

The Nepal UNCT Transition Support Strategy:

Interim Results and Preliminary Impact (January 2012)

The background note on the UN's Transition Support Strategy (TSS) in Nepal, as shared with the TSS donors during the 'Friends of Transition' mission organized in December 2011, sets out the objectives, scope, products and services of the TSS. This current note describes the interim results and preliminary impacts achieved by the project up to end November 2011.

Since its launch in August 2010, the TSS has not only managed the physical merger of the RC Office and OCHA into the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator's Office (RCHCO), it has also recruited new staff and 're-hatted' some field offices whilst establishing new ones in two locations. In the process, the RCHCO developed a detailed two-year results framework and developed and delivered a series of products and services. This interim results and preliminary impact note reflects on the effects the existence and various activities of the RCHCO have had in supporting the transition in Nepal. The note covers three broad transition-related areas: strategies, programming, and products and services.

Transition related strategies

Developed over the course of 2010 by a cross-section of local and international actors, Nepal's international development partners launched the Nepal '**Peace and Development Strategy**' (PDS) in January 2011. The PDS articulates how development partners can assist Nepal in the years ahead to realize the development agenda embedded in the CPA - it is an 'offer of support' by development partners to specific areas that could help Nepal build the kind of peace which will be irreversible. It also looks critically at how development partners can better respond to the particular demands of peace-building in terms of development effectiveness, coordination and operations.

In addition to being the convener and drafting secretariat for the PDS, the RCHCO distributed over 2,000 copies (in English and Nepali) of the PDS to development partners, different parts of government (both at central and decentralized level), civil society and the media and received over 1,800 hits on the PDS webpage. The RCHCO conducted PDS presentations with local government and development partners in over 20 districts around the country. The UNCT Radio Team (discussed below) used the PDS to identify issues for inclusion in its weekly radio show, "Radio Chautari". Using the PDS as its guiding framework, the UNCT also formulated its own 'UN Peace-Building Strategy' (2010-12) to guide its peace-building support to Nepal. The RCHCO also utilizes the priority issues areas identified in the PDS as the framework for developing and producing its weekly field bulletins, for conducting regular peace and

development dialogues in the field, and for beginning to draw-up regional mappings of peace-building actors.

The PDS is recognized as an instrument that has generated a common analysis of the core peace-building priorities and helped keep key CPA issues on the table. It is often noted as a key contextual analysis reference document by development partners. In a recent 'stock take' exercise, DfID and the UNCT noted that they explicitly integrated the PDS into their current strategies and eight other development partners noted that their current ongoing strategies are informed by the PDS or that it will significantly inform the development of new country strategies that they will be developing in the coming year.

The PDS sets out broad areas of multi-partner cooperation on a wide range of transformational issues. One such area in which significant work has taken place is the area of Security Sector Reform and Rule of Law. The RCHCO, on behalf of the UNCT and together with DANIDA and DfID, put significant financial and human resources into the mapping of all known projects and other initiatives in the sector. Subsequently, with the same development partners, the RCHCO worked alongside a team of consultants to produce a joint assessment and critical path analysis for the sector. This work is expected to form the basis for further work in 2012 on a multi-partner strategy on Security Sector Reform and Rule of Law.

Still at the strategic level, the RCHCO in Kathmandu, supported by TSS project-financed UN Field Coordination Offices (FCOs), has been at the centre of the formulation of the UNCT Nepal's **Country Analysis (CA) and the United Nations Assistance Development Framework (UNDAF)**; the overarching analysis and strategy for all UN development actors working in the country for the coming five years. The CA identifies the issues in Nepal which need to be addressed and the UNDAF lays out the programmatic responses to this analysis based on the UN's comparative advantages. Departing from a traditional Common Country Assessment organized around sectors or themes and taking into account Nepal's post-conflict status, the UNCT Nepal agreed in early 2011 to embark on a CA with people at its core — a 'country analysis with a human face', exploring the key question of who are Nepal's most vulnerable people, whose lives should be improved by the measurable impact of the UN's efforts? Which groups do not experience a level playing field in today's Nepal? Are there groups who have long-standing grievances that, if unaddressed, might jeopardize Nepal's fragile peace process? Or groups that are subject to future shocks, such as earthquakes, that could suffer substantial reversals in development gains achieved over recent years? This multi-angle approach was greatly facilitated by the mix of expertise within the RCHCO and its different units as well as by the reach into the furthest corners of Nepal through the presence in the field.

