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INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

A Minor Field Study on the United Nations inter-agency
cooperation in the area of HIV/AIDS in Kenya

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Abstract

The efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations is a much debated topic, outside the organization as well as inside. This Master Thesis looks at the efficiency of the work of the UN at country level, and it aims at assessing the efficiency of UN inter-agency cooperation in the thematic area of HIV/AIDS in Kenya. It focuses mainly on the work of UNAIDS and its ten Cosponsoring organizations, and it is based on empirical material collected during a Minor Field Study in Nairobi, Kenya in early 2006. The material is analyzed in two steps using two theoretical frameworks, the first assessing the level of inter-agency cooperation in place, and the second assessing the efficiency of existing cooperation.

Conclusions of the study involve determining competition between Cosponsors as the main obstacle to efficient inter-agency cooperation. This as a result of the existing structures of the UN organization as a whole. The hampering effects of different organizational cultures and uneven distribution of resources are additional factors discussed. As a remedy to competition, the overall recommendation is to define and strengthen the mandates of individual UNAIDS Cosponsors. The role of the donors and UN member states is emphasized as important in the UN reformation process, to a more modern, efficient and effective organization.

Key words: Cooperation, efficiency, United Nations, aid, Kenya

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Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Purpose and question at issue.....	1
1.2 Method and material.....	2
1.3 Definition of terms	4
1.4 Disposition	5
2 Theoretical framework.....	6
2.1 Cooperation evaluation framework.....	6
2.2 Efficiency evaluation framework.....	8
3 Background information.....	9
3.1 Overview of some general cooperation mechanisms in place	9
3.1.1 United Nations Development Group.....	10
3.1.2 Common Country Assessment	11
3.1.3 United Nations Development Assistance Framework	11
3.1.4 Thematic groups.....	11
3.1.5 The Three Ones	12
3.2 UNAIDS as lead coordination agency	12
4 Analysis.....	14
4.1 Level of inter-agency cooperation.....	14
4.1.1 Direct supervision	14
4.1.2 Standardizing tasks.....	16
4.1.3 Standardizing results	17
4.1.4 Standardizing knowledge	18
4.1.5 Standardizing norms.....	19
4.2 Level of efficiency	19
4.2.1 Comparison with outset goals	20
4.2.2 Comparison with beneficiaries expectations.....	21
4.2.3 Comparison with the stakeholders goals.....	21
4.2.4 Comparison with professional norms.....	22
5 Conclusions.....	23
6 Recommendations.....	25
7 Summary of results.....	27
8 Bibliography	28
8.1 List of respondents	31

List of Acronyms

AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CCA	-	Common Country Assessment
GoK	-	Government of Kenya
GTT	-	Global Task Team
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
KNASP	-	Kenya National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan
MDG's	-	Millennium Development Goals
NACC	-	National AIDS Control Council
SIDA	-	Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation
UN	-	United Nations
UNAIDS	-	Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS
UNDG	-	United Nations Development Group
UNDAF	-	United Nations Development Framework
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	-	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	-	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	-	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WFP	-	World Food Programme
WHO	-	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

In September 2000, at the United Nations Millennium Summit, world leaders agreed to a set of time bound and measurable goals and targets for combating poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease, environmental degradation and discrimination against women (www.un.org). The Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) have since then been central to much of the international community's aid policy and related work. In order to achieve these goals, there is an outspoken need to make aid more efficient, and how to successfully achieve this has been a much debated topic.

The efficiency of the UN has been exposed to both internal and external criticism. Critics claim that the organization has grown out of controllable proportions with a much too heavy administration and too many programs and specialized agencies competing for resources, leading to uncoordinated, inefficient work with duplication of programs and a greater focus on the goals of the own organization, instead of the goals of the UN family as a whole (Baylis & Smith, 2005:421).

Reforming the organization of the UN is a constantly ongoing process. The current reforms were initiated by the Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in 1997 when he took up his appointment. His reform plans strive for an effective and efficient UN with modern, slimmed down and up to date administration and standards, and the MDG's have become the central policy document, setting the aims and priorities for aid and development work for 2000 to 2015. Agreeing on joint goals is one major step in getting an internationally coordinated response to the specified thematic areas, to increase the chances of reaching the outset goals (www.un.org). With the high degree of measurability in the MDG's, the eyes of the world are watching closely to see how the international community, and the UN with a leading role, is performing.

1.1 Purpose and question at issue

My aim with this thesis is to assess how much of an impact the reform process of the UN is having at the country level, and to see how it is performing. As an evaluation of the entire UN reform program is a considerably larger task than the scope of this Master Theses allows, I have narrowed down my research to looking at the work within the thematic area of HIV/AIDS, more specifically the work of

UNAIDS and its 10 cosponsoring organizations¹, at the country level in Kenya. I aim to find out how far this efficiency and harmonization and alignment reform has trickled down from the policy level at the UN headquarters in New York, to the actual implementation of the HIV/AIDS programs at the country level. This through looking at how far the implementation of efficient inter-agency cooperation mechanisms has come at the country level.

Based on this background, the research question to be analyzed in this paper is as follows; *Are the existing inter-agency cooperation mechanisms ensuring a unified and efficient UN approach in the task of combating HIV/AIDS in Kenya?*

Further, after determining the level of inter-agency cooperation in place, and the quality and effectiveness of the cooperation mechanisms, I will, based on my findings, make recommendations on how the cooperation could be improved.

1.2 Method and material

This case study has been conducted as a Minor Field Study, where I spent 2 months in Nairobi, Kenya, collecting empiric as well as documented material. As it is an in depth study of one specific case, it can be described as a hermeneutical case study with the aim to provide in-depth information about one specific case. It can not alone be the basis for developing a theory applicable to other cases internationally (Lundquist, 1993:104f). It can however, being forthright with its principle problem, and connected to the “standard” conceptive framework, contribute with understanding of other cases (Bjereld etc., 1999:76).

The study has been conducted as a combination of a desk review of relevant documents, as well as conducting interviews with relevant stakeholders. I conducted interviews with 8 UN staff members of organizations in the UNAIDS Cosponsors network, as well as with 4 donor representatives, and additionally I participated as an observer at a policy making conference organized by the UNAIDS Secretariat and the National AIDS Control Council (NACC).

Considering that the topic of efficiency of aid and inter-agency cooperation is a very sensitive topic within the UN, and even more so with the government counterparts, I experienced some difficulties in getting people to participate in interviews. For instance, an interview with a representative from NACC was planned, but due to the very sensitive political situation in Kenya at the time of the study, with corruption allegations involving also technical assistance aid money shaking Kenyan politics, this interview never took place. Also, as many of the

¹ The UNAIDS cooperation network consists of the UNAIDS Secretariate and the following ten cosponsors; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Childrens Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizationa (UNESCO), World Fealth Organization (WHO) and the World Bank (WB) (www.unaids.org).

respondents asked not to be quoted with name, I decided to assure all respondents anonymity, and I will therefore throughout the report not make any references to specific interviews. I will however provide a list of the respondents with name, title and organization at the end of the report.

Specifically considering the sensitivity of the topic being addressed, I had to be very clear about my role as an interviewer, that I am doing this study in my capacity as a student and not as a government representative of Sweden. I had to explain that although the study is being partly funded through a Minor Field Study scholarship from the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), it has not in any way been commissioned by the organization, and I am not researching as a representative of the organization.

