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The Norm Life Cycle of the UN Reform: "Delivering as One and UN System-Wide Coherence"

Annett Richter, development effectiveness specialist

Introduction

The United Nations Development System (UNDS) consists of a large number of specialized UN agencies, funds, and programs, each having its own mandate, governing boards, and business practices, as well as regional and country offices. Many reform proposals over the past sixty years have offered solutions, but implementation has been sporadic. This is not because UNDS lacks intelligent and capable officials but because it is so organized that effective managerial direction is very difficult. As Jackson said in his diagnosis of the system and its reform in 1969, "In other words, the machine as a whole has become unmanageable in the strictest sense of the word. As a result, it is becoming slower and more unwieldy, like a prehistoric monster"[1] (Jackson 1969). In 2006, a new reform proposal was put into practice that addressed the UN System's problem of ineffectiveness and incoherence. Entitled "Delivering as One and UN System-Wide Coherence," the reform was defined from a bottom-up perspective. The underlying idea was that system-wide coordination should be guided from the country level and not a top-down prescription by the UN General Assembly.

This paper aims for two objectives. First, it tries to analyze the complex reform process of Delivering as One at the country level, followed by system changes at a later stage. To explain the emergence of new norms and the transition, we apply a theoretical framework that Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink had developed in 1998 to explain political change: The Norm Life Cycle (NLC). Guided by the research question of how the Delivering as One reform process came into existence, I will analyze each NLC stage in detail and generate some propositions about the origins of the new norms, the mechanisms by which they exercise influence, and the conditions under which those new norms become so influential that they change business as usual. Moreover, I will study the role of norm entrepreneurs, norm leaders, norm messengers, and message entrepreneurs, and make use of the organizational platforms that Finnemore and Sikkink proposed in order to explain the complexity of the UN System and the negotiation dynamics among the stakeholders. The platform analysis supports my arguments in favor of the need of a fourth stage of the NLC when it comes to global systemic changes, such as within the United Nations Development System.

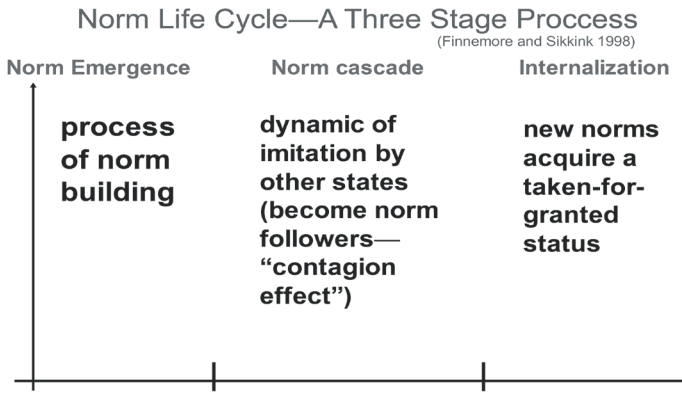
The paper starts with a quick recall of Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle model, followed by some overall considerations for norm emergence within global systems. Then it undertakes a detailed analysis of the NLC of the UN Reform "Delivering as One and UN System-Wide Coherence." Empirical research was conducted among the actors already mentioned above as well as among concerned institutions and diplomatic missions in New York. The evidence informs the analysis and supports the hypothesis being tested. My thesis is that the analysis of the "Delivering as One and System-Wide Coherence" reform should reaffirm the three stages of the Norm Life Cycle that Finnemore and Sikkink developed to explain the emergence of issue-based norms, while at same time, I hope to demonstrate

1. Sir Robert Jackson, op. cit. Vol. I, Foreword, page iii.

that an additional stage is required before norm shifts get internalized in global systems. Thus, the second and even more ambitious objective of this paper is to make the case for a four-stage Norm Life Cycle model and, therefore, stimulate new discussions and empirical research among norm researchers and IR scholars.

Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle: An Issue-Based Approach to Explain the Emergence of New Norms

Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle (1998) is one of the most recognized theoretical frameworks to explain the emergence of new norms and norm shifts. Interested in empirical research on social construction processes and norm influences in international politics, both scholars studied the conditions under which norms influence world politics. Their research is driven by questions such as where do norms come from and how do they change? What are the roles that norms play in political change, both the ways in which norms, themselves, change and the ways in which they change other features of the political landscape? Finnemore and Sikkink propose to understand norm influence as a three-stage process: norm emergence, norm cascade, and internalization.



The Norm Life Cycle according to Finnemore and Sikkink

The first stage, norm emergence, is characterized by persuasion. Norm entrepreneurs, the thinkers and creators of new norms, try to convince a critical mass of states to agree on and implement new norms (norm leaders). The second stage involves broad norm acceptance by those concerned. Norm leaders advocate for and try to socialize other states to become norm followers. The first two stages are divided by a "tipping point," which refers to a critical mass of states or state actors adopting the new norm. The last stage, internalization, is reached when new norms have gained a taken-for-granted status and are no longer subject to debates. While Finnemore and Sikkink make the case that "norm change is characterized by different actors, motives, and mechanisms of influence" (p. 895), they also argue that the "world time-context" may hinder or facilitate norm change (p. 909). World historical events, such as the end of Cold War or the 2008 financial and economic crisis, as well as Global Summits, such as the 2000 World Summit that led to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), may intensify the search for new ideas and norms. With the increased interconnectedness of today's globalized world, new ideas and norms spread rapidly and create new prospects. Over the past twenty years, the Norm Life Cycle has been used to explain the emergence of international social norms, such as international human rights norms and their

integration into domestic practices (Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999), humanitarian intervention (Finnemore 1996), women's rights (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998), and construction of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2009). What those researchers have in common is their focus on the emergence and development of international social *issue-based* norms. With the International Declaration on Human Rights and the ratification by UN member states of specific human rights conventions, human rights norms became universal standards. The MDGs are a similar case. At the 2000 World Summit, the international community agreed on eight MDGs as global priorities for the next international development cooperation agenda. The MDGs with their well-established targets and indicators became the first evaluable global framework that allowed monitoring and measuring the progress made in the implementation of the new globally established norms at the country and regional level.

Norm Emergence within Global Systems

In addition to issue–based norms there are also organizational norms that emerge or shift within different global settings or time contexts. Organizational norms usually emerge to either improve the effectiveness of activities or those of processes. For example, they can emerge with the intention to coordinate actors of social networks, transnational networks or any other social network setting, and to streamline their activities. Organizational norms may also be institutionalized; they may help organize social behavior and the functions of human agency within an institution. Internal human resource rules are an example, and organizational norms also emerge to improve internal work flow processes. There are two components here: The first sets rules for human behavior while the second aims at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of work processes.

When calls for either norm shift appear, negotiations between the management and the governing boards of such global institutions can become complex. A relevant example is the UN Development System that consists of almost all of the UN specialized agencies, funds and programs. There are currently thirty-one full member organizations and seventeen observer entities that make up the UN Development Group (UNDG). Its mandate is to coordinate UNDG members' country and regional development activities[2] to ensure coherence among the different UN agencies. Over the past ten years, UNDG has developed and standardized new operational norms, rules, and procedures that help UN Country Teams[3] to cooperate and engage in jointly planned programs and other activities. This norm shift is the result of the UN reform "Delivering as One and System-Wide Coherence" that launched a vast reform of the existing organizational standards at the country and system-wide level in 2006.

