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**Report of the field visits of
the Executive Board**

Report of the joint field visit to Ethiopia of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, 22 to 31 March 2012

I. Introduction

1. A delegation of 22 members representing 20 Member States of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, WFP and UN-Women undertook a joint field visit to Ethiopia from 22 to 31 March 2012. The purpose of the visit was to see how the United Nations country team (UNCT) is operating in Ethiopia and how the United Nations supports Government priorities in addressing development and humanitarian challenges. The delegation also looked at the interaction of the United Nations agencies with the Government and other development partners.

2. The delegation met with high-level authorities of the country, including sectoral ministers of the Government of Ethiopia, members of the UNCT and bilateral development partners. The delegation had the opportunity to visit project sites in Addis Ababa and in the Tigray and Somali regions.

3. The delegation expresses its appreciation to the Government of Ethiopia for the opportunity to carry out this mission and for facilitating the programme. Appreciation is likewise extended to the UNCT for organizing a comprehensive and well-prepared programme and for making all the necessary arrangements.

II. Country context

4. With a population of 79.4 million, Ethiopia is the second most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa, with 83 per cent of people living in rural areas. Ethiopia's economy is highly dependent on agriculture, which constitutes 46 per cent of the country's gross domestic product, followed by services (36 per cent) and industry (13 per cent). Despite growth in agricultural production, food security remains extremely fragile, with an estimated six million Ethiopians in need of resilience-building support every year. Food insecurity is high, owing to the small size of farm plots, combined with dependence on rain-fed agriculture, with only limited irrigation, poor soil fertility and limited use of farm inputs or machinery. The country ranks 171 on the Human Development Index, and the Global Gender Gap Report 2011 ranks Ethiopia 116 among 135 countries in terms of the magnitude and scope of gender-based disparities. The socio-economic environment is characterized by a high population growth rate (2.6 per cent per year). Female-headed households comprise 46 per cent of all households in the lowest income quartile.

5. Ethiopia has witnessed robust economic growth (11 per cent per year for the past five years) and prioritized investments in social service delivery systems, particularly over the last decade. This has generated significant improvements in social conditions throughout the country, with poverty declining from 38.2 per cent for 2004-2005 to 29.2 per cent for 2009-2010; this number is expected to decline further in the coming years.

6. The main challenge for Ethiopia is to accelerate the progress made in recent years toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to address the causes of poverty among its population. The Government is already devoting a high share of its budget to pro-poor programmes and investments. Over the past two decades, there has been significant progress in key human development indicators: primary school enrolments have quadrupled; the child mortality rate has been halved; and the number of people with access to clean water has more than doubled. The country is on course to achieve five MDGs by 2015. It is accelerating progress towards the MDGs where achievement is lagging: Goals 3 (gender equality and empowerment of women), 5 (maternal health) and 7 (environmental sustainability).

7. The Government has launched a five-year plan, the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) 2011-2015, comprising seven pillars. The plan aims to foster broad-based development in a sustainable manner to achieve the MDGs. Over the next five years, the GTP envisions a major leap forward, not only strengthening the economic structure but also improving income levels and social indicators. The plan sets out a number of key goals: rapid economic growth; doubling agricultural production; increased contribution from the industrial sector; increased participation of the private sector; and improvement of major infrastructure, especially roads and railways. The GTP also aims to reduce the infant mortality rate and cut the maternal mortality rate by more than half.

III. Coordination among United Nations agencies, government and other stakeholders

A. UNCT and the Government

8. Ethiopia has embarked on a transformative agenda in line with its vision to achieve middle-income country status and become a democratic development state with a carbon-neutral economy by 2025. The UNDAF 2012-2015 has been aligned with the GTP 2011-2015. In the UNDAF, six out of the seven pillars of the GTP have been translated into four priority areas, including cross-cutting issues. The resource requirement for the UNDAF is estimated at \$1,988,870. Ethiopia is implementing Delivering as One as a ‘self-starter’, with overall oversight to be carried out by a high-level steering committee.

9. The Government of Ethiopia plays a leading role in the coordination of the activities of the United Nations agencies in the country, as was evident during the site visits in the Somali and Tigray regions.