In terms of process, as a result of an appeal across all UN agencies in Nepal, 191 preliminary profiles of groups considered to be particularly vulnerable were received. Many of these preliminary profiles were submitted through the FCOs, and were based on observations and discussions in the field including with UN colleagues, government representatives and civil society. Through a deliberative process of brainstorming, analysis and re-organization, these 191 preliminary profiles were coalesced into a list of 20 groups identified as being the most vulnerable in today's Nepal. For each group, a detailed profile

was prepared, emphasizing an analysis of the underlying and root-causes for each group's vulnerability. The FCOs provided invaluable contributions to the formulation of the country analysis by holding regional consultations and submitting many of the original client profiles, thus ensuring that a field focus was provided and maintained. Each FCO also facilitated regional consultative meetings on the draft CA with UN colleagues in the field, government and civil society partners and these consultations generated a lot of positive feedback and insight. Government agencies expressed their appreciation of having consultations at the regional levels, which provided them with an opportunity to provide observations from their daily work. The experience was described as being equally useful for their own district development process.

The main strategic focus of the humanitarian side of the RCHCO is to effect a **shift from response and relief to preparedness**. The Humanitarian Support Unit (HSU) of the RCHCO has made considerable progress in the area of disaster preparedness, building and strengthening the capacity of the Government to respond to emergencies in a timely and effective manner. At the same time the work of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) continued to be provided with Secretariat services by the HSU and the Clusters continued to be supported on a daily basis.

Among some of the key achievements has been the development of the Multi-Cluster Initial Rapid Assessment documentation – an agreed single document for conducting joint assessments, signed off and endorsed by the Government and its partners. The *Guidance Note on Disaster Preparedness and Response Planning 2011* was endorsed by the Government and is now the standard format used by all 75 districts of Nepal for preparing emergency response plans. Through participation in and support of a series of trainings, workshops and simulation exercises involving the Government, Nepal Army, Armed Police Force and the Nepal Police, I/NGOs, UN agencies and civil society, the HSU has spread the message that “preparedness saves lives”. This advocacy effort has encouraged the Government to embrace the concept of disaster preparedness and risk management. The HSU has also assisted in upgrading the cluster contingency plans through an innovative matrix format that encapsulates preparedness and response actions against a timeline. This is now used by OCHA's Regional Office as an example of best practice throughout Asia. The HSU has also developed and written Flagship II - *Emergency Preparedness and Response Capacity* – for the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC), including advocacy with donors for resources for implementation.

The **Social Inclusion Action Group** (SIAG), for whom the RCHCO acts as the Secretariat, has brought various development partners, embassies and the UNCT together to address the issues of social exclusion in the country. The regular sharing of information and knowledge, learning and useful experiences on the topic of social inclusion is the main objective of the group providing member organizations for possible support to each other from community to national levels. The group also stands as an influential body to sensitize and develop inclusion oriented recruitment and human resource policies. As a concrete result of the work done in this area, the UN's Declaration on Joint Principles of **Workforce Diversity** was signed in 2010 by 18 UN agencies. The Declaration is a commitment towards addressing issues of social inclusion through having a diverse workforce and provide opportunities for skill enhancement trainings and internship programmes, developing and

