand’s reach through wider distribution channels. Options for sourcing significant elements of product design, market testing, procurement, logistics, distribution and warehousing from third parties are now being examined consistent with the Organizational Review recommendations. Strategic marketing functions including oversight of the product portfolio, branding and contract management responsibilities should for now remain in-house and receive focused attention, but possibilities for alternative arrangements should be kept under review.
In a changing donor landscape, UNICEF’s relationship with government donors should also be enhanced. In the coming decade, while UNICEF maintains and builds upon the close and valuable relationships with its traditional donor governments, it should also reach out to emerging donors and regional multilateral entities. To bring greater coherence to government fundraising efforts across the globe, it is recommended that the Tokyo and the Brussels Offices should be integrated with the current Programme Funding Office (PFO).\textsuperscript{62} UNICEF should maintain presence in New York, Tokyo, and Brussels, but achieve greater strategic alignment through an integrated management of its distributed presence. The Organizational Review recommends that the capacity in Brussels should be strengthened to engage more effectively with the European Union on advocacy and fundraising goals. Additionally, UNICEF should investigate allocating capacity to geographies with emerging government donors, as appropriate based on a careful analysis of fundraising opportunities supported by clear business cases.

UNICEF’s work in “donor” countries involves interaction with a wide range of stakeholders, including citizens, civil society organizations, private corporations, and governments, in pursuit of multiple resource mobilization and advocacy objectives. Currently, the management of these relationships overlaps among several units of the organization, with limited integration of efforts. The success of UNICEF’s multifaceted resource mobilization and advocacy efforts could be far greater if based on a shared vision of the strategic priorities within each affluent country and a clear plan for how the different parts of the organization contribute to achieving them.

UNICEF has the opportunity to bring greater coherence in the strategic approaches employed by itself and the National Committees through integrated planning of complementary roles. One proposed tool for greater coherence is an integrated roadmap for UNICEF’s engagement in affluent countries, defining the roles of NatComs, PFO and PSD. In some cases, other UNICEF entities may also be involved. The roadmap can help to significantly lighten the current joint planning process for NatComs. It should include specific goals for in-country fundraising, advocacy and Education for Development activities, an action plan for engaging with counterparts to accomplish those goals, as well as a clear division of responsibilities and points of integration among PFO, NatComs, PSD, and other units.

UNICEF should also address the quality of resources that it mobilizes. As UNICEF shifts to a business model that is targeting systemic change rather than being project-based, it will require flexible core resources to support investments in “upstream” activities such as advocacy, policy analysis, evaluation design, demonstration projects, and capacity building. However, many donors continue to earmark resources for activities and projects, requiring detailed reporting on resource use and inputs utilized. In the more “upstream” model, the qualification of results and the attribution of responsibility will be more difficult. UNICEF should work with donors to reset expectations and ensure that contributions do not distract from the organization’s strategic focus. As another avenue to address this issue, UNICEF should develop a comprehensive range of fundraising packages built around portfolios of critical

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\textsuperscript{62} Today, the Tokyo and Brussels offices report to OED and GRO respectively but their functions largely overlap with those of the current PFO. It has been suggested by some staff that the new office be renamed as the Public Sector Alliance and Resource Mobilization Office (PARMO)
programme and advocacy interventions, building on the recent success of thematic funding. For example, a water and sanitation fundraising package might include the delivery of purification tablets, trainings for community health workers on hygiene practices, advocacy with government to increase rural sanitation coverage, and promotion of private investment in rural sanitation infrastructure. While some of these interventions may have more immediate appeal to donors than others, an effective and well thought out package of resources can secure funds for the critical upstream elements that underpin the more tangible service delivery components.

X. MANAGE FOR PERFORMANCE

The final set of recommendations centers on improvements to UNICEF’s internal management functions. The goal is to drive greater efficiency and effectiveness in the management of its human and financial resources and business processes and to bring greater coherence to the clustering and structure of key functions across the organization.

Coordination, Support and Oversight for the Regions

As noted earlier, the Organizational Review diagnostics highlighted the lack of adequate coherence between headquarters and the field as a priority issue for the organization. Following the decentralization of UNICEF in the mid-1990’s, a number of roles and accountabilities were shifted from HQ to Regional Offices, placing decision-making authority in closer proximity to the field offices. While beneficial in many aspects, decentralization has also had some unintended consequences. The global stature of the organization has somewhat weakened, with individual regions not acting as a coherent whole. In order to meaningfully contribute to the process of “Delivering as One UN,” the organization must deliver as one UNICEF. To improve cross-regional coherence, UNICEF should consider establishing a dedicated Field Support Unit in OED which will be the first “port of call” for Regional Offices and provide the needed coordination, support, and oversight to foster greater collaboration and coherence.