10. The Federal Government communicated to the delegation a number of concerns regarding coordination with the United Nations agencies. These include limited flexibility in decision-making at the country level by some specialized agencies; and the desire of the Government to move from three-month advances to six-month advances in funding transfers – changes that require decisions at the headquarters level. The Government further indicated that the implementation of Delivering as One in the country might be hindered by the uneven pace of reform of United Nations Headquarters and the country offices. Also noted were occasional inconsistencies in messages from various Executive Boards of United Nations agencies; the Government expressed its hope that United Nations Headquarters would be more responsive to the specific needs and demand of country offices.

B. Coordination among United Nations agencies

11. The UNCT in Ethiopia has 26 members and is one of the largest in the world. Ethiopia became a self-starter for Delivering as One in 2008. According to the UNCT, its members share, to a large extent, a common vision and understanding, and strive to

harmonize and integrate their programmes in order to improve the United Nations impact on the ground. The UNCT finalized the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Ethiopia in March 2011. There is a common cooperation plan, a single framework and integrated planning. The UNCT stated it is on the road to full integration.

12. There are three flagship joint programmes (maternal and newborn health and survival; gender equality and women's empowerment; and enhancing public service, accelerating development in Ethiopia's four developing regional states); five MDG joint programmes funded by the MDG Achievement Fund; a joint HIV/AIDS programme; and a joint humanitarian action plan. However, the country programme documents are still separate, which are then integrated into the UNDAF action plan. The agencies implement their separate workplans as well as the joint annual workplans. Since January 2011, there is a One Fund; so far, it has received funding only from one bilateral donor. The One Fund is governed by the High-level Steering Committee, co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and the State Minister of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. There is no separate budget but, through shared resources, the UNCT is working on a single communication strategy around the promotion of the MDGs and implementation of the new UNDAF. The operations management team is looking at how to increase cooperation, with five working groups reviewing issues such as information technology, harmonized cash transfers, fleet management, and joint hardship assessment.

13. During the visit, the delegation met primarily with representatives of United Nations funds and programmes, as well as the United Nations Resident Coordinator, and, to a much lesser extent, with the other members of the UNCT. Assessments of the UNCT are therefore primarily based on the delegation's interaction with the representatives of funds and programmes.

C. United Nations country team and bilateral development partners

14. The overall partnership with bilateral and other development partners is coordinated through the Development Assistance Group (DAG), currently chaired by the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the United States. Each organization reports outcomes on a yearly basis. There are several thematic working groups. The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are not part of the DAG but participate through the different sector working groups organized by the DAG.

15. Although the terms of reference of the mission refer to meeting with civil society and NGOs, no such meeting was organized at the federal level. However, at the regional level, the delegation had informal interactions with international NGOs.

IV. Results and lessons learned

16. The themes below draw on the UNDAF. The site visits took place within the context of these themes.

A. Sustainable economic growth and risk reduction

17. Agriculture offers livelihoods for 85 per cent of the population. It is seen as a priority sector in achieving long-term pro-poor economic growth and for increasing food security in the country. According to the GTP, the Government's aim is to double the agricultural production by 2015 and to stop dependency on international food aid. The Minister for Agriculture emphasized the role of the UNCT in supporting the Government in increasing agricultural production, and invited the United Nations to focus its capacity on private-sector development, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, technology transfer and marketing systems. In addition, development partners invited the UNCT and especially UNDP to take a more active role in private-sector development.

18. The delegation was shown various activities through which the United Nations has been instrumental in supporting private-sector development. For example, in Tigray, the delegation learned about the UNDP-supported Local Economic Development projects, which aim to promote economic growth and generate livelihoods through capacity development. Key beneficiaries include vulnerable and unemployed women, such as the 13 entrepreneurs who run the mill the delegation visited. Over three years, 62 microbusiness groups have been established.

19. Promotion of women and youth empowerment with equity is a key multisectoral component in the GTP for achieving sustainable economic growth. The delegation learned about activities the UNCT offers to Ethiopia in this regard. For example, UNDP has supported the establishment of cooperative enterprises by unemployed youths, with an aim to start an environmentally friendly private refuse collection, dumping and separation service. The cooperative now handles 75 per cent of the waste of the city of Mekelle; sustainable jobs have been created for 95 youths. This initiative has been replicated in seven other municipalities, with plans to scale up to 100 municipalities. The NGO Mums for Mums, financed by the Global Fund and monitored by UNOPS, has provided skills training to over 900 older women, with over 80 per cent going on to establish their own employment. The UNCT should consider doing more in the area of economic empowerment of women and youth and finding new ways to scale up successful models, including through using the capabilities of UNOPS in this regard.

