

Fourth Country Support Unit Network Meeting

The Montreux Report

20 to 21 October 2005



Department of Country Focus



Participants at the fourth meeting of the Country Support Unit Network

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KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

A number of issues related to the Country Support Unit (CSU) Network were discussed, debated and agreed during the meeting. Rich discussions led to the key recommendations and next steps for action summarized in the table below. The CSU Network, as a whole, is responsible for following up on the implementation of these key action points. Where relevant, specific units of the Network have been identified to take the lead.

Key recommendations and next steps	Deadline
Section II: Review of key action points from the third meeting	
1. Map/identify countries receiving disproportionately low levels of financial assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jointly develop a standard template to map funding to countries Begin exercise where there is greatest contrast between countries Discuss progress at the next CSU Network meeting <i>Responsibility:</i> WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO) Technical Cooperation with Countries Unit	30 June 2006
2. Prepare a Governing Bodies paper articulating WHO country presence in terms of budget, implementation and evaluation processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a small working group to prepare a new paper drawing on concepts proposed by the cross-WHO working group and incorporating comments from the Directors of Programme Management (DPMs). <i>Responsibility:</i> Small working group (to be established by the CSU Network)	31 March 2006
3. Develop an assessment framework to measure the performance of WHO country teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide consolidated feedback on the memorandum of 27 September from the Director, Internal Audit on performance assessment at country level Establish, in light of dialogue with the Planning, Internal Audit and Business Change units, an inter-regional working group to develop a methodology for measuring performance <i>Responsibility:</i> CSU Network, in collaboration with Planning, Internal Audit and Business Change units	30 June 2006
Section III: Communication strategy for the Country Focus Policy and intelligence on countries	
4. Revise the Country Focus communication plan to convey a stronger and more proactive message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the Country Focus video to include the voices of senior executive management, national authorities, key partners and technical departments in WHO. Give illustrative examples of operational changes and new ways of doing business (e.g. Country Cooperation Strategies (CCSs), joint-planning) resulting from country focus <i>Responsibility:</i> Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/WHO Communications Unit and the Department of Country Focus	31 March 2006
5. Implement the CSU Network Portal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide on the location of the platform and source of technical assistance Further refine the cost scenarios for the portal within the next 3–4 weeks and select the option with the best technical and financial feasibility Share proposal for decision within the CSU Network <i>Responsibility:</i> WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) Program Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and the Department of Country Focus	31 March 2006

Section IV: Specific agenda items	
6. Advocate the development of a WHO health systems strategy aligned with country perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSU focal points to the reference group tasked with developing a WHO health systems strategy to articulate country needs in regard to strengthening health systems The CSU Network to facilitate the backstopping of health systems expertise from regional offices and headquarters to the country offices <i>Responsibility:</i> CSU Network	Ongoing
7. Strengthen the Country Cooperation Strategy process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the first generation of CCSs (regions to share methodologies) Keep the CCS process flexible and synchronize with national strategies and cycles at country level Retain the existing CCS guide and complement with: a review of Section 5, briefs on WHO policies and strategies, links with country presence and a communications component <i>Responsibility:</i> CSU Network	Ongoing
8. Publish the 2005 CSU Network Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regions that have not yet submitted case-studies on partnerships and coordination should submit them as soon as possible Regions are to provide their contributions to the report by 15 November The Department of Country Focus is to compile and consolidate the report highlighting key information provided by regions <i>Responsibility:</i> The Department of Country Focus	31 Dec. 2005
9. Assess the baseline in the quality of technical support to WHO country offices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department of Country Focus is to develop a simple assessment tool with measurable elements and a clearly defined objective Regions are to provide feedback on the tool The Department of Country Focus is to send the assessment tool through regional CSUs to WHO Representatives/Liaison Officers for completion <i>Responsibility:</i> The Department of Country Focus	31 Dec. 2005

Section V: Thematic issue: harmonization and alignment at country level	
10. Develop and facilitate the implementation of a strategy for building the capacity of country teams to respond to the harmonization and alignment agenda at country level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine the draft strategy for building the capacity of country teams to respond to the harmonization and alignment agenda at country level Advocate adequate resources for country offices to respond to the harmonization and alignment agenda Facilitate technical back-up from regions and headquarters to enable country offices to build their capacity Share good practices as well as information on constraints at the country, regional and global levels for constructive dialogue with partners Facilitate building national capacity to lead the UN and development partners Integrate harmonization and alignment issues into staff development and meetings of WHO Representatives and Liaison Officers Ensure that the forthcoming regional consultation process includes all relevant groups <i>Responsibility:</i> AFRO Technical Cooperation with Countries Unit and the Department of Country Focus	30 June 2006

I Introduction

The Country Support Unit (CSU) Network holds meetings twice a year. These meetings aim to strengthen WHO's support to Member States by enhancing the dialogue between regional offices and headquarters on WHO's presence in countries and on WHO's work at the country level.

Three meetings of the Network have been held to date; the first two focused on specific themes¹ and the third dealt primarily with internal matters of the Network.² This fourth meeting, in addition to core business issues of the Network, focused on a specific theme: *Harmonization and alignment at country level*.