I conducted the interviews as semi-structured interviews using a thematic interview guide. The interviews did not aim to get detailed information about the inter-agency coordination mechanisms, as this is easily accessible through various policy documents, but at capturing the views of people involved in the process, either directly or indirectly. This method of asking thematic questions gave me more flexibility to elaborate and adjust the questions to the respondents specific role and expertise. It provided the opportunity to ask follow up questions which would have been left out with a fixed set of questions (Kvale, 1996:84ff).

The selection of respondents was based on their functions as being directly involved in the inter-agency cooperation work. My goal was not to get interviews only with high-level policy makers, but with persons directly involved in the implementation. In some cases names were selected from relevant meeting protocols, and in some cases the selection was based on snow-ball sampling, meaning that one respondent would lead me to the next etc. (Essaiasson etc., 2005:212).

My ontological approach can be described as realistic, as I consider the outcome of this study to be based on subjective perceptions. The approach derives from the thought that reality consists of mental constructions depending on social and cultural contexts. As everything is colored by subjective perceptions, true objectivity can never be obtained (Lundquist, 1993:67f). Important to note is that the outcome of the interviews has been treated as subjective perceptions by the respondent and not as the official position of the organization it represents. Also in my role as interviewer I was aware of my own subjectivity, and I have consciously tried to minimize the impact of my subjectivity on this study through asking neutral and objective questions, avoiding leading the answers of the interviewee in any direction (Essaiasson etc., 2005:279f).

Regarding the selection of documents to be included in the desk-review, I have focused mainly on UN produced documentation, official policy and review documents, as well as internal unpublished documentation. Some of these documents are confidential, and will therefore not be referred to, but they have still contributed to my understanding of this problem, and will thus indirectly be reflected in my analysis. As in the case with the interviews, the documentation must also be considered to be subjective, and one must keep in mind who has

produced it and for what purpose, when evaluating its content (Lundquist, 1993:67ff).

In research you must be very conscious about obtaining a high level of validity – coherence between theoretical definitions and operational indicators, meaning measuring what we intend to measure, and reliability – reliable data collection without systematic or random errors (Esaiasson etc., 2005:59,67). As I mentioned earlier, as some respondents were somewhat suspicious of my intentions and role as a researcher, this can have had some effect on the reliability of the research as they might have chosen to present a “nicer picture” in order to show more positive results. I strived to avoid this situation through being clear about my position as a student doing independent research, the aim of the study, and also guaranteeing the respondents anonymity.

1.3 Definition of terms

As the main aim of this thesis is related to evaluating the cooperation between organizations, I must start with defining the term cooperation as it will be used in this study. Joint programming and joint programs are terms often used within the UN when talking about cooperation between UN organizations. The first formal guidelines on this were issued by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in 2000. The guidelines explain it as follows;

“Joint programming is the collective effort through which the UN organizations and national partners work together to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate the activities aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other international commitments....”

“A joint programme is a set of activities contained in a common work plan and related budget, involving two or more UN organizations and (sub-) national partners. The work plan and budget will form part of a joint programme document, which also detail roles and responsibilities of partners in coordinating and managing the joint activities. The joint programme document is signed by all participating organizations and (sub-) national partners.” (Scanteam, 2005:6)

Joint programs refer to formal cooperation with a signed agreement, whilst joint programming is more informal. In this study I will make no differentiation between the two forms of cooperation, and will use the term cooperation as *“joint coordinated activities, avoiding duplication of work, in the strive for maximized efficiency towards the same goal”*.

Efficiency and effectiveness are two terms often used when talking about the UN reform programs. They are also often used in the medial debate about the performance of the organization. A clear definition of the two is however often avoided, leading to different subjective perceptions about what exactly falls under what term, resulting in a rather confused debate (SOU, 1994:102,28).

Jerker Carlsson (1997) provides the following definition of the terms; *efficiency* relates to cost efficiency – how to use your resources in the most cost efficient way. *Effectiveness* relates to having the right goals and “doing the right thing the right way” and is a more quality driven term (Carlsson, 1997:31).

In this study I will focus on the term efficiency, but the term effectiveness will also be integrated in some parts of the analysis.

1.4 Disposition

Following this introduction, chapter 2 will present the theoretical framework to be used in the analysis. Chapter 3 will give a brief introduction to some of the major general cooperation mechanisms in place in Kenya. The analysis in chapter 4 will be structured in line with the theoretical framework and will be followed by conclusions in chapter 5 and recommendations for future cooperation in chapter 6. Finally, a summary of results is presented in chapter 7.

2 Theoretical framework

To conduct a comprehensive analysis of my research question, I will carry out the analysis in two steps. First I will assess the level of inter-agency cooperation in the area of HIV/AIDS in Kenya in place, and then I will look at the efficiency of this cooperation. My tool to do this will be using two separate theoretical frameworks, each especially developed for evaluation in the specific field.

To be able to make a judgment of to what extent the organizations cooperate, I will use a theoretical framework developed by the organization theorists Jacobsen and Thorsvik (2004), where they claim that cooperation can be conducted and measured on six fixed points (Jacobsen and Thorsvik, 2004:96).

Following, to supplement with the dimension of efficiency, I will refer to an efficiency evaluation framework developed by Vedung (1998), especially developed for political organizations. In the framework ten fixed points are set out, to be used for evaluating to what extent the organization works in an efficient way (Vedung, 1998:204). To make my analysis more concise, I have chosen to evaluate the efficiency according to four of the fixed points, leaving out those that I did not find appropriate for this study.

Below I will present the two frameworks, starting with the cooperation evaluation framework.

2.1 Cooperation evaluation framework

As just noted the cooperation framework by Jacobsen and Thorsvik is based on six fixed points. I will use five of these as one is not applicable to this case. Following I will present the five points and give a brief overview of how Jacobsen and Thorsvik intends to have them interpreted.

1. *Direct supervision* – is when a formal hierarchy is emphasized with a strong vertical division of labor centralising the decision making authority at the higher management. Coordination is geared by decisions and direct steering by the management. In larger organizations several layers of direct supervision can be installed, consisting from sub groups or organizations within the organization with each sub group/organization having leaders at each sub level.

2. *Standardizing tasks* – is when standardizing of rules and regulations regarding procedures and tasks is emphasized. The purpose is to set standards for the flow of work and the performance of certain tasks within the organization, to ensure predictability and to cut decision and production costs. The father of this approach is Weber, who saw strict rules as the most important factor to get an

efficiently working beurocracy. The more sterile the organization is from human irrationality and unpredictability, the more and better coordination and efficiency within the organization is to be expected.

3. *Standardizing results* – refers to having a strong set of goals applying to the whole organization. This approach is not so strictly management driven, and gives room for decentralization and allows the employees more flexibility and possibility to be involved in the decision making and coordination of work. The only criteria is that all decisions and processes must lead to one joint goal.

4. *Standardizing knowledge* - refers to shared knowledge as one of the main factors to get an efficiently working coordination within an organization. Since many tasks are of complex nature, it might require the expertise from several individuals from different subgroups/organizations within the organization. Installing structural facilities for improving the communication mainly at the horizontal level, facilitates coordination. These structional communication and knowledge sharing facilities might be in the form of formalized working group meetings at a regular basis; of having specific posts tasked with coordinating the work of the organization; rotation of staff between different sub groups/organizations; having all sub groups/organizations physically seated in the same building to facilitate interaction and exchange; or information networks facilitating communication and information sharing between the different sub groups/organizations.