implementing recruitment and performance assessment practices that are sensitive to such groups, keeping track of workforce diversity within the UN system in Nepal, maintaining mailing lists and contacts of all individuals and/or groups/organizations belonging to marginalized groups for sharing of vacancy announcements. The group also shares useful experiences, best practices and lessons derived from workforce diversity initiatives with relevant partners in the Government of Nepal as well as with civil society organizations, builds awareness and increases sensitivity about workforce diversity among its own staff. The RCHCO conducts analyses of the staff composition from a workforce diversity perspective for all UN agencies and some other development partners. The analysis reports are produced biannually and shared with the respective agencies, with plans of action being prepared for some agencies. The reports have been an essential tool for the agencies to identify shortcomings in their workforce diversity and take action to address these. The UN Joint Traineeship Programme has brought together nine UN agencies to introduce an 11 months traineeship programme for 31 trainees to date. The programme is designed to enhance professional skills to improve the employability for young graduates from traditionally marginalized groups. The RCHCO itself hosts four trainees, of which two are based in the FCOs. Other development partners, such as the Asian Development Bank, who cannot participate in the program itself, have indicated their interest in tapping into this workforce pool once the traineeship is over.

Transition related programming

The United Nations Peace Fund for Nepal (UNPFN) is a funding instrument that has increased and strengthened the UN's level of involvement and capacity to support peace-building in Nepal. A shift of management of the UNPFN from UNMIN to the RCHCO in 2009 led to a shift in assistance from early recovery tasks to emerging issues beyond the strictly security and political components of the CPA. By doing this, the UNPFN puts longer-term issues on the table that are critical for a transition period (e.g. women, children, transitional justice, land and employment generation) and ultimately for sustainable peace in Nepal.

The UNPFN has also provided critical support to advance the UN reform agenda. It has given the RC/HC leverage to promote inter-agency programming, harness greater UN expertise and ensure greater UN coherence. Through its management arrangements, the UNPFN has involved a larger number of agencies (from four in 2007 to 12 in 2010) and has increased cooperation within the UN system as illustrated by the increase in joint projects from one in 2007 to seven in 2010. It has also prompted action on the critical peace-building issues that fall between the traditional mandates of agencies and ensured a strategic UN approach to peace-building in Nepal. The UNPFN has further helped promoting a peace-building 'lens' into the development perspective of the UNCT and enabled it to better respond to Nepal's transition.

The UNPFN has also strived to increase government ownership over the years through increased alignment with the Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF). It has done so by bringing UN peace-building support to national stakeholders on the basis of UN key comparative advantages to complement and support Nepal's transition. One recent illustration is the conduct in late 2011 of a joint prioritization exercise

with a view to develop complementary work plans between the UNPFN and the NPTF. Playing the role of a one-stop gateway, the UNPFN has helped improve the UN's engagement, coordination and collaboration with government, particularly the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction.

Transition related products and services

The RCHCO has developed **crisis prevention and response frameworks** over the course of 2011. Each FCO maintains a 'crisis prevention framework' that provides a reference and analytical framework of the most critical potential crisis issues confronting each region. These have also been synthesized into a Nepal-wide framework, enabling the RCHCO to maintain and disseminate a continuous analysis of the main risks to peace and development. This is done by examining a wide range of political, social, economic, cultural, development and human rights dynamics and how these interact and impact on the peace-building context. Not being constrained by a specific agency mandate, the RCHCO has the crucial advantage of wide-spectrum analysis.

The RCHCO is connected at both the field and Kathmandu level to a wide range of actors (government, UN, donors and civil society), giving it access to key responders in times of potential or ongoing crisis. The RCHCO has developed 'crisis response guidelines' as protocols for FCOs to adopt in the event of different crisis typologies. The system is further built upon success by the RCHCO to promote an environment of information sharing amongst development actors regarding the conditions for peace and development. In Kathmandu, the RCHCO actively participates in informal working groups which help to create space for dialogue and information sharing on peace-building risks. In addition, regional and national contact group meetings and other informal dialogue meetings also address pressing peace-building issues.

In May 2011, the RCHCO began producing **monthly updates** that have a strong focus on emerging issues impacting peace and development in Nepal. These updates are produced through inputs from the FCOs and draw upon information gathered as part of the crisis prevention and response frameworks. Examining development dynamics that are linked to the implementation of the long-term issues listed in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), they are an attempt to ensure development partners understand the changing context and dynamics in Nepal's current transition that present potential risks to the wider peace and development landscape.