Business Processes

Governments, staff and a wide range of partners consistently view UNICEF as an organization that ultimately delivers. Yet, there is also a consensus that since the mid-1990’s, UNICEF has not been able to overcome the difficulty of retaining nimbleness with growth and has gradually shifted from being an entrepreneurial and flexible organization to a more procedurally-driven organization. Process redundancies, proliferation of guidelines and instructions, and burdensome reporting and compliance requirements have accounted for an increasing share of staff time and have diluted the attention paid to programmatic work. Frustration with UNICEF’s processes go beyond staff, as civil society and other partners have voiced concern with bureaucratic burdens and slow response time.

63 This is a key recommendation of the Global Integrated Resource Mobilization Strategy.
64 The functionalities of the proposed field support team in HQ are being further articulated in consultation with Regional Offices and key HQ divisions.
65 The review of Civil Society Partnerships highlighted procedural and administrative delays as one of UNICEF’s key weaknesses as a partner.
A key driver of these challenges is the diffuse accountabilities and insufficient alignment among UNICEF’s various management disciplines. As result, the areas of overlap (and the cumulative burden on field offices) are neither recognized nor managed appropriately. Another underlying driver of the burdensome business processes is the risk tolerance of the organization as a whole. Compliance and reporting processes are currently designed to avoid risk entirely rather than taking a more nuanced view of risk exposure and managing the most critical areas of risk. Moreover, processes are not tailored to different country contexts even though the risk exposure is very different given country capacity and the size and scope of the programme. This means that small country offices like Bhutan face the same procedural requirements as large country offices like India. As a steward of public resources, the organization must maintain a zero tolerance policy for malfeasance and improper conduct. At the same time, UNICEF should recognize the adverse cost and impact on productivity of the heavy assurance mechanisms it implements. As new business processes are developed, design choices should be based on explicit cost/benefit tradeoffs, and governed by explicit service standards.

The organization should urgently investigate options to simplify business processes and quickly take action on areas of highest opportunity. Progress is already being made. The 2008-2009 Country Programme Management Plan (CPMP) guidelines have been substantially streamlined and Phase I of the Business Process Review has identified opportunities for simplification of several key processes, including travel, recruitment, procurement, logistics, and local NGO collaboration. The recommendations of the Organizational Review and the ongoing efforts around UN Coherence offer a real opportunity for additional administrative efficiencies, including through consolidation, use of inter-agency shared services, and 3rd party service provision. While some uncertainties associated with systems choices persist in the context of UN coherence, UNICEF has the opportunity to pioneer operational business process reform, including capturing heightened synergies among the HR, IT and Financial Management functions. A risk management strategy for the organization should also be developed, taking into account reputational and performance factors – and the significant implications for UNICEF’s business processes. The strategic co-location of Audit and Evaluation – recommended by the Organizational Review – should also help in identifying business process impediments to managerial and programme performance. This in some ways implies evolving audit from a largely compliance assurance function to one that also proactively identifies the costs of policy compliance relative to its value.

As a first step, the Organizational Review has recommended that Country Offices and Regional Offices should consolidate and cost-share some of their transactional (so-called “back-office functions”) functions, and reinvest the savings back into innovative programming, knowledge development and advocacy. Recent improvements in technology, for instance, now makes it feasible for many Country Office to delegate financial transaction tasks to other Country and Regional Offices without a loss of security.66

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66 In this case, the main determinant of feasibility is the availability of appropriate banking connections.
Human Resource Management

The Strategic Review of Human Resources completed in 2006 identified a number of issues and opportunities with the management of human resources in UNICEF. Themes emerging from that review and independently observed by the Organizational Review include the following:

- **HR Planning**: Lack of a coherent strategy for talent management, staff rotation, and succession planning, though significant progress has been recently made towards a more systematic rotation of Representatives.

- **Workforce Flexibility**: Budgetary processes, contractual arrangements and unwillingness to “rock the boat” limit managers’ ability to optimally deploy talent. The complex and outdated personnel regulations also serve as disincentives.

- **Performance Management**: Current systems and culture do not successfully differentiate levels of performance nor effectively deal with non-performers.

- **Staff Development**: Insufficient investment in training and development of staff competencies; sub-optimal returns on existing training and workshop investments.