20. The Government emphasized economic growth should be achieved through creation of a climate-resilient carbon-neutral economy. The delegation learned that UNDP provided technical support in developing the country's Climate Resilient Green Economy Strategy and plans to continue its support in establishing a national financing mechanism for implementation of the Strategy. UNDP has also provided catalytic support to Bio Economy Africa-Green Economy, an initiative that brings together scientists, economists,

environmentalists and farmers. UNDP has also been instrumental in presenting the Ethiopian experience in international fora, including the Rio+20 processes.

21. The delegation visited UNICEF-supported water points as well as a WFP-supported Productive Safety Net Programme site, which addresses food security needs while helping to reduce vulnerability and contributing to increasing resilience, and a WFP Relief distribution site. The delegation noticed the close cooperation of the federal and regional governments with the United Nations in this regard. Successful initiatives such as the Productive Safety Net Programme have helped alleviate hunger and establish a focus on sustainable development.

22. The community-based MERET programme¹ implemented by the Government of Ethiopia, in collaboration with WFP, has been highly valued by the Government in tackling chronic food insecurity while responding to environmental challenges. MERET increases local food production and productivity by improving irrigation systems, water harvesting and soil conservation; improves nutrition; creates job opportunities and income-generating activities; responds to climate change challenges; and builds infrastructure in rural areas. The Ministry of Agriculture considers MERET a best practice example for sustainable land management in Ethiopia, with a number of significant results achieved so far: 127,425 ha of land have been rehabilitated; 75,863 ha of deforestation areas replanted; 7,493 water points opened; and 885 km of rural roads built. In 2012, the programme will be targeting 648,000 beneficiaries.

23. United Nations-supported projects viewed during the visit clearly demonstrated how relatively small amounts of funding have made a great impact on livelihoods and can be a catalyst towards sustainable development. Examples show that knowledge transfer can also be as vital as financial support in pursuing sustainable development. There are also examples of how key social services have been made possible through United Nations support, particularly through significant funding.

B. Basic social services

24. During its meeting with the Minister of Education, the delegation learned that education is seen by the Government as a strategic sector in making the vision of Ethiopia as a middle-income country a reality by 2020. Therefore, higher education objectives are framed in such a way that they lead to a better-skilled labour force as required for the development of the country in general and the manufacturing industry in particular.

¹ A joint venture between the Ethiopian government and WFP, the programme draws its name from the Amharic word for land, MERET, which is a convenient acronym for the programme: Managing Environmental Resources to Enable Transitions to More Sustainable Livelihoods.

25. The country has successfully improved access to education; it is on track to achieve MDGs 2 and 3. A General Education Improvement Package has been developed, which is being implemented in primary and secondary education. The Government considers United Nations agencies among the forefront of development partners in this sector. UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and WFP are providing technical and financial support to the education sector in order to improve access and quality at all levels and achieve the MDGs. There are regular high-level consultation meetings between the Minister and the heads of agencies and development partners. The United Nations agencies are also active members of the Education Technical Working Group, which meets each month to discuss education sector issues and challenges, such as ensuring equitable access to education for vulnerable children; improving the quality of education and learning achievements of students; and building capacity in planning, implementation and evaluation at all levels.

26. In the Tigray and Somali regions, education, health and social services are centred on a community-based approach, whose framework has been established by the federal Government and implemented by the communities and the local governments with the support of United Nations agencies. This approach seems to be successful, especially in Tigray, where it has been ongoing for a long period. In Somali, an additional difficulty in reaching out to communities is the fact that significant parts of the communities are pastoralists.

27. The community-based nutrition programme has improved access to basic social services for local communities and raised awareness of the availability of such services. UNICEF supports the Government through cash transfers as well as provision of water and sanitation. This reflects the systems approach taken by the organization, which successfully enables communities to build resilience.