Why and how did this reform process come into existence at this time, given the fact that over the past sixty years calls for reforming the UN system were repeatedly placed on the negotiation agenda of the UN General Assembly? Already in the early 1960s, voices raised to point out systemic problems within the UN System, and since then quite a good number of reform proposals[4] have been placed on the negotiation agenda of the UN General Assembly. So what is the "Delivering as One and System-Wide Coherence" reform process about? How did this reform process generate new organizational norms? What precisely are these new operational norms, and how were they implemented? Was there a special momentum that facilitated the norm shifts, and who were/are the actors? To answer these questions, I examine the characteristics of each stage of the reform process through the lenses of Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle framework. Special attention will be paid to norm leaders and norm

2. UNDG; https://undg.org/home/about-undg/members/.

3. A UNCT is constituted by UN agencies present in a given country (sometimes non-resident agencies are also linked to it).

4. Jackson Report (1969), Pearson Report (1969), Gardener Report (1975), Brandt Reports (1979, 1983), USA (1978, 1996), Nordic Countries (1991, 1996), The Urquhart and Childer's Proposals (1990, 1001), Stanley Foundation (1991), Ford Foundation (1993, 1995), Scanteam Proposal (2005).

entrepreneurs whose activities are supported by norm messengers and message entrepreneurs. While the former are central to the task of promoting the acceptance of specific norms, the latter are those who play a lead role in mobilizing consensus around the new norms (Fukuda-Parr and Hulme 2009).

The Norm Life Cycle of the UN Reform "Delivering as One and UN System-Wide Coherence"

Norm Emergence

Since the creation of the UN in 1945, the inefficiency and ineffective cooperation among the UN and its specialized agencies, funds, and programs developed into a chronic illness. Due to the increased UN membership of poor and troubled decolonized countries during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the UN was forced to respond to the development needs of the emerging developing world, starting with what was named as the United Nations' First Development Decade (1960–69). Although the provision of significant amounts of development assistance was clearly not part of the founders' original vision, development policy became increasingly important and led to the creation of new UN bodies and funds and programs. In addition, the Cold War's bloc politics led to the creation of parallel mechanisms or additional bodies and left the UN system with many entities including bodies within the Secretariat, regional entities, research organizations, and numerous specialized agencies, funds, and programs. While some shared an interest in working together, others preferred to operate independently. This often resulted in competition for human and financial resources and strategic influence among the member states. Moreover, the uncoordinated diversity of member states' own strategic agendas hampered the coordination among the UN agencies' governing boards and effective implementation of the agreed upon development objectives at the country level. A good number of diverse reform proposals from experts, governments, and civil society[5] have been discussed over time, but no detailed consensus was found on what exactly was to be done and how to make it happen. This situation remained until the breakthrough of the "Delivering as One and UN System-Wide Coherence" reform in 2006. What drew the UN membership to accept this reform proposal and what dynamics emerged out of it?

According to Finnemore and Sikkink, "change is characterized by different actors, motives, and mechanisms of influence" (p. 895) as well as world time-context (p. 909). The actors, Finnemore and Sikkink call them norm entrepreneurs, may play different roles according to the underlying dynamics of the three NLC stages. For the first stage "norm emergence," both argue that the characteristic mechanism is persuasion by norm entrepreneurs. Norm entrepreneurs try to convince a critical mass of countries (they call them "norm leaders") to adopt and implement new norms. Yet, new norms do not appear suddenly but over a period of time. The norm building process itself is nourished by human agency, occurring changes or events that favor the norm building process. Norms are developed by agents (norm entrepreneurs) who envision the need for change and appropriate and desirable behavior accordingly. These norm entrepreneurs are critical for the norm emergence stage, because they point public attention to issues, use strong language to name concrete problems, interpret and analyze these problems, and advocate for change. Finnemore and Sikkink make reference to social movement theorists and argue that the construction of cognitive frames is an essential component for norm entrepreneurs' political strategies (they call it the process of "framing"). Norm entrepreneurs are successful when the "new frames are understood by a broader public and adopted as new ways of talking about and understanding issues" (p. 897). Hereby they balance their advocacy between appropriateness and interest for change. A changing political environment may challenge the existing logic of appropriateness, which over time becomes "inappropriate." Proposals for new frames and new norms become an alternative; their appropriateness starts competing with existing norms and a broad range of underlying interest.

5. Jackson Report (1969), Pearson Report (1969), Gardener Report (1975), Brandt Reports (1979, 1983), USA (1978, 1996), Nordic Countries (1991, 1996), The Urquhart and Childer's Proposals (1990, 1001), Stanley Foundation (1991), Ford Foundation (1993, 1995), Scanteam Proposal (2005).

The changing political environment made the reform of the UN system become an emergency. The collapse of the Communist system and emerging conflicts as a consequence paralyzed the functioning and working mechanism of the UN agencies, which had adapted over the past decades to the two-block context. Because of the lack of balance within the international system and political disorientation, the agencies, funds, and programs were left without clear guidance by their member states. The duplication of program activities during the Cold War became a major hindrance for UN agencies, which, on the one hand, had to respond to a vast increase in demand for services due to the increased number of conflicts during the immediate post–Cold War period, while on the other hand, they suddenly found each other competing for resources. Because of their independent mandates and lack of political leadership by their member states, the agencies engaged in strong political lobbying among their own member states to win over other UN agencies to the implementation of their programs in their member states. This competition, orchestrated from the agencies' headquarters, was largely played out at the country level. The representatives of the agencies, funds, and programs, once nominated and having presented their credentials to the government for accreditation, had a direct link to line and sectoral ministries. With no interest for cooperation with their "sister agencies," the country representatives presented their programs, often especially developed for a particular country, as well as the budget they would put into it, to negotiate directly with government representatives the signature of and the implementation of their programs.

At the same time, each of the country offices begged funding from agencies, and in particular, bilateral donor missions that operated in developing countries based on bilateral development aid agreements. When funding was made available to UN agencies by the donating Western countries, UN agencies had to consider and incorporate the donors' strategic funding priorities into their program activities. Based on political interest, development funding was, and still is, discussed and approved by the donor countries' parliaments before being promoted by their ministers of foreign affairs among developing countries. The diverse political priorities of a large number of donor countries was not only a headache for the government but also supported the competition, and even political and programmatic division among the UN agencies (horizontal), which translated into headquarters' political and strategic program development (vertical). Because UN programs were supply-driven rather than demand-driven and could not meet the expectations of the developing countries, they were more and more seen as ineffective, inefficient, and not relevant. Moreover, their competition for donor funding decreased their independence and effective program implementation. The situation looked different from the perspective of developing countries. Because of their lack of political authority and institutional capacity, these governments were unable to handle the competing interests of donors and multiple UN agencies and their vast programs at the same time. This coordination challenge put an additional burden on developing countries' shoulders.

Empirical research has shown that only for environmental issues, twenty UN entities had a stake in the area of fresh water, eleven in the area of marine coastal environment/ocean/flood, ten in climate activities, five in air pollution, six in energy, eleven in biodiversity, two in chemistry, eighteen in desertification, fourteen in urban and rural land use, eight in early warning (e.g., tsunamis), five in small island states, five in environmental law, five in environmental education, and thirteen in environmental emergency issues (Richter 2007). Imagining the burden for governments when handling requests from seventeen specialized agencies and related organizations, fourteen funds and program, seventeen departments and offices of the UN Secretariat, five regional commissions, five research and training institutes, and a plethora of regional and country level structures, although not operating equally at country level at one time.[6]

There is no wonder that developed and developing countries raised their voices and called for reforms to make the UN system more effective. Money was wasted in excessive admin-

6. Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel "Delivering as One." New York: United Nations, 2006, 15.

istrative costs due to the duplication of activities and fragmented country program delivery, and developing countries called for higher responsiveness to country needs (demand-driven), more effective program delivery, and decrease of the coordination burden for their own government administration. This call was backed by the agreements reached from the preceding aid effectiveness negotiations. With the 2003 Rome Declaration, countries both developed and developing acknowledged the need for aid transparency and collaboration. The 2005 Paris Declaration went beyond and fixed aid cooperation commitments around five principles: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability. Reforming the UN development cooperation system simply followed what the Finnemore and Sikkink called the logic of appropriateness.