CSU Network members from the regional offices, selected country offices, and headquarters participated in this meeting. The Director of the Department of Program Planning, Resource Coordination and Performance Monitoring (PRP) and the Coordinator of the unit dealing with Coordination with the United Nations and other Intergovernmental Agencies (UNI) also participated. The agenda and list of participants can be found in Annexes 1 and 2, respectively.

The Director of the Department of Country Focus opened the meeting by highlighting the principal function of the Network in strengthening country teams. She emphasized the diversity in the structures of the CSUs across regions, and consequently the need for dialogue to ensure the collective benefit of the Network at country level. She expressed her gratitude for the valuable participation of the regional CSUs and selected WHO Representatives in this meeting and to her team for their support in its preparation.

A. Main objective of the meeting

The main objective of the meeting was to propose ways to further strengthen the CSU Network to better support WHO country teams and to build their capacity in implementing the harmonization and alignment agenda at country level.

B. Specific objectives

1. CSU Network core business

- 1.1 To review and analyse the degree of implementation of the key action points identified at the 3rd CSU Network Meeting in Santo Domingo.
- 1.2 To provide an update on standing agenda items:
 - second generation of CCSs;
 - health systems; and
 - CSU Network information and communication.

¹ *The Copenhagen Report – Revisiting the Country Cooperation Strategy*. The First Country Support Unit Network Meeting, 3–5 March 2004.

The Cairo Report – Country Focus and Health Systems Development. The Second Country Support Unit Network Meeting, 3–5 August 2004.

² *The Santo Domingo Report*. The Third Meeting of the Country Support Unit Network, 31 May–2 June 2005.

- 1.3 To discuss proposals for the CSU Network Report 2005 and the WHO Representatives/Liaison Officers satisfaction survey on technical support from regional offices or headquarters.
2. ***Specific theme: harmonization and alignment at country level***
 - 2.1 To identify the challenges and implications for WHO in the changing environment at country level as regards international development assistance, the Paris Declaration and the UN reform.
 - 2.2 To share regional responses to the harmonization and alignment agenda at country level.
 - 2.3 To propose a CSU Network strategy for strengthening WHO capacity for harmonization and alignment at country level, building on good practices.

This report provides an overview of the progress made in implementing key action points identified during the third meeting of the Network. It identifies challenges for WHO in the changing environment at country level and proposes a strategy for building the capacity of country teams in implementing the harmonization and alignment agenda at this level.

II. Review of key action points from the third meeting

The key action points that had been identified during the third meeting of the CSU Network were reviewed to assess the extent of their implementation (see CD ROM Item 2: *Review of key action points from the third meeting*). Whereas progress on several of the action points is covered in later sections of this report, three specific points are considered here.

A. Identification of 'forgotten' countries

Concerns have been raised that financial support within and external to the Organization favours certain countries at the expense of other countries in need. An analysis of financial assistance to countries would reveal the varying levels of funding across countries and provide a 'snapshot', or general overview, of the pattern of support across countries. As a result, countries that are receiving disproportionately lower levels of donor support would be highlighted.

Key points highlighted during discussion

- All regional CSUs have expressed concern that financial support favours certain countries at the expense of others. The analysis of financial support should initially be carried out in the WHO African Region, where the apparent disparity between support to countries is the greatest.
- Findings from this analysis should be communicated throughout the Organization and to other partners. The CSU Network should ensure adequate and appropriate allocation of funding to countries. The Network may also act as an advocate in directing the resources being mobilized.
- Concerns were also raised over the disproportionate financial support being given to certain programmes within WHO. A large proportion of funds is often earmarked for the same programmes (e.g. communicable diseases) thereby overlooking other important programmes (e.g. health systems and Making Pregnancy Safer).

- Internal processes also need to be addressed. For example, unspecified funds at the headquarters level should, as far as possible, remain unspecified at the regional and country levels. Coordination is also needed for unspecified funds. Additionally, the method of allocating the Programme Budget to the various Areas of Work should be uniform and consistent. The Programme Budget should reflect the priorities identified from the CCSs.

Key recommendation and next steps

Map/identify countries receiving disproportionately lower levels of financial assistance.

- Jointly develop a standard template for tracking funding to countries.
- Begin the exercise where the contrast between countries is greatest.
- Discuss progress at the next meeting of the CSU Network.

B. WHO country presence

The draft paper, '*WHO country presence*,' prepared by the cross-WHO working group has been divided into two parts:

— *Current picture of WHO country presence*

This paper provides the first global picture of WHO country presence as of September 2005. It presents an analysis of all responses received from a global survey on WHO country presence and information on WHO Country Offices, WHO Representatives, Liaison Officers and Heads of Office.

— *A proposal on criteria and approaches for defining WHO country presence*

This paper proposes a set of criteria and an approach for defining WHO country presence. It outlines the implications of ensuring an adequate and appropriate country presence.

These papers were presented to the Directors of Programme Management (DPMs) during their meeting in Lima from 12–14 October 2005.

Key points highlighted during discussion:

- The first paper was well-received by the DPMs who considered it to be extremely

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