28. Part of the development effort in the Tigray region has recently been dedicated to developing social protection strategies for vulnerable groups. UNICEF and other partners support the regional government and other partners in launching pilot community-based social protection programmes centred on community care coalitions. These coalitions are run by the community in collaboration with the regional government and may be used as the starting point of a community-based social protection system.

29. In Tigray, the school-feeding programme run by WFP contributes to lowering dropout rates in primary education, especially among girls. In recent years, the school has shifted focus from high enrolment rates to exploring ways to providing the community with quality education. The delegation was also able to witness the UNICEF-supported child-to-child education programme, which, along with the introduction of a so-called “0 class” by the Government, addresses previously high dropout rates in grade one. This approach has been mainstreamed by the Ministry of Education and is being replicated to other regions.

30. Members of the delegation met with the Minister of Health, who noted that the United Nations is one of the Government’s strongest partners, not only in implementing

ongoing programmes that are saving lives but also in building an effective health system for the future. He highlighted improvements to key health indicators, including infant and child mortality, HIV prevalence, malaria prevalence and nutrition, and attributed these successes to health-sector reform, which has increased coverage for rural populations through the expansion and decentralization of primary health care service delivery. He estimated that 15,000 district health posts and 28,000 health extension workers have been put in place over the past six years.

31. The Minister lamented that progress on MDG 5 was lagging, with a high maternal mortality rate (470 deaths per 100,000 live births) that has not improved significantly over the past five years. There is renewed commitment to address the root causes, such as a critical shortage of skilled health care providers, and enabling pregnant women to give birth in health care facilities. Additional midwives and surgical personnel are being trained to provide emergency obstetric care, and small lower-cost ambulances will be provided at the district level. He also noted that, according to results of the 2011 Demographic and Health Survey, the contraceptive prevalence rate had doubled since 2005, from 15 per cent to 29 per cent. This is expected to have a positive impact on reducing maternal mortality and improving child survival rates.

32. The delegations visited health centres and health posts in the Tigray and Somali regions, where medical equipment, training and technical assistance is provided by UNICEF and, sometimes, UNFPA. These health centres and posts are part of the health extension programme, which is a large-scale community-based programme that reaches every household with life-saving interventions. This hierarchical structure of health services – contributing to maternal health, sexual education, HIV prevention, and AIDS treatment and care, as well as prevention of malnutrition through the community-based nutrition programme – allowed the United Nations system to contribute significantly to the reduction of infant and child mortality.

33. The delegation visited in the Dollo Ado area a clinic established by Doctors Without Borders, which is assisted by UNFPA. A clinic in Haror Ays, with the assistance of UNICEF, provides health services to the Jijiga area.

34. UNFPA is involved in work on maternal health with Mekelle University in response to the lack of qualified emergency obstetric care personnel in the country. Ethiopia has one of the world's highest rates of maternal mortality. The country has only 700 gynaecologists. The delegation learned that UNICEF also has a partnership with the paediatric unit of the hospital. This indicates the need for improved coordination among the United Nations agencies.

35. Given the shortages in doctors, and the time and cost required to train a surgeon, UNFPA and the Ministry of Health have developed the position of Emergency Surgery Officer. The position, which covers surgery elements rather than providing full medical training, requires three years of training. The first batch of students recently graduated, and

early results are promising. Discussions are underway to extend the scheme to nursing, anaesthetic and midwife personnel.

C. Governance and capacity development

36. The delegation held meetings with several ministers, including the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs; the Minister of Finance and Economic Development; and the ministers of education, health, women, children and youth affairs, and agriculture. The delegation also met with regional presidents and the heads of sector bureaus of the Tigray and Somali regions. In addition, a panel discussion on the role of democratic institutions took place with representatives from the Federal Ethics, and Anti-corruption Commission, the Ethiopian Parliament, the Human Rights Commissioner, the Institution of the Ombudsman, the Office of the Federal Auditor General and the House of Representatives.

37. The Deputy Prime Minister stressed in his introduction to the delegation that engagement with civil society organizations and the transformation of democratization processes were an important part of the GTP; however, he made a distinction between civil society organizations, such as women and youth associations with thousands of members, and NGOs, with few constituents. The delegation did not meet with representatives of civil society during their visit.