When taking office in 1997, Kofi Annan responded to the UN memberships' call for bold structural and managerial reforms to modernize the UN working methods and rationalize efforts, capacities, and funding. In Annan's report "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform" (1997), he revealed a new vision for reform with more effective management of the UN Secretariat, funds, and programs, and a new leadership and management structure.

What is most striking is the emphasis on coherence of operational activities at the country level. Under article 49 and 50 of the report, and entitled "Acting as One at the Country-Level," Annan spells out that "(a) all too often, the separate United Nations entities involved in these activities pursue their activities separately, without regard to or benefiting from one another's presence. The greater unity of purpose and coherence in performance that these strategic management initiatives accomplished at headquarters level must also be reflected in the field." Moreover, next to the UNDG, which was established in 1997 in New York and comprised four founding New York-based ExCom Agencies UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and WFP (they had agreed to common country planning methods to jointly support the government and other partners to develop their own country programs), the secretary-general asked the remaining specialized agencies, funds, and programs to establish similar consultative and collaborative arrangements at the country level to provide the government with a coherent overview of the programs being performed by the various agencies in their own countries. To this end, the "country-level assistance provided by each United Nations programme and fund should be integrated into a single United Nations Development Assistance Framework" (UNDAF).

In addition, the secretary-general proposed that all UN agencies with field missions operate in common premises, which he called the "UN House." "In countries where there is a Resident Coordinator, all funds and programmes as well as United Nations Information Centres should become part of a single United Nations office under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator." This was an attempt to reduce administrative costs by means of cost-sharing. Annan's intention was multi-fold. On the one hand, he tried to push the agencies for stronger collaboration and transparency in program implementation while at the same time streamlining their planning efforts into one single program framework, the UNDAF, would help make duplications visible during the planning phase. On the other hand, he was also aware of the distinctiveness and specific focus of the work of each agency, which, if wisely used could be turned into complementarity rather than competition. In this vein, he recommended to retain the UN agencies specific mandates but invited member countries of the four ExCom agencies to explore ways of "facilitating more integrated oversight by, for example, convening joint committees and/or consecutive meetings of their respective Executive Boards." The idea behind was that "joint planning exercises" of these four agencies" would require the delegates (members of UN permanent missions in New York) to sit in the four executive boards at the same time. This would enable them to develop the same level of understanding and get a broader overview of the complexity of country planning mechanisms and execution of programs, and, thus, decrease counterproductive decision-making by member states.

The establishment of the UNDAF in nearly each country can be considered one of the key results of Annan's reform agenda on operational activities at the country level. A second achievement is the establishment of the "Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the UN System" (TCPR)—now quadriennial. Designed as a policy control tool for ECOSOC, every four years it brings UN member states and the UN agencies, funds, and programs together to take stock on progress made and to review the policies and strategic programs from a global perspective. The three years interval was initially considered as an appropriate period that would enable all participants to detect problems and correct them in time, preventing shortfalls and unnecessary loss in funds. After several iterations, it was decided to implement it every four years. For the first time, a direct reporting line was established between the country and global level. The entrepreneurial vision for a more effective UN system was successfully put in practice by Annan and the UN Secretariat, which laid the foundation for a more substantive reform process in the years to come.

Besides bilateral negotiations with donor and aid recipient countries, as well as UN agencies' headquarters, Annan and the UN Secretariat used the UN General Assembly as an organizational platform (Finnemore and Sikkink, 899/900) to advocate for these new organizational frameworks, UNDAF and the TCPR, because the majority of the UNGA membership is needed to approve norm shift. Yet, even though the UNDAF brought more transparency to the country programing process, it did not prevent the different agencies from backing donors and competing for funding. It did not stimulate the various country offices to collaborate and work together to save costs or make program delivery more effective. Each country office continued negotiating its part directly with the government counterpart without searching for synergies that could have benefited two or more agencies and the government. Unsatisfied, the UN member states again placed the effectiveness problem on the top of the negotiation agenda. The G77, the Non-Alighted Movement (NAM), and the EU started exhaustive negotiations on the different issues subject to reform.

Overall, the main concern for developing countries was that the reform agenda would be used by donor countries to divert the regular budget funds reserved for development to other ends, such as peace and security. Their main interest was to ensure that resources would be applied in an equitable way. Both the G77 and NAM strongly opposed proposals that could be understood as imposing conditionality on aid, for example human rights and gender, which in the eyes of the developing countries represented a "double standard" by donor countries and which they considered issues that donor countries often pursue more vigorously in developing countries than at home (Freiesleben 2006).

Developed countries on the other hand, especially the EU, rejected these indictments and the division of conditionality on aid. They rather argued that voluntary funding finances development. Indeed, developing countries are the principal receivers of large amounts of financial aid via voluntary contributions, which often surpassed the UN and its agencies' regular budgets. Nevertheless, developing countries in general considered voluntary contributions as funds that developed countries spent according to their own priorities (supply-driven) rather than to those of the developing countries (demand-driven). The north-south mistrust was at its peak with the south believing northern countries would like to take control over country-level activities, which was the reason why the G77 negotiated toward a broader "package decision" and not each issue one by one.

Discrepancies and disagreements also occurred among the countries belonging to the G77 and NAM—mainly between larger and smaller or medium-sized countries. While the former pursued a broader UN development agenda with centralized decision-making on development issues in the General Assembly, the latter was focusing on how to improve and streamline the burdensome services of UN agencies at the country level. Smaller, aid-dependent countries complained about the demanding and incoherent procedures when dealing with thirty to forty agencies at a time; larger countries, less dependent on aid, focused on using their resources to

benefit as much as possible from the fragmentation of the UN system. Despite the different interests and viewpoints, the UN member states reached consensus and signed the World Summit Outcome Document (A/RES/60/1) in September 2005 that was to strengthen the overall reform efforts of the UN. They called for UN system-wide coherence (A/RES/60/1, para 168) and invited the secretary-general "to launch work to further strengthen the management and coordination of the United Nations operational activities so that they can make an even more effective contribution to the achievements of the internationally agreed development goals, including proposals for consideration by Member States for more tightly managed entities in the fields of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment."

Norm Entrepreneurs

At this point, a new norm entrepreneurship initiative started. In response to the request of member states, Annan appointed eminent personalities and experts to serve the "High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment." Learning from past experience, the responsibility for the norm creation and norm entrepreneurship was "outsourced" to prominent people with different professional backgrounds (three co-chairs, ten development experts and two ex-oficio: UNDP and IFAD) and from different countries and regions. The choice of the norm entrepreneurs was informed by two struggles of balance. First of all, a balanced regional presentation was critical to make sure that each region created a sense of belonging and ownership over the process.

The experts' role was to provide specific technical input, share experience from the past, and raise awareness of the special circumstances and needs of their regions. However, the choice of the co-chairs was not only guided by regional representation but also by political purpose. With Prime Minister of Pakistan Shaukat Aziz representing the Asian region, Prime Minister of Mozambique Luísa Dias Diogo the African regions' interests, and Prime Minister of Norway Jens Stoltenberg the donor community, the opposing political interests of the different regional groups within the UN membership were fully included and considered at the highest level of the panel. The fact that the most controversial opinions were included in the panel discussions obliged the panel members to find a compromise; at the same time it avoided the risk of blocked negotiations by those who had felt left out.