5. *Standardizing norms* – refers to standardizing the organizational culture of the sub groups/organizations to joint norms and standards. Having everybody working after the same set of norms and the same code of conduct will facilitate cooperation within the organization. (Jacobsen and Thorsvik, 2004:95-102)

The point I have left out from Jacobsen and Thorsvik's framework is *mutual adjustment* – meaning when individuals or groups (organizations) adjust to each other ad cooperate without any formal agreement. As the UNAIDS Cosponsors are bound by a formal agreement to cooperate, this point does not apply. The authors also mention that this form of cooperation is mainly possible in organizations with a low level of complexity in its organizational structure, which is certainly not the case with the UN.

I intend to look at inter-agency cooperation in the area of HIV/AIDS from the perspective of each of these five fixed points, to determine in what areas functioning cooperation mechanisms are existing, and also to see what approach the UN has chosen to facilitate the harmonization, simplification and alignment reforms. One mode of cooperation does not exclude the other, and I expect to find a mixture of the five ways of cooperation, with emphasis on certain points. From this I aim to see where there is room for improving the process.

2.2 Efficiency evaluation framework

To determine how efficient the inter-agency cooperation in the area of HIV/AIDS in Kenya is, I will use selected parts of Vedung's efficiency evaluation framework, in its original form consisting of ten fixed points. The framework is based on comparison in different fixed points leading to a comprehensive analysis of the efficiency as related to selected factors (Vedung, 1998:203-204). As mentioned, I have narrowed down the fixed points to be used to the following four;

1. *Comparison with outset goals* – to determine how close the obtained results are to the outset goals. Is the level of efficiency obtained sufficient to be determined as achieving the goals?

2. *Comparison with the beneficiaries expectations* – does the level of efficiency live up to the expectations of the recipients, in this case the Government of Kenya (GoK)? Are they satisfied with the level of efficiency obtained?

3. *Comparison with the stakeholders' goals* – does the efficiency live up to other stakeholders' expectations? In this study I will translate this point to determine whether the level of efficiency lives up to the donor community's expectations, and also the expectations of the UNAIDS Cosponsors.

4. *Comparison with professional norms* – does the level of efficiency obtained live up to professional norms? Does national and international expertise determine the level of efficiency obtained to be sufficient? (Vedung, 1998:203-204).

As earlier mentioned, the original framework consists of ten fixed points. The points which I have not included are; *the past, international comparison, national comparison, benchmark, minimum and optimum*. I did not include them either because I do not find them relevant to this study, or because I find them not measurable. To make a comparison between the level of inter-agency cooperation in the past and today would be an entire study in itself. Equally, to compare the results of my research with the best practice or the optimum would also be a comprehensive task requiring a full separate study. This partly because evaluation of the efficiency of inter-agency cooperation is a fairly unexplored area and few comprehensive evaluations are to be found, but also because of the fact that most of the studies undertaken are UN internal unpublished documents, which are normally not accessible to outsiders.

After this presentation of the two theoretical frameworks to be used in the analysis, I will give a brief overview of the main important inter-agency cooperation mechanisms in place in Kenya.

3 Background information

Central to the present UN reform process, initiated by the Secretary General in 1997, is creating a UN living up to modern standards and requirements for efficiency and effectiveness. Simplification, harmonization and alignment within the UN system are catchphrases central to the reforms (www.un.org). In the reform programs there is great focus on harmonizing procedures within the different programs and specialized agencies, and as a result, create a more efficient and effective organization. Adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) in September 2000, part of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, was a great step forward in harmonizing the aid policy and work by the UN as well as the international community. It is a policy document setting the standards for specific goals in eight different areas². The MDG relevant to this study is number 6, *Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases and to halt and revert the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015* (www.un.org).

Confirming that the MDG's is a central policy tool in coordinating and harmonizing the policy making of the UN as well as of the international community, I will now present some of the tools developed to facilitate the *implementation* of the simplification, harmonization and alignment policies at country level in Kenya.

3.1 Overview of some general cooperation mechanisms in place

As this study focuses on the level of efficiency of inter-agency cooperation within the area of HIV/AIDS in Kenya, focusing on the work of UNAIDS Cosponsors, I have chosen the tools which I found most commonly used and most "on the common agenda", but it should be noted that they are not the only ones. I found that accounting for exactly what coordination mechanisms are in place in Kenya is a more difficult exercise than I had expected. There are several mechanisms and tools existing, but they do not always seem to be interlinked.

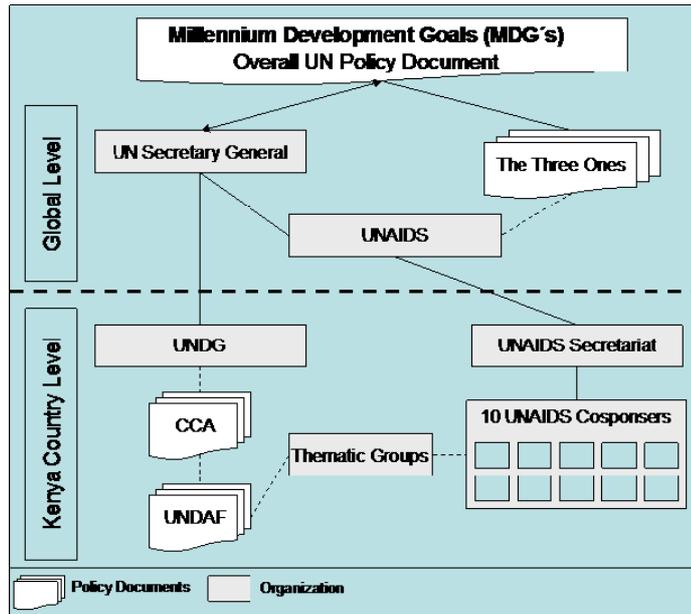
The policy documents, which I refer to as tools, that I will present below are the Common Country Assessment (CCA), The United Nations Development

² The eight Millennium Development Goals are; 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2. Achieve universal primary education, 3. Promote gender equality and empower women, 4. Reduce child mortality, 5. Improve maternal health, 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, 7. Ensure environmental sustainability, 8. Develop a global partnership for development (www.un.org).

Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Three Ones, complemented by a brief presentation of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS), as they both play important roles in the work to harmonize, coordinate and align the work of the UN organizations.

As this chapter is very information based and rather heavy, to facilitate the readers understanding for how these policy document, organizations and working groups are connected, I have produced the below graphic.

Chart 1.1 Structure and connections



3.1.1 United Nations Development Group

In the year of 1997 the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) was created by the UN Secretary General as a tool to improve the effectiveness of UN development at the country level. The chair of UNDG is the Resident Representative of UNDP, i.e. the UN Resident Coordinator, in the case of Kenya Mr. Paul Andre de la Porte. The UNDG Executive Committee (ExCom) consists of the four founding members UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP and UNDP, and it reports directly to the Secretary General. The full UNDG membership consists of 25 organizations. The group meets at least three times yearly to decide on issues related to country level coordination to achieve the MDG's (UNDG, 2005:1).

The mandate of UNDG at country level is to develop policies and procedures that allow member agencies to work together to analyze country issues, plan support strategies, implement support programs, monitor results and to advocate for change. To facilitate the work there is a Country Team working specifically on these issues, in close cooperation with the Government of Kenya. (UNDG, 2005:1 and www.undg.org)

3.1.2 Common Country Assessment

One important task of the UNDG Country Team is to prepare an assessment and analysis of the key causes to poverty with focus on the MDG's and other national priorities. The outcome is a document called Common Country Assessment (CCA). To ensure integration with the national development process, full participation from government and civil society is sought.