38. The Human Rights Commissioner, appointed by the Parliament in 2005 to promote and protect human rights and investigate human rights abuses, has increased the number of staff from 20 to 200 in six regional offices, and planned to expand to double the number of offices. The Human Rights Commissioner informed the delegation that land rights, peace and development, prison monitoring and increased capacity of authorities had been high on his agenda. The capacity of the law and justice sector had been addressed in dealings with human rights abuses by officials.

39. The Office of the Ombudsman, in operation since 2004, had particularly looked into solving complaints regarding administrative abuses related to the needs of women, youth and children. The Ombudsman is present in five regions and has been involved with establishing a countrywide monitoring system.

40. The Federal Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission has pursued corruption offences against officials and, increasingly, employees of the private sector, with a particular focus on establishing corruption-free land administration, transparent public procedures and effective management of governing systems. Five priorities were highlighted: land administration; revenue collection; procurement rules; corruption in the justice system; and asset disclosure and registration of officials. The Office of the Federal Auditor General focuses on building internal capacity in auditor offices and enabling external involvement in technical capacity building.

41. UNDP is supporting capacity building of different democratic institutions through a multilateral technical assistance programme called the Democratic Institutions Programme. Since 2008, the programme provides support to the democratic institutions, including the House of People's Representatives, regional state councils and city councils, to enhance the capacity in law-making processes as well as oversight, public consultation and representation functions.

42. The delegation learned that UNDP has supported awareness raising of constitutional rights, including for children, and contributed to further trust building among institutions and towards a more transparent and efficient fiscal administration.

43. In a meeting with the DAG, the Group members underlined the importance of the United Nations in supporting the Government in its democratization efforts and good governance, with public-sector reforms particularly seen as in need of stronger United Nations engagement. The DAG members also underlined the importance of having well defined mechanisms for dialogue with the Government on approaches to maximize development results.

D. Women, youth and children

44. The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs promotes the equal participation of women and youth in the economic, social and political sphere and protects the rights of the children. Important progress has been achieved in the promotion of the economic and political empowerment of women but it is still necessary to strengthen the participation of women in the political sphere. Programmes to enhance the economic empowerment of women, such as the support to small enterprises, are also necessary.

45. Important progress in achieving gender equity in primary education has been made but results vary at the regional level. Measures to achieve the participation of girls at secondary and tertiary school levels should continue to be implemented.

46. Maternal mortality has decreased in the last years but it is still necessary to improve prenatal and natal care, considering that only 25 per cent of births are attended by skilled health personnel. More cases of obstetric fistula and maternal and child mortality could be prevented with timely prenatal and natal care.

47. One of the main challenges is to eradicate harmful traditional practices and to enhance the rights of women and girls. In this regard, the engagement of local authorities and communities is fundamental to achieving results in the long term. The visit to the Hamlin fistula hospital showed the delegation what difference the treatment of fistula make for girls and women. The delegation also visited a safe house supported by UNFPA and UN-Women in Addis Ababa. The safe house is run by an NGO in partnership with the Government (Police and Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs) and was seen as an excellent approach to addressing violence against women through integrated services.

48. Despite improvements in the indicators for MDGs 3 and 5, Ethiopia still faces important challenges. In this regard, strong coordination on gender issues is essential in Ethiopia, especially taking into consideration that UN-Women does not have a strong presence in the field. The flagship joint programme, which involves UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-Women, UNESCO and ILO, focuses on women's economic empowerment; access to secondary and tertiary education by girls and women; ending harmful traditional practices, including early marriage and female genital cutting; and enhancing coordination structures that address women's rights. It is a good example of interagency coordination accelerating achievement of the MDGs related to gender. However, it is necessary to ensure the financial sustainability of this initiative.

E. Humanitarian response

49. With the GTP, the Government aims to shift from humanitarian aid to development. There have been heavy investments by the Government to introduce safety nets; health and nutrition have been decentralized; and there is an increasing focus on social protection and disaster risk reduction. These seem to be fruitful policy choices, but they need to be sustained over time in order to make the population more resilient. The team visited sites in Somali and Tigray, where UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP have been cooperating with the Government in these areas.