Co-Chair and former Prime Minister of Mozambique Mrs Luísa Dias Diogo, for example, held meetings with three groups present at the UN General Assembly level: African Group, the G77, and the SADC. During an interview, she said,

> So, one of the things I did was to meet Africa; show my face to Africa. It was not an easy decision. My representatives in New York said "Madam Prime Minister, how are you going to face the Africa Group as a Co-Chair?" "Lets go, I have to listen to them rather now than later." Fix it now! And I knew that not all the demands are the demands that you make. But at least I would know that I am representing their voice in their minds; and I went to the Group of 77.

During the interview, Diogo pointed to extremely controversial opinions on how to reform the UN system. Advocated by Gordon Brown, a couple of panel chairs shared the idea of merging all institutions into one single organization and having only one fund as financing instrument. Brown's logic was simple and guided by the quest for effective management. Countries would have only one interlocutor to deal with and money would be spent in a more transparent way. Yet, Diogo underlined UN agencies' mandates and the programs they tailor to a specific country: "When one knows the mandate, one analyzes the country the country can say what it wants, and joint discussion follow to define a program in a country, and from there you put the money. You put the expertise, you put the know-how, or if you don't have, you go to the world and you get the know-how. This is the way how the United Nations works. They have the network of knowledge, they organize the knowledge, bring the money and they do in the country." UNICEF's work on children is programed under an emergency perspective,

while UNFPA focuses on the development and well-being of populations from a different angle. Both approaches are valid and well-received by benefiting countries.

The panel defined its work from Terms of References they had received from Annan and started a broad consultation process that included not just issue-based consultations (environment, humanitarian assistance, gender). They also met with the executive heads of Rome- and Geneva-based agencies, UNESCO, and major financial institutions. Meetings with country-level practitioners were organized to study business practices, the funding system, and the resident coordinator system. Regional consultations, including Regional Economic Commissions, as well as consultations with the civil society and the private sector were organized to cover the complexity of the UN System's work and that of partners involved.

Despite the controversial approaches at the beginning, the members of the High-Level Committee reached consensus and submitted an outcome document entitled "Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence: 'Delivering as One'" (2006). In that report, the panel provided "a framework for a unified and coherent UN structure at the country level [. . .] matched by more coherent governance, funding, and management arrangements at the centre" and laid out steps on how to implement a fundamental restructuring of the organization. "Delivering as One" and the systemic fragmentation is the central theme of the report. Its recommendations focus change "in the way the UN operates at headquarters, regional, and country level" and places center stage "performance, efficiency, accountability, results within the UN system, and the enhanced role and voice of developing countries." To this end, the panel recommended, among others, the establishment of the ONE UN with new organizational norms and principles such as One Programme, One Budget One Leader, and One Office (where appropriate).

The One Programme is the unique program document that UN agencies, funds, and programs plan together against the development priorities defined in the national development plan. In contrast to the UNDAF under which all UN agencies, funds, and programs indicate the kind of assistance they provide to the government, the One Programme brings all members of the Country Team together under one nationally owned strategy that draws on the full range of UN expertise. Under the leadership of the UN resident coordinator, the UN Country Team plans together to create a set of strategic results based on national priorities, including the internationally agreed development goals, such as the MDGs. In addition, the programing is underpinned by integrated policy positions and services, and real-time monitoring through joint work plans and joint evaluation plans. The outcomes are listed as measurable with costed outputs resulting from UN support to national partners.

Under the One Budget, the UN Country Teams agree on cost results and present it in one financial framework. In other words, the One Budget shows each agency's planned financial input together with the funding source. Unfunded results are also identified and open for fundraising or extra-budgetary contributions. Each participating UN agency identifies the resources it expects to provide—whether in-kind or monetary—subject to funds being available. At the end of the year, agencies and government departments provide information on progress made against the planned results and actual expenditures to give governments a clear picture of UN support. Under the One Leader concept, the resident coordinator is expected to provide strategic leadership throughout the development programing process. While each agency retains authority and accountability over the use of agency resources, they respect the resident coordinator's role and guidance and support to the UN Country Team during program implementation, including mobilizing additional resources. The resident coordinator is held accountable by the government of the results produced by the UN Country Team. The One Office describes the use of common services, common premises, as well as harmonized, simplified, and unified business policies and procedures that help UN Country Team members work together. The purpose of One Office is to increase efficiency, decrease transaction costs and produce savings that in turn can be spent on programmatic development work. By physically and functionally bringing

everyone together, the One Office is supposed to achieve greater economies of scale, improve collaboration among UN agencies, and present a unified UN image at the country level.

Norm Leaders

Although the recommendations of the "Delivering as One" High-Level Panel were widely discussed and welcomed by the majority of the UN member countries, no concrete action was taken to start the implementation process. Neither Secretary-General Kofi Annan nor the UN membership engaged in reform activities until the arrival of the newly elected Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Four months after the release of the "Delivering as One" report, on 3 April 2007,[7] Ban Ki-moon announced his "broad support" to the recommendations of the High-Level Panel, and restated the panel's focus on the need of "overcoming fragmentation and bringing together the system's many assets." He endorsed the "One UN" project, including the central idea of national ownership, underlined the importance of results-based performance, pointed to the authority and accountability of the resident coordinator, and of the overall coordinating role of the UNDP.

Nevertheless, because there was still a good number of reform skeptical countries that might have blocked the complex negotiations for approval via a UNGA resolution, a more pragmatic solution was found: Use norm leaders. As sovereign countries have the primacy over making decisions on how to govern their own countries, a couple of reform-friendly countries proposed to volunteer and implement the One UN norms and principles. The pilot initiative was supported by reform-interested donors (Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, and the United Kingdom), which allowed the creation of a special implementation fund, One UN Fund, for each pilot country to finance the transaction costs (Independent Evaluation, Main Report 2012). What we can see here is that the norm entrepreneurs, who promoted the new norms among the members of the UN, are joined by norm leaders, namely those who took on the lead to make the case for the appropriateness of "Delivering as One's" new norms. These characteristics correspond to those described by Finnemore and Sikkink when elaborating on the norm emergence stage: norm entrepreneurs, the thinkers and creators of new norms, socialize and try to convince a critical mass of states to implement new norms (norm leaders).

In January 2007, eight pilot countries[8] started implementing the "Delivering as One" reform (DaO) on a voluntary basis, and almost all started with the One Programme and One Budget. Under the leadership of the resident coordinator (One Leader), all UN agencies (via their representatives in the country) programmed their country activities into the "One Programme" and respective financial resources into "One Budgetary Framework" in line with the jointly identified financial needs of the One Programme. The latter is planned against the development priorities that countries had already fixed in their national strategic development plan—thus both planning documents are structured around the same thematic clusters. This enables governments and donors to understand *which agency* supplies *what* kind of expertise, resources, and financing to support *which* particular thematic cluster. Transparency of the planning process and a clear division of labor among the government, donors, UN agencies, and nongovernmental partners were key factors to bring and keep all stakeholders on board.