The CCA is prepared as a joint effort of all the UNDG member organizations, and one of the areas focused on is to identify priority areas where the UN can collectively make a difference. Kenya was a CCA/UNDAF pilot country and produced its first CCA in 1998, and its latest one in 2001. (UNDG 2005:2 and www.undg.org 6 May)

3.1.3 United Nations Development Assistance Framework

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is a common strategic framework for the operational activities of the UN at country level. It sets out the UN response to national priorities. Based on the nationalized MDG's and the main concerns identified in the CCA, the UNDAF sets out key results to be supported by agencies, and links them directly to the country program of the individual agencies. The first UNDAF for Kenya covered the period 1999-2003, and the current covers 2004-2008 (GoK, 2004:2).

Based on the UNDAF, a Results Matrix is produced, providing the basis for the work of the UN system at the country level. Thematic Groups then consider how each specified result can best be supported on an ongoing basis, and what agency is best suited to respond. One of the aims of the UNDAF and the Results Matrix is to create an efficient, harmonized response to achieve national priorities and goals. It can be used as a tool to identify opportunities for joint initiatives based on agencies' comparative advantage (UNDG, 2005:3-5). "When agencies think, plan and design their programmes together they increase programme effectiveness". (UNDG, 2005:3).

3.1.4 Thematic groups

UN Country Team thematic groups and technical working groups have been established to support the Common Country Assessment (CCA), and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The key consideration in creating these groups is to ensure that they are broad enough to cover the four areas of cooperation agreed under the UNDAF as well as the eight MDGs, and provide for more active involvement of all agencies. Until recently there were six

UN Theme Groups in Kenya³. These were aligned to the MDG's, and each was supported by a technical working group. The thematic Technical Working Groups are attended by technical experts/personnel, and in-depth technical issues are discussed. The Theme Group meetings are only attended by Heads of Agencies, and the discussions are more at a policy level and are based on the outcome of the Technical Working Groups (www.un-kenya.org, 15 April 2006). According to one of the respondents, the latest development in Kenya is that the Theme Groups at Heads of Agency level have been abolished. This due to too many conflicting obligations for the Heads of agencies. Now the thematic Technical Working Groups meet on a regular basis every three months, and they report directly to the Resident Coordinator of UNDP, in absence of a UNAIDS Country Program Advisor.

3.1.5 The Three Ones

A policy document on how to make the work to fight HIV/AIDS more efficient was developed and approved in 2003, and again endorsed in April 2004 at the Consultation on Harmonization of International AIDS Funding by governments, donors, international organizations and civil society groups. The policy document I refer to is "The Three Ones", which sets the following guiding principles for improving the country-level response;

- One agreed AIDS action framework that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners,
- One national AIDS coordinating authority, with a broad-based multisectoral mandate,
- One agreed country-level monitoring and evaluation system.

UNAIDS was called on to act as facilitator and mediator in efforts to realize these principles. (UNAIDS, 2005:7-8) The document was further endorsed at the July 2005 G8 Gleneagles Summit, and the participants committed to applying the Three Ones principles in the HIV/AIDS work in all countries (UNAIDS 2, 2005:2)

3.2 UNAIDS as lead coordination agency

As mentioned earlier, one of the mandates of UNAIDS is to take a leading role in the work against HIV/AIDS. It is headquartered in Geneva, but is represented by UNAIDS Secretariats at the country level. Its role is to act as a coordinator for the

³ UN Thematic Groups in Kenya are; 1. Poverty, Hunger and Partnerships Theme Group (MDG 1&8), 2. Education Theme Group (MDG 2), 3. Gender and Empowerment Theme Group (MDG 3), 4. Health Theme Group (MDG 4,5&6), 5. Theme Group on HIV/AIDS (MDG 6) and 6. Sustainability Theme Group (MDG 7) (www.un-kenya.org, 15 April 2006).

work of the ten Cosponsors, and also to liaise with the Government and national counterparts to ensure an efficient and affective joint approach in the work against AIDS (www.unaids.org, 4 April 2006).

A meeting was held in London on 9 March 2005, called “The Global Response to AIDS – Making the Money Work: The Three Ones in Action”, attended by leaders from both donor and developing countries governments, civil society, UN agencies and other international institutions. The purpose of the meeting was to agree on the setting up of a Global Task Team with the mandate to “improve coordination among multilateral institutions and international donors to further strengthen the AIDS response in countries” (ToR Global Task Team, 2005:1). The UNAIDS Secretariat plays an important role as the facilitator of the Global Task Team, which was assigned with developing a set of recommendations within 80 days on how to improve the institutional architecture of the response to HIV/AIDS. The particular focus is on how to streamline, simplify and further harmonize procedures and practices of the multilateral system, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the country-led responses and reduce the burden placed on countries (www.unaids.org, 14 May 2006). One of the recommendations was to reconfirm the role of UNAIDS and the UNAIDS Secretariat as taking the lead in facilitating an efficient and effective coordination of the work of the UNAIDS cosponsors (UNAIDS 1, 2005:3).

4 Analysis

The UN is very much a “living organization” constantly developing and changing. Since its foundation in 1945, it has grown into a system of Programmes and Specialized Agencies working according to complex administrative and political structures. There are different funding mechanisms and different channels of reporting (UN, 2000:3ff). It has grown into an organization with a joint overall framework of rules and regulations and code of conduct, but the administrative rules, and the organizational culture within the various members of the UN family differ greatly. This diversification within the UN family has been recognized as hampering inter-agency cooperation, and thereby the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. As a remedy, the simplification, harmonization and alignment process has become a part of the Secretary General’s reform program.

After having presented the theoretical frameworks and relevant background information, I will move to the analysis of my actual research question “*Are the presently existing inter-agency cooperation mechanisms ensuring a unified and efficient UN approach in the task of combating HIV/AIDS in Kenya?*”. I will start with an analysis of the level of working inter-agency cooperation mechanisms in place, and then continue with an assessment of the level of efficiency obtained. In the following chapter I will then present my conclusions based on this analysis.

4.1 Level of inter-agency cooperation

As mentioned in chapter 2, the framework analyzing the level of inter-agency cooperation consists of five fixed points;

1. Direct supervision
2. Standardizing of tasks
3. Standardizing of results
4. Standardizing of knowledge
5. Standardizing of norms.

I will present my analysis under each of these fixed points below.

4.1.1 Direct supervision

As presented in chapter 2, this point describes a cooperation based on formal hierarchies and decision making at the highest level. Coordination is geared by decisions and direct steering by the management.

Concerning the focus of this study, i.e. how the inter-agency cooperation works at the country level in Kenya, I think that this fixed point describes quite well the efforts being done to promote coordination in the field of HIV/AIDS. As presented earlier, both UNDG and UNAIDS, who are major actors in coordinating the work against HIV/AIDS, were set up on the request of the Secretary General, and they both report directly to him.

There are several formal mechanisms structuring inter-agency cooperation at the country level, including the ones I presented in the previous chapter. The CCA and UNDAF are providing a framework for the joint work of the UN agencies, based on the Government priorities, decided at highest level. These documents steer the rest of the policy and implementation work of the individual UNAIDS Cosponsors, as their individual programs have to be in line with these documents.