50. One of the targets in the GTP is to ensure Ethiopia is no longer dependent on international food assistance by 2015. At that point, there probably will still be regions where the population will receive food assistance, but the aim is to provide this food from elsewhere within Ethiopia. The UNCT has cooperated with the Government to reduce reliance on food assistance and to increase the amount of food bought locally. This cooperation was shown during a visit to sites of the WFP-supported Productive Safety Net Programme, a food-for-work tool that also helps to stop soil erosion, and in a visit to a food distribution point supplied by WFP. The Tigray team visited a site of the MERET programme.

51. The Government provides security to the WFP distribution of food in high-risk regions, in order to prevent attacks on delivery trucks. Although this assistance is appreciated, it poses additional logistical challenges, since the trucks have to travel in groups and wait for an escort. Some of the areas for food distribution are difficult to reach, especially during the rainy seasons, and a few areas are still out of reach for security reasons. With the hubs and spokes distribution system, the distribution of food and other commodities seems to be taking place as efficiently as possible under the difficult circumstances.

52. After suffering the most severe drought in two decades, the Government, with support of WFP, was able to avoid a famine in 2011, thanks to joint investments in community resilience and preparedness. However, it was emphasized, at all levels, that improving resilience to droughts, particularly through more sustainable access to water, continues to

be a key challenge for developing agriculture and in improving the country's fragile food security situation. It was clear that the priority of the regional government in Somali was to provide sustainable water resources to the population, as the region is regularly affected by droughts. Bringing water in by trucks is expensive; therefore, the Somali state government prefers to use available resources for permanent solutions such as drilling water boreholes. However, it appears to be easier to find cooperation partners for emergency operations than for development activities.

53. The visit to Hilaweyn refugee camp, one of five in the Dollo Ado area, showed the close cooperation among the Government, the United Nations and international NGOs (African Christian Fellowship and Doctors Without Borders) working in the camp to provide shelter, security and social services to Somali refugees. UNICEF ensures emergency education and WFP provides school feeding; child-friendly spaces where traumatized children receive therapy through play; and outreach programmes to pregnant women and young mothers on hygiene and the importance of breastfeeding. WFP supplies the camp with food rations, which the Government distributes through the Administration of Refugees and Returnees Affairs. The Government runs the camp jointly with UNHCR, and is responsible for security in the camp. This particular camp had been open for less than a year and seems to be functioning effectively, in good cooperation with the local inhabitants of the area. However, the long-term challenge for the people living in the camp is finding sustainable livelihoods.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

54. The Government has shown strong ownership and leadership in the development process in Ethiopia, and has made impressive progress towards meeting the ambitious development targets it has set for itself in becoming a carbon-neutral middle-income country by 2025. The shorter-term targets of the GTP – doubling agricultural productivity and achieving all the MDGs in the social sectors by 2015 while sustaining rapid growth and establishing a stable democratic and developmental state – seem to be pursued with strong leadership and vigour. The delegation notes with appreciation that the new UNDAF is fully aligned with the GTP and supports six of the seven GTP pillars.

55. The country has witnessed robust economic growth, and the Government has prioritized investments in the social sector, including tackling climate change challenges to social service delivery systems. The delegation is encouraged to learn that particular efforts are being made to accelerate progress in MDGs 3, 5 and 7, with the assistance of the United Nations, and encourages further efforts in this regard.

56. The Government aims to become independent of food aid by 2015 and reduce aid dependency. In this regard, the mission underlines the importance of dialogue between the United Nations and the Government on the matter.

57. The delegation was impressed with the way the UNCT is assisting the Government in achieving results in many areas, at the federal and regional levels, and in providing humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations and refugees. The contribution of the United Nations is appreciated by the national authorities, and the United Nations agencies are seen as important partners in development and humanitarian assistance, with cooperation and coordination between the Government and the United Nations working well. The importance of well-defined mechanisms for dialogue between the Government and its development partners on approaches to maximize development results, and the importance the partners attach to the United Nations in this regard, are noted and appreciated.

58. The delegation took note of the Government's request for further support from United Nations Headquarters to rationalize and simplify procedures related to fund flow management. In particular, the Government asked that the cash transfer period be extended, from three months to six months, to reflect the federal framework of fund flow management in Ethiopia and to simplify internal United Nations procedures. This request was echoed by the UNCT. It is recommended that this issue be considered at the appropriate levels within the United Nations.

