

CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS AMBIENTALES

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IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM TO BE ADDRESSED

1. The integrated approaches that amalgamate social, economic and environmental issues, repeatedly projected by diverse stakeholders and institutions (among them the United Nations) have proven more elusive than existent. The sought cohesiveness and strengthening of institutionality within the UN should stride hand-in-hand with seeking policy cohesiveness by integrating fully all aspects of human development.
2. Therefore, the problem is not only institutional UN-system wide coherence from an organisational point of view but also system-wide consistency from a policy viewpoint. The challenge for the United Nations system as a whole is to harness the opportunities put forth for by re-structuring approach that it is undergoing and channel momentum so that the three mainstays of development are achieved at all levels.

PROPOSALS FOR APPROACHES OR SOLUTIONS

3. Of course, operational sing organisational re-structuring and at the same time operationalising policy review is a rather difficult approach. In particular, taking into account the paramount changes needed in such an institution as dealing with. In general terms, however, the institutional changes necessary must be put forth from the organisational apex and permeate to the regional and country levels. That is, a very strong top-down re-organisation must take place. At this stage it is generally perceived that the work at the UN is rather different from headquarters than at the national and albeit project level. That it is integrated in some general areas but is rather atomised when the efforts are translated into country offices, agencies and of course projects. Therefore a greater integration is needed not only in headquarters but also making certain that this integration is translated into assimilation among the secretariats and the country-level operations.
4. At the inter-agency and at the country level, therefore, there has to be further union so that policies, projects, technical assistance, expertise transfer, and so on, is not done in an isolated manner. Many times the work of the UN is done in discrete units and therefore is not only not integrated but at times conflicting. At times, the pillars are not only un-integrated but cancel each other out by different policies or projects that do not act in an inclusive manner. In sum, the proposal for approaches is that the incipient integration present in some areas of the UN be seeped into agencies and country level operations. Institutional mechanisms for this can include, inter alia:
 - a. clustering approaches of agencies and secretariats;
 - b. "inter -cabinet" - like approaches;
 - c. coordination of different agencies when working on the ground (i.e. at the country level);
 - d. simply maintaining obligatory channels of interchange at the national levels between the different agencies operating; and
 - e. strengthening of the "newer" theme areas so that the different pillars are taken into account on equal footing and not as "window dressing".

INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT AND/OR FUTURE INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE

5. Although of course quite difficult, a more streamlined but cohesive structure that tends to duplicate efforts less and coordinate policies more can arise out of a general administrative and policy re - structuring. Therefore, as in all sizeable institutions change is not easy and a propensity to change is small, the impact can be quite positive and sizeable. Not only in the institution itself but in the positive impact that has on equitable and human - oriented sustainable development. And this is after all one of the main aims that the UN system has.