The Cosponsoring organizations are represented in Kenya at different levels, some organizations are headquartered in Nairobi, whilst others have regional or country offices. This naturally leads to a skewed distribution of resources among the organizations, where some have several staff members working full-time with the HIV/AIDS program, whilst other organizations with fewer resources, have only one person spending 25% of the working time on these issues (UNAIDS Secretariat, 2005:4). I also found that inter-agency cooperation was often not a part of the terms of reference for the job descriptions, leading to that there is not calculated any specific amount of time to be spent on this task. This signals that it is not a priority, and it becomes an additional task for the staff members, competing with the tasks outset in the job description (Scanteam, 2005:45).

Interestingly enough, interviewing respondents from different organizations of varying size and financial situation, I saw a striking difference in attitudes towards inter-agency cooperation. The larger organizations, or the organizations with sufficient resources and funding, seemed to have less focus on cooperation. Apart from the UNAIDS Secretariat, the smaller organizations which are more dependent on voluntary and project funding seemed to be the main driving actors. The existence of this trend is also confirmed by both external and internal reports (Scanteam, 2005:13ff). Considering that the UNAIDS Cosponsors all have committed to the cooperation in making the work more efficient and effective, theoretically seen, there should be the same emphasis in all organizations, decided by the Senior management of each organization, in line with the Secretary General's policy directives.

The Cosponsors should also stay within their given mandate, endorsed by the UN member states, in order to avoid competition and duplication of work. As the size and funding situation for the individual organizations vary greatly, in practice there is often a competition for funding, and mandate stretching is a problem acknowledged also by the UN senior management (Mair, 2005:4-6).

To sum up my views on this fixed point, I find that there are tools in place to facilitate inter-agency cooperation, established by the management, and through the CCA, UNDAF and the Technical Working Group, there is some inter-agency cooperation in place. There is considerable cooperation when producing these policy documents, but less on the implementation level. Some inbuilt mechanisms

in the structure and system of the UN as a whole, promoting focus on the performance of the individual organizations but less on the work done in the thematic area as a whole, leads to competition and flagging of the individual results. This is hampering the efforts of efficient and effective inter-agency cooperation in the field of HIV/AIDS.

4.1.2 Standardizing tasks

This point refers to standardizing rules and regulations to obtain standards for how certain tasks are performed.

The UN has a heavy set of rules and regulations applying to the organization as a whole. This sets the overall framework for how the organization should be run, but it leaves a great deal of flexibility to each individual organization when it comes to the performance of procedures and tasks, such as administration and implementation of programs. Over the years, each organization has developed its own organizational culture with own practices, procedures, standards and formats (Scanteam, 2005:48f).

Practical obstacles such as different planning and implementation cycles (some have 2 year cycles, some have 5 years etc.) amongst Cosponsors, or different reporting and monitoring tools, lead to problems in efficient cooperation (Scanteam, 2005:50f).

There has however been some progress in this area as the four ExCom agencies have to some extent harmonized and aligned their tools and practices (Scanteam, 2005:50). This is a large undertaking as it first has to be decided what procedures, standards and formats to be used, and then it has to be fully implemented. The case is inevitably that some organizations have to change and give up old practices. It is a cumbersome process involving conflicting interests, and it is not always easy to reach an agreement as this statement from one of the respondents shows; *“We have worked for ten years to develop an internal financial reporting system which suits our needs. Now that it is up and running successfully and to our satisfaction, why would we want to give up this huge investment and change to another inferior system?”* The harmonization of some procedures and standards of the ExCom organizations is a step in the right direction, but keeping in mind that this only represents four out of the ten UNAIDS Cosponsors, there is still a huge task ahead.

Collecting material for this study I also felt the problems of the different procedures and tools used by the Cosponsors. I initially intended to do a mapping of all the Cosponsors projects on HIV/AIDS, and compare the individual project documents to see where there is inter-agency cooperation and where there is obvious overlapping. This turned out to be a much more complicated task than expected as the formats for the individual Cosponsors vary to the extent that I found it did not serve a purpose to compare them. Some organizations have full fledged project documents, whilst others indicate in their work plan or strategic

framework what they intend to do in each thematic area without detailed description or indicators.

To sum up my views on this fixed point, I find that the different organizational rules and working methods of the Cosponsors, with different procedures, tools and formats, is a great obstacle to efficient inter-agency cooperation. Work to harmonize the procedures has been initiated, but there is still a long way to go.

4.1.3 Standardizing results

As presented in chapter 2, this fixed point refers to cooperation striving for joint results and one joint goal.

Despite that tools such as the CCA, UNDAF and Cosponsors network and the Three Ones have been developed and implemented, I found that the UN is often criticized at the country level for being too fragmented and that UN organizations do not seem to have one joint goal. Donors mentioned that they feel that the UN organizations do not signalize that they represent one joint UN family with one common goal, but quite the contrary sometimes. One donor respondent mentioned that at conferences, the individual Cosponsoring organizations often emphasize the goals and expertise of their individual organization, and there seems to be some competition instead of cooperation.

The picture of fragmentation presented in interviews with donors shows that although the UN and the UNAIDS Cosponsors have one overall joint goal, the MDG number 6 – *To halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015*, and some tools to reach it, the specific individual goals of the organizations sometimes come at first place.

One explicit joint goal which has been achieved though is the preparation and launch of a Kenya National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan for 2000-2005. This strategic plan was produced by the Government of Kenya with collective inputs from the UNAIDS Cosponsors and other stakeholders (GoK, 2005:23).

Asking the donors if they are aware of the UN internal work being done in coordinating the work of organizations, I found that they were generally not well informed. One donor respondent suggested that they should be kept better informed about inter-agency cooperation work and activities, and suggested UNAIDS to take the lead on this. Most donor respondents also mentioned that they find it difficult to know the mandates of the individual organizations, as they find that some organizations sometimes work in areas not directly related to their mandate. Asking if donors support the inter-agency cooperation efforts financially, the answer was a unanimous No.

My views on this point are that the funding system, and also the actions and signals sent by donors, do not promote UN inter-agency cooperation. As there is in fact competition for funds, this leads to a climate where the organizations have to put their own interests first, and the overall benefits and interests of cooperation second. There are strong demands for changing the UN system, especially from the donors, but there does not seem to be much interest in funding these activities.

One must keep in mind that the UN is dependent on the political and financial support from donors. Without this in place, no change is possible.

4.1.4 Standardizing knowledge

This point refers to standardizing of knowledge as the main factor to achieve efficient cooperation. The fact that the UN office in Nairobi is one of the UN headquarters, and that all cosponsors are located in the same compound, is a big step towards achieving interaction and cooperation between the organizations.

Jacobsen and Thorsvik mention specific posts responsible for cooperation as an important tool (2004:100). This method is adopted at most UN country level duty stations, also in Nairobi. The Resident Coordinator is the designated representative of the Secretary General for development operations at the Kenya headquarters, and he is also the UNDP Resident Representative. He reports to the Secretary General on the program development and coordination at country level (www.un-kenya.org, 15 April 2006).

In the field of HIV/AIDS, the UNAIDS Secretariat has been assigned the role as coordinator in Kenya. This coordination function is central to the UNAIDS Cosponsors network, and provides resources to produce needs assessments and policy documents used in the work. At the meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board on 29 June 2005, the board *“urged UNAIDS to strengthen its leadership of, and support to, global, regional and national efforts to intensify HIV prevention as part of a comprehensive response to AIDS”* (UNAIDS 2, 2005:2).