- **Recruitment**: Insufficient attention paid to attracting a high quality pool of internal and external applicants. This is now getting significant management attention and simplification of the process is underway.

The Organizational Review has developed a number of recommendations aimed at reprofiling the HR management function to address gaps in HR planning, as well as talent identification, assessment and deployment. A robust *competency framework* should serve as the foundation to these changes. With input from the appropriate technical and functional experts in the organization, specific competencies should be defined for key roles and positions, covering the range of skills illustrated below. These competency requirements should ultimately guide recruitment and deployment decisions, as well as the design of performance assessment and learning mechanisms. The framework should be tiered for different levels of career development, specifying capacity expectations for apprentice, practitioner, and mastery levels.

A better understanding of organizational competencies should enable more effective HR planning, as management will be able to identify levels of capacity in the organization, where they are allocated, and which areas require further development and investment.
A robust, competency-based foundation drives better performance on several key HR levers

UNICEF should also move toward a much more flexible workforce which will enable the organization to more easily adapt and deliver results in a changing world.\(^{67}\) Better mechanisms are needed for assessing performance and for appropriately dealing with chronic non-performers.\(^{68}\) Inability to manage non- and sub-standard performance has limited UNICEF’s flexibility to allocate staff skills and competencies where they are most needed. As mentioned above, the competency framework should provide the foundation and clear standards for performance assessment across the organization. In addition, for key senior posts (e.g. Representatives) UNICEF should develop supplementary formal assessment mechanisms to ensure quality and competency of selected personnel. To address non-performance and flexibility, the organization should further limit the use of long-term and recurring contracts. UNICEF should pursue opportunities and mechanisms for dynamic redeployment and better utilization of staff capacity, including sharing of certain expertise among different units. For example, a robust HR system that could identify the current allocation of staff and their respective competency levels would enable management to locate under-utilized staff and then to re-deploy capacity, either physically or virtually, to support areas in need of greater capacity.

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\(^{67}\) This is especially critical because more and more countries seek high quality technical assistance responsive to their specific needs.

\(^{68}\) The presence of “non-performers” has been a core focus of the 2006 Strategic Review of Human Resources Management. In the view of the Organizational Review, the issue is only partially about individual non-performers and more importantly about the organizational and managerial conditions that enable non-performance. The Organizational Review has recommended that the management assessment and training should be overhauled to rigorously and analytically address performance management, providing appropriate tools, guidance and backing for making tough choices when necessary. The so-called “360 degree” reviews can also be useful in signaling to managers their performance and gaps in relational and communications competencies.
The heavy and slow recruitment processes is a significant obstacles to effective recruitment across the board in UNICEF. The recent Business Process Review has made a number of recommendations on expediting the recruitment processes including improving the use of technology in facilitating the process. The Division of Human Resources has made a number of recommendations to improve the delegation of authority for recruitment. In addition to the process improvements, UNICEF should continue to actively promote diversity, including gender equity, in personnel decisions and planning.

Also within the Human Resource agenda, the development of a comprehensive and adequately resourced training and staff development strategy is now a critical priority. Given the dynamic nature of the external environment in which UNICEF operates, continuous refreshing of staff skills and development of competencies to meet new challenges is critical in order for the organization to deliver value to counterparts and results for children. UNICEF should invest in enhanced learning tools and mechanisms to catalyze staff development, beginning with the redesign of the leadership and management training curriculum. UNICEF should also invest in more effective recruitment and development of its young talent pool. UNICEF should expand and diversify the pool of Young Professional (YPs) and Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) and create “stretch roles” for junior staff, both National and International, to provide greater challenges and professional development opportunities.

Audit and Evaluation

Assuring compliance with approved operating standards and evaluating the success and/or failure of the organization’s efforts are two distinctive sides of the accountability coin and both are essential to managing for performance. Today, instead of synergy there is significant overlap and gaps between Audit and Evaluation in the area of programme audit. The Organizational Review has recommended that the Evaluation and Audit staffs be co-located in a way that enhances both professional functions. Going forward, auditors should continue to focus on risk management and compliance assurance. Evaluation staff should continue to extract lessons for programme and functional effectiveness. The two disciplines, however, should invest in joint and complementary tools and mechanisms for ensuring and informing institutional performance. Organizing in this way is intended to preserve the distinctive contributions of each profession while improving their coherence, information sharing, and quality of learning. The balancing of the learning and compliance assurance roles is likely to be a challenge, especially in an organization where audit – despite considerable recent improvements – is seen as unduly focused on procedures instead of purpose. A consequence of this cross-disciplinary collaboration, however, is the expectation that the art of evaluation will become more rigorous. Audit, on the other hand, should be challenged to go beyond the verification of procedural compliance and to analyze whether the costs of compliance and inspection are proportionate to the benefit. The organization should also more systematically monitor the implementation of audit and evaluation recommendations in order to ensure that their lessons are translated into practice.

