



World Business Council for
Sustainable Development

Geneva, 24 January 2007

Comments of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) on the Report of the High-level Panel on the United Nations System-wide Coherence entitled “*Delivering as one*”

The WBCSD supports the overall thrust of the Report calling for the United Nations to “deliver as one” in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment and to overcome fragmentation. As a strong supporter of the Millennium Development Goals, the business community will, as a result of the proposed reform, be able to engage and partner with the United Nations and its specialized agencies in a more effective and coherent manner.

As the leading business organization in the field of sustainable development the WBCSD also strongly supports the proposal that the status of sustainable development be elevated within the UN institutional architecture and in country activities. In that context we welcome the recommendation that UNEP and UNDP strengthen their partnership. We also consider that it is essential that a designated UN entity at the highest level be given authority to ensure that sustainable development be mainstreamed into the work of the United Nations and that this entity engages constructively with the private sector and civil society. Just as leading companies are now integrating sustainable development in all aspects of their business, be it in their procurement methods or their supply chain, the United Nations could send a strong signal that it is “walking the talk” by implementing such measures at headquarters, regions and countries.

Development: delivering as one at the country level

The WBCSD welcomes the recommendation in the Report that the UN should deliver as one at country level as it should strengthen national resources and capacity building for implementation, taking into account the necessary flexibility needed to reflect different country circumstances and priorities.

Business can be the engine of economic growth but it needs a favorable investment climate. The UN, working as one entity, should foster private sector development with effective action in the following priority areas: a fair and competitive global market that is non-discriminatory, effective legal and regulatory frameworks, support for SMEs, including better provision of financial services, and investments in core infrastructure. Through the proposed reform the UN should assist governments to set the necessary framework conditions for business to help meet the MDGs.



Environment: building a global consensus and capacity for action

The WBCSD welcomes the recommendation that the system of international environmental governance be strengthened and made more coherent, and that an independent and authoritative assessment of the current UN system is commissioned in that regard. This assessment should be made in an inclusive manner, taking into account the views of all stakeholders.

We agree with the view that the UN should provide leadership and guidance on environmental issues and that a designated UN entity be given real authority and funding over environment policy. We recognize that there are currently many UN entities with an environment mandate (for example CBD and UNFCCC). We recommend that this policy body of the UN strongly coordinates its work program with these entities so as to avoid overlap.

The WBCSD strongly supports simplification of entry points into the UN and strong coordinating units at the UN (for example on water), greater integration of UN standard-setting and operational activities and coherence among UN entities, Bretton Woods institutions other intergovernmental bodies including the various MEA secretariats.

Engagement with the private sector

Business is increasingly engaged with the UN at local level and encourages the UN to more fully recognize and seize on business' local expertise and knowledge to promote sustainable development for all.

At the international level, business should have access and engagement in UN discussions and consultations, commensurate with its role in society, expertise, resources and inter-disciplinary knowledge and impact. For business to make substantive contributions in UN discussions and consultations, it must be allowed to have an early seat at the table.

Business cannot succeed in societies that fail and we therefore have a strong interest in contributing to healthy and thriving societies that will be good places for doing business. We therefore also have a strong interest to have an efficient and effective United Nations.

No part of society can create a sustainable future on its own. We need a partnership between governments and business and we need to work together. The United Nations is an excellent forum to do that. The WBCSD is therefore committed to help the UN in its reform to fulfill its overall objective of sustainable development.