A further step to promote standardization of knowledge to facilitate cooperation is the Theme Working Group on HIV/AIDS, where interaction between the Cosponsors promote the sharing of information and knowledge. To promote a general awareness and sensitization of HIV/AIDS amongst the staff members at the UN headquarters in Nairobi, training sessions have been conducted, with successful results in terms of information sharing (UNAIDS 3, 2005:4).

To sum up my views on this point, I found that there is a network for standardization of knowledge in place in Kenya. A problem expressed by some respondents was however that the information sharing is sometimes so excessive, that they do not have time to absorb and process all information shared. The fact that the Theme Group for Heads of Agencies has recently been abolished, can be seen as a decentralization of the sharing of information, resulting from too many conflicting obligations of the senior management. Jacobsen and Thorsvik are positive to standardization of knowledge at the horizontal level, and support decentralization in this point (2004:100-101).

4.1.5 Standardizing norms

This point refers to standardizing the organizational culture of the Cosponsors, to create one uniform UN organizational culture. In my opinion this is the most challenging task.

There are many definitions of organizational culture, and an interpretation used by many organizational theorists is - *an inherited pattern of ethics and norms, influencing and forming the actions of members of the organization*. They further mention that the organizational culture is often promoted and reinforced through the use of unique symbols (Jacobsen and Thorsvik, 2004:146).

As mentioned in 4.1.2, there are overall norms such as the UN code of conduct in place, but these are very general, overall norms of how a UN staff member should act. The individual organizations have over the years developed additional individual organizational cultures regarding administration and implementation.

Donor respondents referred to this topic as a problem area. As referred to earlier they mentioned that organizations were “flagging” their own organizations expertise and performance, to the expense of the work of the UN system as whole. Looking at the visibility of the UN, it was more common to see one of the logos of the individual Cosponsors than the joint logo for the UN system.

During my interviews with respondents from different UNAIDS Cosponsors I got the feeling that there is a strict, unspoken, hierarchy between the organizations. Some seem to see themselves as natural leaders within certain areas and do not necessarily agree to seeing other organizations stepping into their territory, or trying to take the lead in “their” area. Without my mentioning, this problem was also brought up by several of the donor respondents.

My view on this point is that this is the major challenge to obtaining an efficient and effective inter-agency cooperation. Organizations have over the years developed individual strong organizational cultures, and changing this will most likely be a gradual and slow process. All the fixed points discussed earlier are building blocks in creating a joint UN organizational culture, but I predict that it will take considerable time before the individual organizational cultures of the UNAIDS Cosponsored are harmonized.

4.2 Level of efficiency

As mentioned in chapter 2, the framework to analyze the level of efficiency of inter-agency cooperation consists of four fixed points;

1. Comparison with outset goals
2. Comparison with the beneficiaries expectations
3. Comparison with the stakeholders goals
4. Comparison with professional norms.

I will present my analysis under each of these fixed points below.

4.2.1 Comparison with outset goals

As the name of this fixed point implies, it refers to comparing the current situation with the outset goals. The only measurable indicators set out for the goals of UNAIDS Cosponsors inter-agency cooperation is to reach the goals set out in MDG number six, “to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015” (GoK, 2005:5f)

The implementation process for the MDG’s in Kenya was initiated in September 2002. Later the government, with assistance from the UN and other implementation partners, conducted an assessment study of Kenya’s performance in relation to each of the eight MDG’s, which was launched in July 2003. The outcome of the study resulted in a halt in the implementation of the programs as they were initially planned, and a new approach was developed in cooperation with implementing partners, including UNAIDS Cosponsors, and other stakeholders. The new program was officially launched in May 2004, with a demonstrated commitment to reaching the MDG’s by 2015. (GoK, 2005:5f)

As there are no measurable indicators for either the desired level of efficiency of inter-agency cooperation to be obtained, the goals, or indicators for how to explicitly measure efficiency, it is difficult to give a comprehensive and clear cut answer under this fixed point. What can be confirmed is that certain tools to promote higher efficiency and avoid duplication of work have been, and are currently being, developed. As it is a rather new, and ongoing and developing process, it is difficult to say how far it has come. Most respondents seemed positive about the development of improved inter-agency coordination mechanisms as some frustration with the current methods were expressed. One respondent from a Cosponsoring organization expressed the difficulties with inter-agency cooperation as follows;

“It is very time and resource consuming. I have for example during the last three months been working to set up cooperation with another Cosponsoring organization, and now where we have almost come to the point of agreeing on a joint project, my counterpart in the other organization has been reassigned to another duty station. This means that I have to start the process all over again from square one with the new counterpart”.

This statement implies that much of the inter-agency cooperation depends on the initiatives of persons, initiating certain activities. This was also confirmed by other respondents. This view shows that there is a need for stronger and more formalized inter-agency cooperation mechanisms to improve efficiency.

As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to give an explicit determination of how far from, or close to, the current UNAIDS inter-agency cooperation in Kenya is to the goals of aspired efficiency. I did see much work in the area done, and also in the process of being done, and I believe that some progress has been made compared to the earlier situation.

4.2.2 Comparison with beneficiaries expectations

To crystallize the specific national goals, the Government of Kenya has, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders including the UNAIDS Cosponsors, produced the Kenya National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (KNASP) for 2005/06 – 2009/10. The document was still in draft format at the time of this study. In the foreword the President H.E. Mwai Kibaki, reconfirms Kenya's commitment to the "Three Ones", and makes the following appeal to the relevant stakeholders, including the UNAIDS Cosponsors.

"I appeal to all stakeholders to support the implementation of KNASP and build partnerships with one another so that we can achieve the goal of the Strategic Plan, namely "reduce the spread of HIV, improve the quality of life of those infected and affected and mitigate the socio-economic impact of the epidemic in Kenya" (GoK/NACC, 2006:v).

The purpose of the KNASP is to *"provide an Action Framework for HIV/AIDS within which all HIV/AIDS interventions in Kenya take place... to provide clear and agreed vision, goals and targets for the national response over the next five years"* (GoK/NACC, 2006:vii). The preparation of a national action framework is in line with the first point of the "Three Ones".

As regarding to how the Government of Kenya feels about the level of efficiency in the UN inter-agency cooperation, I have, certainly for political reasons, not found any explicit statement, or even any reference. I do however think that the above statement from the President, calling for partnership building amongst stakeholders, can be interpreted as that they feel that there is improvement to be done in this area.

4.2.3 Comparison with the stakeholders goals

As describer in chapter 2, this point refers to the gals and perceptions of the stakeholders, which in this study are the donors and the UNAIDS Cosponsors.

Interviewing respondents from different cosponsoring organizations, I found that there was varying emphasis on inter-agency cooperation between the respondents. One thing that they seemed to agree on though, was that it is a cumbersome and time and resource consuming process, which is not very efficient. Some frustration was expressed about that the coordination mechanisms are not working properly, and that cooperation often originate from relations and efforts on the personal level.

Discussing the same topic with donor respondents, I got the impression that they have a similar view. It was mentioned that the processes and the work to obtain working inter-agency cooperation is not transparent enough, and that they are not being properly informed about work being done. A general view was that it seems to be more focus and exposure of the work and results of the individual Cosponsors, and the results are rarely presented as a unified, joint UN effort. One

respondent also mentioned that it often is cumbersome when dealing with several UN agencies at once, since they amongst themselves do not seem to have decided on one goal, one strategy and the means to achieve this.