Norm Cascade

Norm Followers

The norm leaders' role is to implement the new norms and make the case for their appropriateness. The implementation process itself is an experiment for which no receipt exists. As the

7. A/61/836, 3 April 2007.

8. Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay, and Vietnam. These countries, well advanced with the aid effectiveness agenda [country ownership, harmonization and alignment (country coordination mechanisms), mutual accountability, results], are also representing a regional balance.

country context and development priorities varied from pilot to pilot country, communication and exchange on issues of concern became a crucial factor for successful norm shift. The pilot countries implemented the One UN norms over a period of five years, from 2007 to 2012. Annual High-Level meetings were organized by the governments of the pilot countries to share lessons learned and best practices among the pilots and with other involved or interested stakeholders. Interestingly, the earlier meetings held in Maputo (21–23 May 2008) and Kigali (19–21 October 2009) brought only the governments of the Delivering as One countries together as well as resident coordinators and some representatives of the UN Country Teams. A couple of self-starter countries also joined the Kigali meeting as observers. The following meetings held in Hanoi (16 June 2010), Uruguay (8–10 November 2011) and Tirana (27–29 June 2012) were attended by an increasing variety of stakeholders:

Hanoi: Governments of DaO countries and self-starter countries, resident coordinators and UN Country Teams of DaO countries, and representatives of donor governments.

Uruguay: Representatives of thirty governments, resident coordinators and UN Country Teams of DaO countries, representatives of donor governments, technical experts, and numerous representatives from different multilateral organizations.

Tirana: Representatives of forty countries, including governments of pilots, self-starters, resident coordinators and UN Country Teams of DaO countries and self- starters, countries interested in adopting the DaO approach or learning about it, international donor community, Regional Economic Commissions (RECs), UN senior staff, as well as civil society.

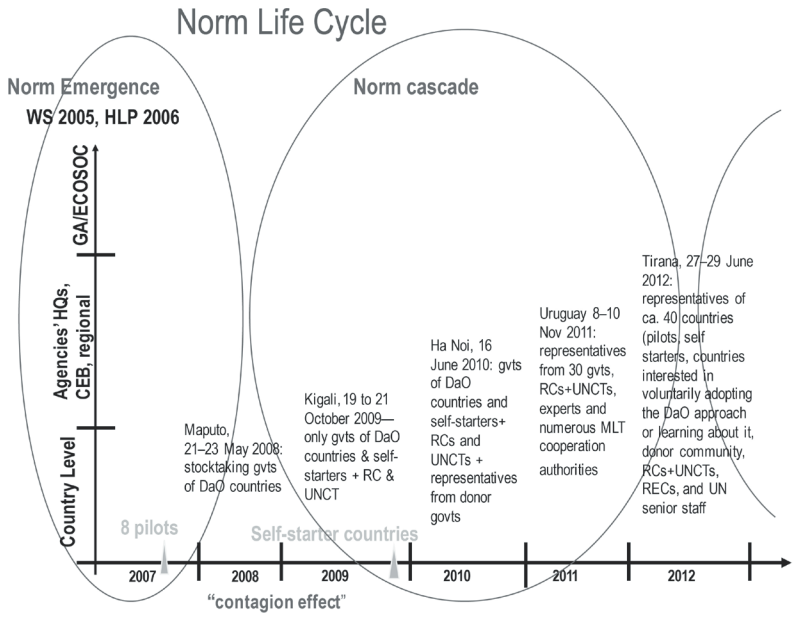
The "Delivering as One" meetings were organized by the pilot countries themselves to which all interested stakeholder groups were invited. This diplomatic "socialization process" convinced new countries (self-starter countries) to adopt and implement the new "One UN" organizational norms; it increased the critical mass of countries implementing the One UN norms up to a point that would make the norm shift process irreversible. This emerging dynamic can be explained by what Finnemore and Sikkink call the "contagion effect": The influence of norm shift becomes more and more important and incites other countries to become norm followers (p. 902). Indeed, already in 2008, one year after the pilot countries decided to implement the One UN principles, a group of self-starter countries engaged in the same change process. Having eight pilot countries was enough to serve as a critical mass that would appeal to other countries. Also, the balanced geographical representation of the pilot countries played in favor of "regional contagion." As of 2016, fifty-four countries put into practice the One UN principles[9] (UNDG 2016).

The implementation of the "Delivering as One" approach in pilot countries was supported by a specific number of donor countries. With the rising number of reform-seeking countries, the donor communities in those self-starters suddenly became concerned as did other program implementation partners, such as the civil society and the private sector. New donor countries joined the original donor group that pushed for and financed the norm shift transition in the pilot countries. The "contagion effect" went in two directions: a) new self-starter countries, and b) drowning donor communities. No wonder that the number of signatories of the final outcome documents increased with each "Delivering as One" High-Level Conference.

A second tipping was reached when both the "Delivering as One" and self-starter countries constituted a critical mass of countries that up-streamed norm shift and influenced the policy frameworks and organizational settings of the region to which they belong. This explains the interest of the Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) in the "Delivering as One" reform process and their attendance at the Tirana High-Level Conference in 2012. Con-

9. https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Delivering-as-One-countries_May-2016.pdf.

vened annually by the RECs, Regional Coordination Mechanisms[10] (RCMs) aim to improve the coordination among the work programs of UN entities and their partners at the regional level. Generally speaking, the overall mandate of the RCMs is to foster inter-agency coordination at the regional level through two main activities: 1) executive-level meetings to interpret and implement policy-level consensus on opportunities for increased regional cooperation, and 2) thematic working groups try to find ways to promote improved regional cooperation on specific operational and programmatic issues.



Norm Messengers and Message Entrepreneurs

As the number of countries supporting the "Delivering as One" reform grew, and the implementation of the One UN principles went rather smoothly and without any major obstacle, the entire norm shift process at the country level needed to be back-stopped at the global level. The negotiations that preceded the consensus reached on the 2005 World Summit Document were guided by two camps, those who wanted to reduce the galaxy of UN agencies to a single UN development agency with a single UN Fund (advanced by Gordon Brown and followers), and a second camp who pointed to the complexity of human development and the different development context and priorities of each country. The supporter of the latter camp argued that no will for cooperation and coordination in addition to overhauled business practices were the main problem. UN agencies' mandates and specific expertise were regarded as valuable and important to maintain. Undeniably, the "Delivering as One" reform and its One UN norms and principles went in favor of the latter camp. Yet, the real challenge was to convince the UN membership and reach consensus about whether to accept norm shift and the new way of doing business at the country level.

Simultaneous to the High-Level meetings of the "Delivering as One" countries, the members of the UN General Assembly looked very carefully at the stocktaking reports and

10. www.un-rcm-europecentralasia.org/home/the-regional-coordination-mechanism.html.

outcome documents indicating best practices, lessons learned, and next steps. Several negotiation rounds took place during the period from 2006/7 to 2010/11 with each led by two co-facilitators who were nominated by the president of the General Assembly in agreement with the UN secretary-general. This negotiation technique corresponds to what Sakiko Fukuda-Parr and David Hulme (pp. 4, 8, 14) promote as the concept of "norm messengers." In their paper entitled "International Norm Dynamics and 'The End of Poverty': Understanding Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)," both scholars analyze the Norm Life Cycle of the MDGs and made the case for a third category of group involved in the norm-making process. In contrast to norm entrepreneurs whose task is to create and promote the acceptance of new or specific norms, message entrepreneurs frame the new norms and play a leading role in mobilizing consensus around them (p. 4). Fukuda-Parr and Hulme further demonstrate how message entrepreneurs applied diplomatic skills to promote the MDGs, a selection of a reasonably coherent and concise set of norms, in pursuit of an international agreement by governments and international organizations (p. 8). They were institutionally embedded individuals who were motivated by organizational mandates (p. 14).

