Progress in JMI implementation and in identifying Aid Effectiveness priorities for 2009

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This paper provides a short up-date on the JMIs and on our joint efforts to identify aid effectiveness priorities. These aid effectiveness priorities are relevant to our national situation as well as to our commitments in the Accra Agenda for Action. Both the JMIs and the aid effectiveness priorities therefore help us to remain faithful to the principles of mutual accountability that characterize our GDCC mechanism.

Two documents have been shared. One provides an overview of TWG progress in implementing their own workplans and the JMIs; the second details the aid effectiveness priorities that have been identified.

The Joint Monitoring Indicators

Although it has been only 4 months since the JMIs were endorsed at the CDCF meeting, overall progress towards the agreed targets has in general been good. All 20 of the JMIs appear to have been taken forward. Annex Two of the TWG-JMI report consolidates the reports that we have received from all 19 of the TWGs and I trust that it provides sufficient detail on the 20 JMIs. During the discussion that follows we will of course be able to address any specific issue related to the detail of any particular JMI. I note from the development partner paper that there are queries related to Legal and Judicial Reform, Anti-Corruption legislation, the Agriculture & Water Strategy, as well as Land and my colleagues from the Royal Government are prepared to respond to any questions raised by our development partners.

If there is a single common theme it is that we must fully recognise the *joint* nature of these indicators and the need to work together if we are to achieve our objectives. It is noteworthy that in the majority of cases where progress has been good, it is evident that this is usually because of effective partnership and cooperation. Evidence from the Fisheries, Mine Action, Food Security & Nutrition, PFM, Health and Gender TWGs is particularly positive in terms of showing how partnership-based approaches can produce results but there are others too. In general, where TWGs appear to function effectively there is a strong relationship between their ability to implement their workplans efficiently and to make progress against the JMIs. Ownership and capacity clearly matter and they are an important determinant of the quality of partnership.

Conversely, where constraints have been identified – which is in about half of the JMIs - they generally relate to funding shortfalls or delays in procurement or mobilisation of required expertise. Two TWGs – Agriculture & Water; and HIV/AIDS - also raise concerns about ownership and excessively donor-driven approaches to policy-making. I would therefore urge Government and partners in these TWGs to come together to identify working modalities in which the principles of partnership and mutual accountability are located within the over-riding imperative to promote ownership. Only then will we achieve the results – and guarantee the sustainability – that we all seek. Our discussion to follow will go into further detail.

Aid effectiveness priorities

1. Background

We have all recognised the need to be more focused in our work; to ensure that there is high-level commitment to identifying and implementing measures that can make aid more effective; and that we must focus on actions that are relevant to achieving results. This is the national context and it is consistent with the approach that was agreed in the Accra Agenda for Action.

2. Process

This has been relatively good and we are encouraged at the momentum that has been built over the last few months. A meeting of senior Government officials from the TWGs came together in Siem Reap in December to identify a preliminary set of priorities and since that time there has been a negotiation with development partners in the TWGs. Where further reflection is still required we encourage TWGs to continue their discussion; where the identification is complete we hope that the process to date has created a partnership dynamic that can now ensure swift and effective implementation of the agreed actions.

3. The nature of the priorities

The priorities fall into three broad categories. It is important to note here that priorities are primarily the responsibility of the Government as ownership and leadership are fundamental pre-conditions for success. Implementation is the responsibility of the Ministries and agencies of the Royal Government – this is what taking ownership means. But the priorities have been negotiated in the TWGs – and this is where they will be further discussed and monitored – so I present them here in terms of TWGs.

1. 12 of the TWGs include an ambition to establish or strengthen a programme-based approach or sector strategy. They often link this to stronger ownership, a more cohesive development partner approach and improved information management that can support programming and coordination of resources, as well as the use of national systems. This is overwhelmingly the most commonly-identified priority area.
2. The second theme relates to capacity development. Six TWGs identified a capacity-related priority, often related to monitoring & evaluation, strengthening national systems or to financial management.
3. The third theme is based on the principle of mutual accountability. The Planning and Land TWGs explicitly refer to the use of partnership principles and the actions identified by others also emphasise the need to strengthen ownership through a partnership that is defined by mutual accountability.

4. Implementation and monitoring

It should be recalled that these priorities emerge from a JMI commitment. They will therefore be annexed to the JMIs endorsed at the 2nd CDCF meeting, to be implemented and monitored in the same way through TWG reporting to the GDCC. Again, I note that, just as for other TWG activities, the primary responsibility for leadership and ownership, lies with Government – these priorities are jointly-negotiated but Government leadership is required to ensure their successful implementation. In addition, the Partnership & Harmonisation TWG will provide a forum for regular stock-taking and exchange of views and experience between Government and development partners across all sectors and TWGs. The TWG Network will also perform this peer review and exchange function, as well as facilitating overall coordination, while CRDB/CDC stands ready to provide technical support in line with its mandate as the national aid coordination focal point. I am hopeful that future GDCC meetings will also give us an opportunity to review and discuss implementation as we enter the final two years in which we are to achieve the Paris Declaration targets.

I believe that the principles of ownership and mutual accountability have been strongly emphasised in the priorities that have emerged. I also note that the priorities are consistent with the three areas that we discussed at the CDCF: capacity development and technical cooperation; programme-based approaches; and strengthening the quality our partnership. We should therefore be encouraged that the priorities we have together identified represent an effective response that is rooted in our collective experience. It is also an approach that is consistent with keeping the promises we made in Accra.

Finally, let me offer a broader perspective on our aid effectiveness work. Our efforts to implement the Harmonisation, Alignment and Results Action Plan as well as the commitments made in the Accra Agenda for Action include a number of additional and complementary initiatives. It is useful to brief you here so that everyone can understand the full range of

actions that are being taken to ensure that development assistance is effective and results-driven.

1. Promoting the integration of central planning and budgeting processes, including aid management – the Ministry of Planning will provide an up-date on work in this area;
2. Development and delivery of a training on 'Managing for Development Results', linked to identification and monitoring of JMIs, for key TWG members, which I hope to schedule for later this year in preparation for the 2010 CDCF meeting and JMI exercise;
3. Development of a 'partnering initiative' to strengthen and promote partnerships that enhance ownership and mutual accountability. I hopeful that this work will begin in June and I will share more details in the coming weeks;
4. Application of the Guideline on Technical Cooperation to promote more effective capacity development practices. This has been finalised and I urge both Government colleagues and development partners to make reference to this in line with work being undertaken by CAR on the production of a Capacity Development Strategy;
5. A reflection on the use of national systems as a 'first option' and associated capacity development initiatives linked to the strengthening of these systems – I trust that in each TWG the work on programme-based approaches and capacity development will ensure that we implement the commitment made in Accra to use national systems or otherwise ensure their strengthening over time;
6. Maintaining efforts to ensure in-year and medium-term predictability of development assistance – I acknowledge the major progress made against this objective and thank development partners for up-dating their figures. This will support our PIP and budget processes, as well as our response to the economic challenges that we face.

The effective use of our TWGs has never been more important. Moving forward to implement the JMIs and our aid effectiveness work can make an important contribution to strengthening our partnership and to ensuring the impact of development assistance, not least in the context of the current economic crisis. I am hopeful that we can now move swiftly toward implementation of our joint commitments towards the JMIs and to aid effectiveness work.