The overall opinion of the stakeholders seemed to be that there is room for improvement in the area of inter-agency cooperation. The respondents from Cosponsoring organizations were fairly well informed about mechanisms in place and ongoing initiatives, whilst the donors were less informed. As mentioned earlier, the donors all said that they are not specifically earmarking funding for initiatives to improve the efficiency of inter-agency cooperation, but they have high expectations and demands for harmonization activities to take place. They also agreed that the apparent competition between UNAIDS Cosponsors is hampering efficient inter-agency cooperation.

4.2.4 Comparison with professional norms

This point refers to whether the national and international experts determine the level of efficiency obtained in inter-agency cooperation to be sufficient.

On the global level the efficiency of the UN is being questioned by many who claim to be experts. Also the donor community and the countries receiving aid are questioning the efficiency of the organizations work. This has resulted in several ongoing reform programs to slim down the administration, and to harmonize work within the organization as a whole.

On the country level in Kenya I did not come across any published outspoken criticism of the level of efficiency by claimed experts, but this does not in any way mean that such does not exist. To me, the real experts on this topic are the persons directly involved in the work. I myself made the experience that this is a very complex area to analyze due to the many, and complex structures and mechanisms within the UN. It is difficult to fully get an understanding for how the system functions, and to be able to evaluate its efficiency, this is basic and central information. I should point out that this paper gives a very simplified picture of how it in practice works, and there are many more facilitating mechanisms which have not, due to the given constraints, been discussed.

Many of the respondents interviewed seemed to have their doubts about the efficiency of inter-agency cooperation between the UNAIDS Cosponsors in Kenya as the situation is today. I did however get the impression that there is a positive feeling about the future and much work is being done to develop and install efficient facilitating mechanisms.

5 Conclusions

My conclusion from the analysis is that there are certain mechanisms in place facilitating inter-agency cooperation in the field of HIV/AIDS in Kenya. Both policy documents, working networks and working groups are developed and tasked with facilitating coordination. There seems to be substantial cooperation in producing various policy documents, but considerably less in the implementation of these. It is questionable whether the presently existing cooperation mechanisms in place are ensuring a unified and efficient UN approach in the task of combating HIV/AIDS in Kenya. Following I will summarize the main obstacles I found to efficient inter-agency cooperation.

Firstly, the comprehensive problem with achieving efficient inter-agency cooperation seems to be the competition for funds between Cosponsors. This I see as the result of a system error within the structure of the UN. Due to the different funding mechanisms within the organization as a whole, some individual organizations are to a large extent funded by core funding, whilst others are more dependant on voluntary contributions and project funding. This, in combination with the decreasing funding for the UN over the last years, leads to that individual organizations promote themselves and flag their expertise and results to attract funding (Mair, 2005:4-6). Many organizations are dependant on the voluntary and project funding, and therefore the competition gets hard.

Secondly, as a result of this, mandate stretching has become rather common, as was pointed out by both donor, and UN staff member respondents. Donor respondents mentioned that they find it difficult to keep track of the stretched mandates of the organizations. Some donors also pointed out that the expertise of UN organizations lies within policy making. In order to attract funding for technical assistance projects, many organizations focus too much on the “simple” implementation of projects, and neglect their expertise as policy makers. Donor respondents recognized their role in this matter, and acknowledged that earmarking of funds has negative effects on inter-agency cooperation.

Thirdly, the different organizational culture of the Cosponsors, with different planning and implementation cycles, and different structures and procedures, makes it difficult to find a joint level facilitating efficient inter-agency cooperation. The practical obstacles such as different reporting and management tools, and varying formats and standards, makes it difficult to even get an overview of the system. These varying procedures have over the years grown to a part of the individual organizations culture and are difficult to change. Donor respondents mentioned that there seems to be a strict unofficial hierarchy amongst the Cosponsors, and that some organizations see themselves as natural leaders in certain areas. This might lead to problems if organizations “lower” in the

unofficial hierarchy seeks to take the lead in cooperation with other organizations “higher ranked”.

As a fourth point, the fact that the organizations have different capacities at country level in Kenya, some being headquarters, some regional and country offices, leads to an uneven distribution of resources. In addition, in many cases inter-agency cooperation was not defined in the terms of reference for the respondents job descriptions, and this therefore became yet another task competing for limited time. This could have the effect that the staff members are not evaluated after how much focus and time is spent on inter-agency cooperation, which might lead to it becoming less of a priority. It was mentioned by most respondents that creating inter-agency cooperation is a rather time and resource consuming activity, and some were of the opinion that most inter-agency cooperation initiatives arise from initiatives by persons, and not as a result of the coordination mechanisms.

Another thing to be mentioned is that donors seemed relatively uninformed about the ongoing and upcoming initiatives within the UN system to promote efficient inter-agency cooperation. Some respondents called for a stronger leadership by UNAIDS, and more clear mandates and division of labor within the UNAIDS Cosponsors network. All donor respondents interviewed confirmed that they do not fund specific initiatives for promoting more efficient inter-agency cooperation.

Despite these outlined obstacles to efficient inter-agency cooperation within the work against HIV/AIDS in Kenya, I saw much work and efforts being put into strengthening and/or reforming the existing cooperation mechanisms, which to me seemed to be too weak to be efficient.

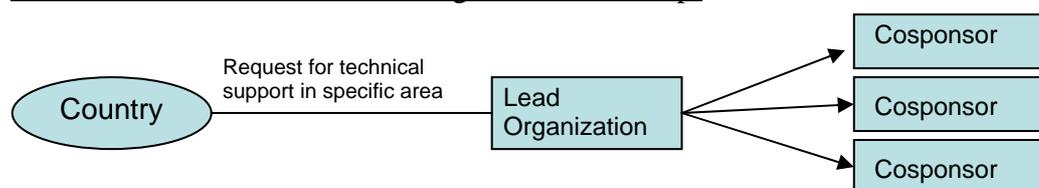
This being a very current topic, it is widely discussed both at the UN Headquarters in New York, and at country level in Kenya. Speaking with the respondents, but also informally with UN staff members at the Nairobi UN Headquarters, I did get the feeling that people are positive about finding a coordination system that works. There was no illusion that this will be a process happening overnight, but it was recognized that it is a process already started with the policy and reform programs initiated by the Secretary General, which will go on for several years. As I see it, the problem lies within the structures of the UN as a whole, as I do not see cooperation and competition to be compatible terms leading to an efficient organization. There need to be changes both from the top, senior management level of the organization, fully supported by the UN member states, and from the bottom, grass root level where the actual implementation of projects is being done. As I mentioned earlier, the Secretary General's UN reform program is a step in the direction of change coming from the top level, and from what I saw at the country level in Kenya, there is plenty of work being done to facilitate change towards a more efficient organization. What must be emphasized is that the UN member states hold the key to the development of a more efficient and effective UN, as they are the ones making the decisions, and thereby the ones in practice running the organization.

6 Recommendations

My most comprehensive recommendation to improve the efficiency of UN inter-agency cooperation in the HIV/AIDS work in Kenya, would be to review and strengthen the definition of mandates of the individual UNAIDS Cosponsors. This view was also supported by many of the respondents. I recently found out that work in this area is currently being done. The UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, mentioned in a speech at the Vienna UN Headquarters (12 May 2006) that the UN member states have been assigned to review and re-endorse the mandates of the UN as a whole, and also the mandates of each individual UN organization. I have not found any documentation indicating a dead-line for this exercise. Strengthening the definition of the mandates would to me be a key in creating efficient inter-agency cooperation mechanisms, and it would impede competition between the individual organizations as the areas of responsibility of each organization would be clearly outlined.