Much of information in and on Nepal is heavy 'Kathmandu-centric'. Through widely distributed **Field Bulletins** the FCOs provide a window to field realities in the districts, especially with regard to the status of some of the medium and long term issues recognized in the CPA and the PDS, which are vital for Nepal's peace process. Published weekly since April 2011, the field bulletins have covered a wide range of issues such as Muslim Youth in Banke and Kapilvastu; perspectives on federalism from Limbuwan inhabited districts; land seizure in three Mid-Western Tarai districts; the state of stateless citizens; Chaupadi in the Mid- and Far-West; and workforce diversity in NGOs in an Eastern Hill district to name but a few. The feedback from readers has been overwhelmingly positive. Development partners in Kathmandu have noted that the field bulletins give them an alternative source of information on the context in which they implement programs; NGOs have used the field bulletins in their reports, as a

basis for project proposals and to support the prioritization of their work in the districts; even the media has picked up on information in the field bulletins, bringing it to an even wider audience. In some cases certain groups have noted that the field bulletins have helped raise their plight and district level government officials have stated that it encouraged them to raise the issues with the concerned higher authorities to resolve problems.

Both at the central and district level, the RCHCO has been instrumental in supporting the monitoring and dissemination of the **Basic Operating Guidelines** (BOGs). In addition to having facilitated and supported BOGs dissemination workshops, the FCOs also convene and chair monthly Contact Group Meetings to enhance cooperation amongst actors on the ground and ensure coordination of activities, including those related to BOGs. One NGO working in the field noted that the information shared at the regular contact group meeting were useful in dealing with threats and extortion as a group. The FCOs regularly collect data on BOGs violations and operational space issues and provide information to the Information Management Unit (IMU) for mapping and further dissemination. The operational space database records BOGs violations and is updated and maintained with information provided by the FCO, the UN Department for Safety and Security (DSS), the BOGs Secretariat and the DFID/GIZ Risk Management Offices. The BOGs' Group is co-chaired by the RC/HC.

The **Do No Harm** interagency initiative is implemented jointly by the RCHCO, UNICEF and UNDP and has ensured that trained regional interagency teams have worked together to provide trainings and briefings on Do No Harm to different actors in various fora at the district level. This has increased the awareness of conflict sensitive programming amongst not only UN colleagues, but also INGO and local government staff. An INGO staff member trained stated that *"during our next field visit we will definitely talk to our partners and other organisations about Do No Harm"*. The regional context analyses developed with inputs from a large number of interlocutors as part of the Do No Harm initiative were and continue to be instrumental in developing and updating the region-specific Crisis Prevention Frameworks (see above). RCHCO staff trained on Do No Harm approaches provided peer reviews of client profiles as part of the CA process (see above). This has positively influenced the upcoming UNDAF, consequently benefitting the whole UN system and its clients. This work will be taken further through region specific conflict analyses including of stakeholders, connectors and dividers that will be prepared prior to the start of the implementation of the UNDAF (i.e. in the fourth quarter of 2012 and first quarter of 2013). These analyses will be prepared together with UN agencies and government counterparts working in each of the regions. This will lay the foundations for an UNDAF implementation in line with do-no-harm principles and best practices. Although the RCHCO is a temporary set-up, and the FCOs have been instrumental in bringing the concept to the field, the fact that the initiative is an inter-agency one and that the work will be mainstreamed throughout UNDAF implementation, will allow the UNCT to carry on the work when the TSS comes to an end.

In terms of humanitarian issues, the FCOs have supported the capacity development of the Nepali authorities through **regional workshops on preparedness and response planning** organized by the Regional Disaster Relief Committees. The FCOs have also worked with the Regional Disaster Relief Committees, District Disaster Relief Committees and other concerned stakeholders to ensure the

formulation and preparation of Disaster Preparedness and Response Plans at regional and district levels. As a result, in the Mid-Western Region, for example, 14 out of 15 districts have completed their Disaster Preparedness Plan and in the Eastern Region all 16 districts have completed their plans. In the Far-West the FCO supported the Regional Administrator in establishing a regional level Disaster Preparedness and Response Monitoring Committee, comprising Government authorities, the UN, INGOs and the Nepal Red Cross Society as well as the private sector. The FCOs also contributed to raising awareness on the importance of awareness through facilitating and participating in “simulation exercises” on earthquake responses and other frequently occurring disasters.