It took the UN General Assembly four negotiation rounds, stocktaking, consultation and mobilization round, substantive work round, and decision round, to decide on the various aspects of the "Delivering as One and UN System-Wide Coherence" reform process. Every round had a special objective and working mechanisms and built on the results of the previous round. The stocktaking round was run only over a few weeks. The High-Level Panel's report "Delivering as One and UN System-Wide Coherence" was issued on November 2016. Neither Secretary-General Kofi Annan nor the UN membership engaged in reform activities until the arrival of the newly elected Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who publicly announced his support to the recommendations of the High-Level Panel on 3 April 2007. On 25 May 2007, President of the General Assembly Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa officially announced he had appointed two co-facilitators, Ambassador Hackett of Barbados and Ambassador Hoscheit of Luxembourg, with the objective to begin consultations with member states on the recommendations contained in the report of the High-level Panel on System-Wide Coherence on development, humanitarian assistance, and the environment. It is important to recall that the High-Level Panel made forty-seven recommendations that were organized around eight topics:

1. Delivering as One
2. Humanitarian
3. Environment
4. Gender
5. Human Rights
6. Governance and institutional reform
7. Funding
8. Business Practices

The co-facilitators immediately found themselves questioning "how to go about with 47 recommendations having only a few weeks left before reporting to the General Assembly?" Informal consultations and briefings with the entire UN membership started immediately. Because many of the issues raised by the High-Level Panel were not new, a stocktaking exercise was launched (a) to identify already existing mandates for specific areas, and b) to establish a route map of feasible short-term, mid-term, and long-term objectives and benchmarks for each component. Human rights for example is a cross-cutting issue and to be considered in each program. A similar situation applies for the environment: There are a large number of environmental treaties, programs, declarations, and outcomes documents. Given this, it was imperative to understand what agreements already existed, in which document they were fixed, and to check if there was a new element that the High-Level Panel had recommended, and if so how to contextualize it? Addressing the complexity of humanitarian assistance was even more challenging as the coordination and collaboration included not only UN agencies but also international NGOs and the private sector.

The gender issue remained on the check list. It was found that the four independent bodies working on the empowerment of women (see footnote 12) approached this issue from different perspectives and rather complemented than competed with each other. Merging them into an overarching structure would reduce managerial costs and build synergies between the program activities. Past experience had shown it was difficult to approach the reform of governance and institutions mainly because of the opposing viewpoints between groups of countries pushing for effectiveness (Western countries) and those who were concerned of funding cuts and consequently blocked any movement. Hence, the implementation of Delivering as One and its One UN principles by pilot countries did not find any opposition. After all, it was a sovereign decision of the pilot countries to engage in this process and to share the experience after five years. There was a general understanding that the lessons learned from the implementation of the One UN norms and principles would provide a good basis for negotiations on reforming business practices, funding, and governance at a later stage.

The analytical work of the stocktaking round informed the negotiations of the 2007 Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the UN system[11] (TCPR). Many points raised by the High-Level Panel are reflected in this resolution that became the route map for the five years to come: funding, gender and empowerment of women, transition from relief to development, coherence, effectiveness and relevance, regional dimension, business practices, transaction costs and efficiency, capacity-building at the country level, and relevant evaluation processes of country level activities.

The second negotiation round, the consultation and mobilization round (2007–08), was animated by co-facilitators Ambassadors Augustine Mahiga of Tanzania and Ambassador Paul Kavanagh of Ireland. In his letter of 11 January 2008,[12] the president of the General Assembly addressed the members of the UN and stressed the importance of advancing coherence across the UN development activities system and the implementation of the One UN pilot projects. Member states were invited to fully cooperate; an invitation was extended later to the UN agencies' headquarters. However, commencing concrete negotiations appeared difficult as too many issues at a time could not be digested by the entire General Assembly. The co-facilitators opted for a "basket" approach when negotiating the various elements raised by the High-Level Panel; they announced the creation of several thematic working groups, such as funding, governance, gender, Delivering as One, Harmonization of Business Practices, etc., and invited member states to join one or several of those working groups according to their interests and capacities. Each working group had its own agenda and a commonly chosen chair handled the work program of its group. A deadline was fixed for each group to present its work, and recommendations for consideration of the UN membership, which would discuss and decide whether or not to accept it (in the latter case the process would start again on the issues of disagreement).

During that time, both co-facilitators started extensive consultation processes to mobilize the actors concerned by the Delivering as One implementation process: governments of pilot countries, resident coordinators, UN country teams, and donor countries, as well as the UN agencies' headquarters. They pledged for a new spirit of cooperation and of the advantages of the One UN norms and principles on one hand, while on the other hand they reassured the UN agencies' governing boards and senior managements of the support of the UN membership in New York. During January to March 2008, the co-facilitators visited the pilots Tanzania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Albania; from April to June 2008 visits took place in pilot countries Rwanda and Vietnam, as well as in Geneva and Rome-based UN agencies and UNESCO in Paris.

To ensure informed decision-making by the UN membership, co-facilitators Mahiga and Kavanagh installed vertical communication lines and invited *message entrepreneurs* to share their experiences and report on the progress made with the One UN norms and principles.

11. A/RES/62/208, 19 December 2007

12. www.centerforunreform.org/sites/default/files/swc110108.pdf

Message entrepreneurs are actors that implement the Delivering as One norms at the country level. The governments of the pilot countries were regularly invited to share their "country level experience" with their peers, and especially the G77 members of which the majority remained skeptical about the reform. In addition, informal hearings were organized; resident coordinators and members of the UN country teams shared the progress made in their countries and the challenges they had to face. Special sessions with resident coordinators and pilot countries were organized during ECOSOC and the General Assembly to keep the reform on the top of the UN General Assembly's political agenda, and thus push for consensus on the items that two resolutions should consider, e.g., two resolutions were approved during the mobilization round: The first[13] approved the review of the mandates of the various UN specialized agencies, funds, and programs and their thematic focus that had started during the preceding stocktaking round. The aim was to ensure that the reform process would take place within internationally approved legislative settings. The second[14] focused on Delivering as One and UN System-Wide Coherence. The five interrelated axes were considered and recommended to work on: Delivering as One at the country level, harmonized business practices, funding, governance, and gender fragmentation.

For the third negotiation round, the substantive work round, General Assembly President Ambassador Miguel D'Escoto Brockmann appointed Ambassadors Kaire Mbuende of Namibia and Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo of Spain as co-facilitators of the upcoming negotiations on System-Wide Coherence. As the nomination was announced on 20 February 2009,[15] only six months were left to lead the UN membership through a substantive work process. To do so, they requested the help of the UN Secretariat, which delivered three discussion notes: one on system-wide coherence and especially the interrelation between the five axes, a second paper on the fragmentation of the gender architecture, and a third paper on funding issues. In contrast to the basket approach used by the previous co-facilitators, Ambassadors Mbuende and Yáñez-Barnuevo opted for a "one by one" thematic approach. Each topic, e.g., gender, governance, funding, was discussed by the entire membership until consensus was found.