Also at the country level in Kenya work is being done to clarify the roles of each UNAIDS Cosponsoring organization. A current initiative headed by UNAIDS in cooperation with the Cosponsors is the “Lead Organization Concept”. In simplified terms this is a framework structuring the division of labor between the UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors, which has been developed as a policy concept and document, but not yet endorsed and implemented (UNAIDS, 2005:3ff). For ease of reference I have included below a graphic describing the structure of the intended division of labor.

Chart 1.2 Structure of the Lead Organization Concept



Central to the concept is to have one single lead organization in specific defined areas where technical assistance is requested. There will be different lead organizations for different areas. The lead organization will receive the request for assistance from the Government of Kenya, and will then either perform required work itself, or delegate to specified Cosponsors having expertise in the area. The lead organization will, even if the implementation has been delegated to a Cosponsor, be responsible for the result and quality of the implementation and responsible for the reporting of results. This framework aims to make a clear division of labor between the Cosponsors, but equally important, to secure that

one Cosponsor gets ownership and takes responsibility for the work, and acts as a liaison with UNAIDS and other providers of technical support, within a specific area (UNAIDS, 2005:3ff).

My reason for presenting this concept in the chapter for recommendations is that I think that it is a good approach with potential to be successful. But *only if* the mandates of the Cosponsors are clearly outlined and defined, as the element of competition will otherwise remain.

Another approach to make inter-agency cooperation in the thematic area of HIV/AIDS more efficient and effective is to move away from the focus on UN coordination mechanisms, and focus on mechanisms provided by the Government counterpart. One donor respondent was of the opinion that there is too much focus on making the coordination within the UN system work, and too less on how this coordination is in line with the recipient country's needs. A suggestion expressed was to focus more on needs assessments developed by the Government counterpart, such as the Kenya National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan (KNASP), and use it as a framework identifying areas where UN technical assistance is needed. Based on this, it could be assessed in what areas each Cosponsor has its mandated area of expertise, and this could lead to a natural coordination of work and division of labor. This area sounds good in theory, and I think that it would be an interesting approach. The fact that it was mentioned by a donor respondent indicates that it is an approach promoted at least by some donors. For this approach to be potentially successful, I think that it is of central importance that the mandates of the UNAIDS Cosponsors are strengthened and strictly defined to avoid competition.

Concluding this chapter, to me the key to efficient inter-agency cooperation lies in the eradication of competition between the individual UN organizations. This could be achieved through defining and strengthening the individual organizations mandates, avoiding overlapping and duplication. The donors also play an important role in this work, and it is important that they support this initiative not only on the policy level, but also through their actions. To make work within the thematic area of HIV/AIDS more efficient, also they must coordinate their efforts to avoid duplication or even conflicting work being done. As stated before, earmarking of funds for specific projects or organizations go against the efforts to promote efficient inter-agency cooperation.

7 Summary of results

This study has assessed whether the presently existing cooperation mechanisms in place are ensuring a unified and efficient UN approach in the task of combating HIV/AIDS in Kenya. My analysis is based on one framework assessing the level of inter-agency cooperation in place, and one framework assessing the level of efficiency of the cooperation. My conclusion is that there are cooperation mechanisms in place, which seem to work rather well on the policy level, but which are weak when it comes to implementation.

The main obstacle to efficient inter-agency cooperation is competition between the individual UNAIDS Cosponsors, resulting from the uneven funding situation and distribution of resources within the UN system. This competition for necessary funds has led to mandate stretching and flagging of the individual organizations expertise and results, making the work in the area of HIV/AIDS uncoordinated and unstructured. This results in focus on the individual goals of the Cosponsoring organization, and not in the joint overall goals of the UN. Donor respondents confirmed that promoting an efficient UN approach to HIV/AIDS is a priority, but no donor respondent interviewed confirmed funding of specific activities promoting efficiency of inter-agency cooperation at the country level.

Different organizational culture amongst the UNAIDS Cosponsors seems to hamper efficient inter-agency cooperation. Practical obstacles such as different planning and implementation cycles, different standards, formats and tools makes it difficult to find common grounds for efficient cooperation. There seems to be an unofficial hierarchy between the organizations, leading to difficulties overstepping the unofficial, but ingrained opinions and habits. The different capacities and resource levels at country level in Kenya seems to enhance this hierarchy thinking.

My comprehensive recommendation for improving the efficiency of inter-agency cooperation, is to clearly define and strengthen the mandates of the individual UNAIDS Cosponsors to avoid overlapping and duplication of work. Having clearly defined and strong mandates would counteract the problem of competition between the organizations. This initiative must be supported by the donors, both in policy making and in implementation. Also they must coordinate and harmonize their aid programs in order to avoid conflicting programs or duplication of work due to earmarked funds for specific programs or projects.

As a conclusion, conducting this study has made me more aware and informed about the complexity of the UN system. I hope that I have in a correct manner been able to not only highlight the problem areas and obstacles to efficient inter-agency cooperation in the field of HIV/AIDS in Kenya, but also to convey the positive feeling I got from many directly involved in working with this issue. Much work is being done, both at the global and at the country level, and I think that the big wheels for change have been set in motion, and now it is a matter of being patient awaiting the results.

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In addition, reference is made in the text to a speech held by Mr. Kofi Annan on 12 May at the UN Headquarters in Vienna, to all Vienna based UN staff members.

8.1 List of respondents

Ms. Mira Ihalainen, Institutional Development Advisor, UNAIDS Secretariat, 23 January 2006. Duration 1 h.

Ms. Inderpal Dhiman, Coordination Support, Office of the Resident Coordinator, 30 January 2006. Duration 1,5 h.

Mr. Roger Pearson, Senior Programme Officer, UNICEF, 14 February 2006. Duration 45 min.

Ms. Agnetta Onyango, Programme Officer HIV/AIDS, UNDP, 16 February 2006. Duration 45 min.

Ms. Wachuka Ikua, Operations Officer, World Bank, 17 February 2006. Duration 45 min.

Ms. Alice Ochanda, Programme Officer, UNESCO, 22 February 2006. duration 45 min.

Mr. Carsten Hyttel, Representative, UNODC, 28 February 2006. Duration 1h.

Mr. Rey Chad Abdool, Drug abuse and HIV/AIDS Adviser, UNODC, 28 February 2006. Duration 1 h.

Ms. Vibeke Grundtvig Söergaard, First Secretary, Norwegian Embassy, 31 January 2006. Duration 1,5 h.

Ms. Margaretha Brisman, HIV/AIDS Programme Officer, Swedish Embassy, 2 February 2006. Duration 1 h.

Mr. Anders Örnemark, Deputy Head of Mission, Danish Embassy, 8 February 2006. Duration 45 min.

Ms. Anna-Carin Kandimaa, Health Advison, EC Delegation, 23 February 2006. Duration 1 h.

I also attended the Kenya One-Day Universal Access National Consultation, held at the Panafrique Hotel, Nairobi, on 19 January 2006, organized jointly by UNAIDS Secretariate and NACC. Here I had informal discussions with some participants.