69 An interesting opportunity is the introduction of the Programme Effectiveness Assessment (PEA), a joint audit-evaluation product recommended by the Organizational Review and expected to be piloted in 2008.
Resource Policy and Global Strategy functions

UNICEF should also strengthen the global strategy and resource policy functions to bring greater coherence and strategic integration to the management of the organization and the preparation of the budget. Traditionally UNICEF has focused on the short- to medium-term time horizons, without dedicated capacity for the early recognition of transformational external shifts in the long-term. In addition, it is important to have capacity to get a comprehensive view of the sources and uses of UNICEF’s various income streams to cost strategic proposals and analyze investment tradeoffs, for the effective deployment of resources to match organizational priorities. The proposed advisory function would provide needed support to OED and the GMT, as follows:

- **Resource Policy**: 1) Developing coherent analysis of multiple committed and anticipated income sources and the corresponding absorption capacity; 2) Developing options on allocations and management of resources to facilitate decision-making on investments.
- **Global Strategy**: 1) Scanning for early indications of trends, issues, or other emerging phenomena that will impact the organization, but are at the margins of current thinking and practice; 2) Developing transformational initiatives that would entail significant shifts in organizational strategy.

Results Based Management

There is still much progress to be made in managing for results in UNICEF. While the organization tracks an extremely large (and growing) set of metrics and indicators, many of these indicators lack clear decision relevance and do not provide valuable insights for management. Tracking and reporting on such a large roster of metrics imposes a significant burden on field offices but provides little value in return. Furthermore, those metrics with clear decision relevance have not been institutionalized into the dialogue and debate of management processes.

To address these issues, the Organizational Review recommends that UNICEF should develop and implement results management dashboards that capture a select set of critical indicators for each aspect of the results chain, including UNICEF inputs, outputs, intermediate milestones, and outcomes for children. These new tools should account for all aspects of UNICEF’s contributions, including leverage (see the illustrative diagram below) and allow for aggregation at various levels of the organization (Country, Region, HQ). The dashboard data should serve as the foundation for strategic conversations about UNICEF’s performance and contribution, the effects of its external environment, and opportunities for improvement. Well-designed dashboards should also provide the evidence base for a number of management mechanisms and decision-making processes, such as staff deployment and resource allocation decisions. These could also provide a common evidence base for management discussions at the GMT and RMT meetings. A manageable set of relevant indicators drives better management discipline and establishes greater linkage between UNICEF interventions and results for children.
Structure of Accountabilities

Once the strategies outlined above are further developed, UNICEF should define, communicate, and implement a revised structure of accountabilities for the global organization. The current accountability documents (e.g. the 1998 “Organization of UNICEF”) should be revisited and updated to capture the implications and nuances of the proposed strategic shifts. Developing a recognized structure of accountabilities will be essential to successfully adopting the broad sweep of changes.

Change Management Team

Finally, a dedicated change management team was recommended by the Organizational Review and has been established. While this team should not directly manage the implementation of every strategic shift outlined above, it could be a pivotal resource in driving and coordinating the various change efforts throughout the organization, monitoring progress, and recommending adaptations as required.
XI. CONCLUSION

The Organizational Review exercise represented a proactive and comprehensive assessment of UNICEF with a focus on its readiness to succeed in a rapidly changing global environment. The ideas and proposals presented here are intended as a basis for consideration and action by UNICEF’s staff, management and its broad set of stakeholders. While the Review has presented a range of recommendations that address multiple facets of the organization, implementation of these shifts should be staged in a manner that balances UNICEF’s ongoing commitments and capacity for managing change with the opportunities for greater impact presented by the Review. Implementation should also balance strategic, structural, systemic and cultural elements to ensure an integrated and reinforcing approach to change. The design of the 2008-2009 Biennium Support Budget proposals provide an immediate opportunity to implement a number of these change initiatives, while others will require continued attention over the longer-term. UNICEF has already made substantial progress in enhancing organizational performance. This momentum should be sustained, drawing upon the energy and motivation of UNICEF’s highly committed staff around the world.

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The team benefited from inputs from a number of UNICEF colleagues whose contributions are gratefully appreciated.