As long as the transition from response to preparedness is under way, FCOs continue to contribute to response measures when called upon. In the aftermath of the September 2011 earthquake, for example, the Biratnagar FCO conducted joint visits with the Government of Nepal and non-governmental actors to the earthquake affected districts to identify the impact of the earthquake, the response status, the gaps and inputs required to support the government structures. Similarly, the FCO in Nepalgunj assisted in ensuring that a humanitarian response was provided within 24 hours of a fire outbreak in a Madhesi community in Banke and that assistance to landslide victims in Mugu was well coordinated.

The **Information Management Unit** (IMU) re-launched a much improved United Nations Nepal Information Platform (UNNIP) website. The website has a range of new features that provide overall information on ongoing UN activities in Nepal. In addition, it serves as a resource centre for stakeholders to share information related to peace, development and humanitarian issues in the country. As the website is the virtual home of the UN system in Nepal, it is a key component of an overarching communications and coordination system, working towards a One UN. In addition, the IMU has provided GIS and cartographic support to a wide range of development and humanitarian partners. It has been supporting the UNCT, development and humanitarian partners by providing regular reference maps as well as very specific thematic maps produced on demand. Maps can be seen in government, UN, and (I)NGO offices all over the country.

The RCHCO, through the IMU, has been instrumental in developing the analytical tool for mapping an enhanced **Who does What Where** (3W) database. The expanded 3W data collection form was developed in mid-2011; it expands a traditional humanitarian information tool with information on development actors at the district level. The tool, which is in line with DAC codes, allows the generation of 3W matrices by actor, district or DAC sector and sub-sector; it also serves as a contact database for all the actors present in a given district. The 3W data was collected by the FCOs and the IMU processed it after which the FCOs shared it with contributors. The response has been highly appreciative. Feedback included that the mapping has helped provide an overview of the presence and initiatives of different development partners in particular districts, and that it helps local government officials and development partners alike in identifying the gaps and opportunities for coordinated efforts.

Radio Chautari's radio programme target, were the issues at the vital intersection of 'peace' and 'development'. The radio programme aimed to ensure that the important longer-term peace-building agenda was not lost sight of, when attention was more naturally drawn to the visible short term political priorities. 112 30-minute weekly episodes and more than 60 Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were produced between April 2009 and September 2011. The programmes were broadcast from 39 FM stations throughout the country in Nepali, Maithili, Awadhi, Tharu and Tamang languages and the PSAs were broadcast through more than 100 radio stations in the same languages twice a day. More than 18 million people, mostly from rural communities were reached by these broadcasts. The radio programme supported 'One UN' by bringing all UN agencies working in Nepal together in one place. The editorial board comprised representatives from all agencies.

The RCHCO continues to facilitate various forms of **coordination support** at both the national and field level. It acts as the Secretariat for the UNCT, ensuring that relevant UN reform issues remain on top of the agenda and that the bi-weekly UNCT meetings are used for strategic thinking. The CA and UNDAF process noted above were a main focus of the UNCT during 2011, ensuring full ownership of the process. The FCOs conduct regional UN team meetings to ensure that the One UN achievements are reflected in the field, as well as providing examples to the UNCT how things can work in the field.

The FCOs assisted the UN system, development partners, NGOs and INGOs in arranging (including identifying suitable participants for specific topics) and hosting a multitude of meetings as well as workshops in the regions. The FCOs also conducted briefings for visiting missions. In addition the FCOs participated in and provided support to a number of joint missions, helping to enhance coordination between development actors on the ground. The regional briefings for visiting donor and UN missions by the FCOs have been much appreciated, and helped visitors get a better understanding of the context of their activities, thereby supporting more relevant programming in the longer term.

RC/HC Office, January 2012