Yet, because only six months were left to present recommendations to ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly, an effective preparation of the thematic sessions was essential. To meet their objectives and keep the negotiation process as effective as possible, the co-facilitators: (a) sent mass letters to each of the permanent delegations, which included a detailed work plan and the "homework" to be done prior to the meetings. The homework consisted of a substantive analysis of the secretary-general's thematic discussion papers, a clear political position of each mission's government and concrete proposals that should be circulated in advance among the UN member states for consideration; (b) introduced a "thematic cycle negotiation method" to keep negotiations constantly running. Meetings were scheduled nearly every two weeks, with each time focusing on a different theme. The advantage of this method was that there was time for background work and consultations of permanent missions with capitals before the next meeting on that specific issue was scheduled. In the meantime, work continued on other issues and advanced the negotiations without delay. For the substantive work round, meetings were scheduled as follows:

System-Wide Coherence (10 March 2009)
Gender (30 March 2009; 15 April 2009)
Governance (24 April 2009; 8 May 2009)
Funding (19 May 2009)
Interactive session with Secretary-General (20 May 2009)
Delivering as One (4 and 8 June 2009)
Gender (8 June 2009)
Experts session on Funding and Governance (17 June 2009)
Gender (22 June 2009)

13. A/RES 62/278 of 15 September 2008.

14. A/RES/62/277 of 15 September 2008.

15. www.un.org/ga/president/63/letters/appointmentSWC.pdf.

System-Wide Coherence (letter 7 August 2009)

System-Wide Coherence (draft resolution sent to member states on 11 September 2009)

The vertical communication lines installed by the previous co-facilitators were kept as they appeared useful. Co-facilitators nourished bilateral contacts with individual member states and regional groups; experts were invited to ECOSOC session to feed their knowledge into intergovernmental negotiations; resident coordinators and UN country teams continued to share their experience in Delivering as One pilot countries; and Delivering as One governments regularly provided feedback and shared their views with peers of the G77 group. The substantive work round produced one resolution on system-wide coherence[16] that approved the merger of the four existing UN structures[17] working on the empowerment of women into one single composite entity on gender, which became the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in 2010. No resolution was searched for the Delivering as One process as the implementation continued at the country level. However, the UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) had already started in 2007 to think of how to evaluate the Delivering as One reform process—so far this norm shift process was unique. Preliminary evaluability assessments for the years 2007 and 2008 were circulated and informed the decision makers during the months of the substantive work round.

The last negotiation round, the decision round, was animated by co-facilitators Ambassador Tiina Intelmann, permanent representative of Estonia, and Ambassador Ghazi Jomaa, permanent representative of Tunisia. Their job was to continue the consultative process on the System-wide Coherence in the course of the 64th session and to lead the UN membership for a final decision. To start with, the co-chairs requested the secretariat to produce a strategic discussion paper[18] that would outline already accomplished negotiations and information on unsettled issues. The idea behind this request was to bring the UN member states at the same level of understanding and to build on what has already been decided by the preceding resolution on UN System-Wide Coherence (A/RES/63/311). It is a common diplomatic praxis in New York that the diplomatic personnel of permanent missions stay no longer than four years, often less. Most of the time, incoming diplomats need a warm up period to get used to the UN General Assembly negotiation life and procedures. At that time of the year, many roll-overs of diplomatic staff happened and created a critical mass of newcomers who needed to get acquainted with the topics and negotiation results. The reports provided by the UN Secretariat aimed to bring all permanent missions to the same level of knowledge and understanding of the reform process.

As already mentioned, the topics left for final negotiations were those related to system-wide governance (five axes) and the creation of UN Women. The assessment of the implementation of the One UN principles was left for an Independent Evaluation team that was hired and had already started its work. Here again the preferred methodology was to split up the work into thematic working groups. The co-facilitators nominated the heads of each working group and charged them with the responsibility to guide the discussions over a fixed period of time. By the end, each working group had to submit a draft proposal whose recommendations were debated among the UN member states. Comments made during these special thematic sessions were integrated into a new draft document which, at a second time, was not only shared among the UN members but also with the UN Secretariat to discuss and integrate technical issues. Opposing opinions among particular countries such as Cuba, Egypt, Russia, and India had let to stocked positions. As UN members are equal sovereign countries, the co-facilitators had no power to push or intervene in those countries' internal affairs. Nevertheless, as the number of blocking countries remained limited, the co-facilitators took the freedom to

16. A/63/311 of 2 October 2009.

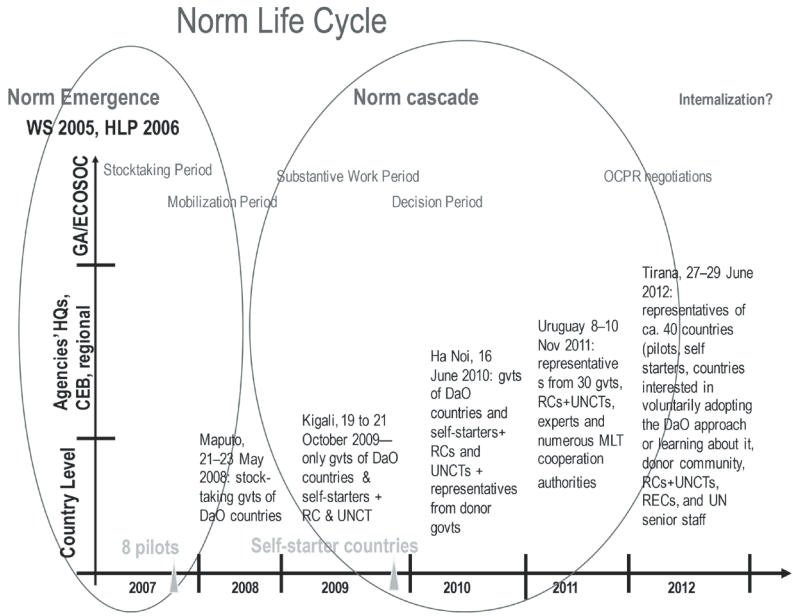
17. Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

18. A/64/589.

announce an official deadline for the disagreements among those countries to be solved and requested the submission of a joint proposal for the next agenda item.

In order to avoid a patchwork situation where individual countries block negotiations for their own interest, the co-facilitators presented a last draft resolution and requested the political groups to negotiate among them and present a statement that was supported by all group members (Res/A/64/L.56 and A/RES/64/289 of 21 July 2012 on SWC and UN Women). The resolution set a milestone with its decision to create a new organization, UN Women. It made provisions for the establishment of this new organization, funding, governance, composition of the governance board, administration and human resources, and transitional arrangements.

The final outcome was a specific resolution, called Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review[19] (QCPR), which was adopted on 22 January 2013. The QCPR focused on system-wide coherence and looked at issues such as system-wide arrangements for administration and human resources management, financing, and transitional arrangements. With the QCPR approval, the members of the UN unanimously supported the Delivering as One approach and its new One UN norms. However, no agreement was found to decide on whether or not the Delivering as One approach would be considered as the new way of conducting operational activities at the country level. At the contrary, the UN membership remained careful and stated in article 21 of the resolution[20] that it "encourages the Secretary-General to proceed with the modality for the independent evaluation of lessons learned from the 'delivering as one' pilots, . . . and looks forward to receiving the outcome at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly." In other words, after more than four years of implementing the new One UN norms in the pilot countries, the status of internalization had not been reached.



19. The QCPR is the mechanism through which the General Assembly assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and impact of UN operational activities for development and establishes system-wide policy orientations for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the UN system in response to the evolving international development and cooperation environment. In 2008, member states decided to change the comprehensive policy review (formerly the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review-TCPR) to a quadrennial cycle, notably to ensure that the review guides the development of strategic plans of UN system organizations. A/RES/67/226 of 22 January 2013 www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/289&referer=http://www.un.org/en/ga/64/resolutions.shtm l&Lang=E.

20. www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/289&referer=http://www.un.org/en/ga/64/resolutions.shtm l&Lang=E.