59. The delegation notes that the UNCT and the Government voluntarily took up the Delivering as One vision, and that the UNCT has made good progress in this respect. It notes that the Government appreciates the results of the progress made, including a clear strategic focus, an increased ability to go to scale, with greater value for money. It also notes that the Government would like to see further progress, including increased flexibility to innovate at the country level and a faster pace of reform at the United Nations headquarters level. It is recommended that the experiences of Ethiopia be included, as appropriate, in the background information for future discussions on these matters at United Nations Headquarters.

60. The Delivering as One process does not seem to be well known among the other development partners. The UNCT is therefore encouraged to increase communication with other development partners of the purposes and results of Delivering as One, including the increasing number of joint programmes that require funding. Donors in a position to do so are encouraged to familiarize themselves with these joint programmes and to consider contributing to their funding through the One United Nations Fund. This kind of outreach could help strengthen partnerships between UNCT and other development partners, for example, in the area of private-sector development.

61. On gender, the delegation welcomes the promotion of gender and youth empowerment with equity as a key multisectoral issue in the GTP, and recognizes the UNCT contributions in this regard. The delegation was informed of the progress made in empowering women and improving their participation in decision-making, but progress may be uneven among the different regions. It is recommended that the UNCT consider

increasing efforts to support the economic empowerment of women, for example, by building on the strong focus on small-scale farmers that the Government pursues in doubling agricultural productivity by 2015.

62. In order to support the Government's efforts in building capacity and good governance, the delegation encourages the United Nations, and in particular UNDP, to continue to support capacity building and to strengthen competence in democratic institutions and public-sector reform at the federal level; it could consider increasing its engagement with regional authorities for this purpose. The delegation has been impressed with the strong and effective partnership among the Government, the United Nations and many NGO partners in providing humanitarian assistance to the large number of refugees in Ethiopia. The visit to the refugee camp in Dollo Ado showed the delegation a refugee camp that seemed to be well managed – with important contributions from UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP, as well as many NGOs, in addressing the various needs of the refugees living in very difficult circumstances. Additional challenges include finding long-term, sustainable livelihood solutions for these refugees. The delegation recommends that best practices from the response to the large influx of refugees experienced in 2011, particularly the collaborative mechanisms developed to respond effectively, be collected and documented, to be used in the future in similar situations in Ethiopia and elsewhere.

63. During its visit to the Somali and Tigray regions, the delegation saw examples of the close and effective collaboration between local authorities and the United Nations in assisting vulnerable populations in the region. The resilience of the people and their communities is increased through direct food delivery and through targeted programmes, leading to improved access to clean water, environmental rehabilitation and social protection. The delegation acknowledges the efforts to move people from food aid delivery to productive safety nets as fast as possible as the right approach. It is crucial to ensure a good collaboration and dialogue between the Government and the United Nations so that no gaps are created in this transition. The serious drought has created particular challenges in this respect, and the delegation encourages a continued close cooperation among all partners to ensure that vulnerable people are protected and assisted as required.

64. In line with United Nations General Assembly resolution 62/208, the UNCT is requested to work closely with the Government, especially the central coordinating agency, to facilitate the participation of Ethiopia in the QCPR process, in order to link the negotiation process at United Nations Headquarters with the ground realities of programming in Ethiopia.

65. In line with the 2011 Istanbul Declaration on a renewed and strengthened global partnership for the development of least developed countries, and in view of the subsequent decisions of the various Executive Boards to integrate the Istanbul Programme of Action, the UNCT is requested to help the Government in this regard. It may also consider establishing a coordination mechanism to monitor follow-up of the Istanbul Programme of Action in Ethiopia.

66. Finally, the delegation encourages the UNCT to consider ways to communicate more effectively the results of the work being done in Ethiopia. The United Nations should continue to report not only on the positive results achieved but also on areas where achievements may be lower than expected. However, the delegation witnessed many examples of excellent work and results achieved by dedicated and professional staff who often work under difficult circumstances. The delegation believes these stories and achievements need to be told and made more widely known.