Stabilization—The Missing Stage before Achieving the Internalization Stage

So far, this study has analyzed the promotion of the One UN norms and principles via two organizational platforms: the UN General Assembly and Delivering as One pilot countries (country level). These platforms were used by norm entrepreneurs, norm messengers, and message entrepreneurs to promote the new norms. Organizational platforms can be constructions created for a special purpose to which adhere different stakeholders (NGOs, transnational networks, etc.) pursuing a specific purpose, or international organizations that have purposes and agendas other than just the promotion of a specific norm (Finnemore and Sikkink 896, 899). Nevertheless, even though the progress made with the implementation of the new organizational norms, the status of internalization had not been reached after more than four years. The reasons for are multifold.

First of all, it was a sovereign decision of pilot countries to volunteer and experience the implementation of the One UN norms. The objective here was to build cases for such a norm shift and also document the different steps, challenges met, lessons learned, and best practices for further studies. One could indeed argue that the self-starter countries also contributed substantially to the discussion on how to liftoff norm shift. Yet, the self-starters made the decision to go for norm shift only after a couple of months when the pilot countries had already well advanced and it became obvious that the funds made available by a specific group of reform-interested donors would decline as more countries wanted to join the norm transition process. Within a multilateral setting such as the UN, individual experience by a specific member state might inform debates but will never be accepted as a prescription to the entire UN membership without unanimously agreed upon terms of a resolution. It should also be noted that while seven countries undertook an evaluation of DoA, one, Pakistan, did not. Consequently, no internalization stage can be reached at this point.

Second, the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR 2007), followed by the resolution on System-Wide Coherence (A/64/289 of 2 July 2010, art. 21,) mandated an independent evaluation of the Delivering as One initiative. Moreover, by resolution 64/289, the General Assembly outsourced; it endorsed and entrusted oversight of the evaluation to a regionally balanced group of evaluation experts. The overall objective of the evaluation was "to assess the contribution and the added value of 'Delivering as One' and to draw lessons learned that are significant for the United Nations system." Avoiding a comparative assessment of performances across countries, the independent evaluation went for a synthetic evaluation of the lessons learned from the pilot experiences and used evaluation criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

Generally speaking, the Delivering as One initiative was echoed with positive voices. Concerning relevance, the independent evaluation team considered the Delivering as One approach and the One UN norms helped the pilot countries better meet their developing needs because: (a) both together, the resident coordinators and the respective governments, took the lead on the overall programming and coordination. This increased transparency and coherence among all stakeholders at the country level (horizontal) as well as with the UN system (vertical). Moderate progress was made in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. The effectiveness of Delivering as One was understood as the contribution made to deliver better support to countries, development processes, and results—it was assessed as the intermediate state of the UN system delivering better support to countries.

The efficiency of Delivering as One was considered weak. First of all, there was no real progress made in reducing transaction costs, which is often the case for such important change management processes. The independent evaluation team noted that progress lagged owing to the limited mandates of country offices to change procedures and incompatible systems across UN organizations. Getting into change was time consuming, and support from higher levels of the system was often considered inadequate by UN country teams. Moreover, a coherent and consolidated management information system did not exist.

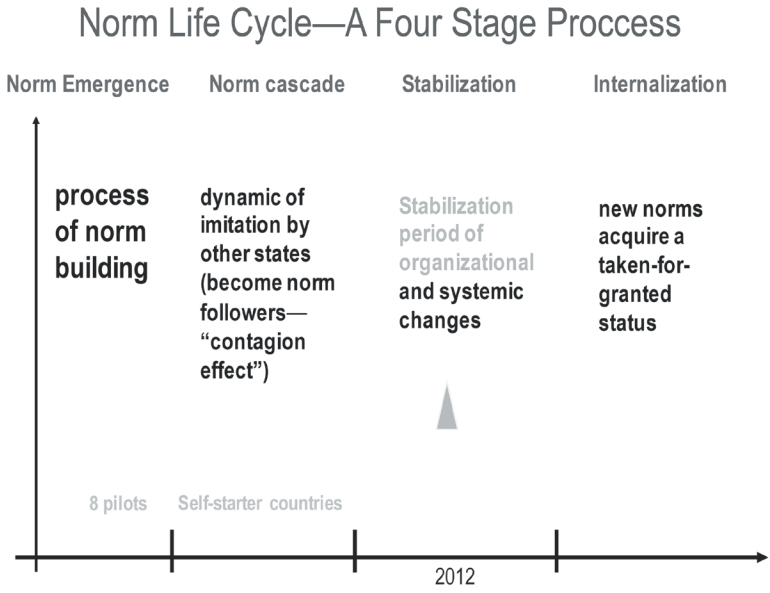
The likelihood of sustaining Delivering as One was assessed as moderate. The evaluation team assessed the sustainability question in terms of the probability of its continuation over time and the likelihood of long-term benefits, for both pilot countries and the UN system. In this regard, sustainability was considered as a "combination of the extent to which 'Delivering as One' is relevant, efficient and effective and has gained sufficient support at all levels in all relevant systems to ensure its continuation, along with its continuing financial viability" (para 88). Indeed, the support for Delivering as One within the pilot countries, most parts of the UN system, and individual member states was strong; however, the team had considerable doubts of the financial sustainability of Delivering as One as key donors had indicated to reduce or discontinue funding for it. Spain for example had been a strong supporter and donor for the Delivering as One initiative. Nevertheless, its banking bailouts as result of the 2008/9 global financial and economic crisis in addition to the European debt crisis had obliged the country to step back its international ambitions. Another case was the UK. The Delivering as One initiative got strong support under the leadership of Prime Minister Gordon Brown; however, new priorities for multilateral cooperation were formulated when David Cameron took office.

Condition for relevance respond to country needs and priorities	Alignment to countries' development priorities; Accept and support county ownership and leadership	**IE: yes, strong**
Condition for effectiveness and efficiency: system-wide vertical and horizontal coherence of policies and business procedures	*Country level*—Mechanism: One Programme, One Budgetary Framework, One Fund, One Voice, One House; UNDAF rollout countries, new UNDAF cycles *HQs and CEB level*: CL activities need to be backstopped at regional and HQ/CEB level On-going process in CEB with HLCP, HLCM and UNDG	**IE: moderate–weak** *CL*: mechanisms only now fully in place and start to be operational *HQs/CEB*: IE identified problems and provides recommendations
Condition for sustainability: system-wide systemic changes fixed by GA,HQ + governing boards, governance reform	Inter-agency coordination, IPSAS, ISWE Accountability and reporting lines, governance reform	IE: Problem Tree and Recommendations of what needs to be changed

The independent evaluation's assessment pointed to systemic bottlenecks as key problems for the effectiveness and efficiency of the Delivering as One approach. Indeed, over the path of several decades, each organization had developed its own financial management IT solutions, management information systems, accounting standards, human resources regulation, which, once operating under the new One UN norms hindered the implementation of commonly planned activities at the country level. A simple financial transaction from one UN country office to another needed to be approved by headquarters, which wired it to the benefitting agency's headquarter that then needed to wire the funds back to the agency's field office. As each UN organization has its own governance structure, mandate, and culture, it remained the primary units of account for performance and management. Incontestably, voluntary coordination at the country level among a diversity of existing systems quickly reached its limits because many high-level systemic elements had not been changed for "Delivering as One." The Delivering as One initiative was an experiment; no senior management and governing board would have initiated a vast change in corporate management systems before the assessment and evaluation of the Delivering as One results.

Within this context, it becomes evident that a stabilization stage was required to finalize the norm shift process. The new One UN norms and principles, One Programme, One Budgetary Framework/ (One Budget), One Leader, and One Office, induced all UN agencies' headquarters to adapt and align and find new approaches to planning, budgeting, and reporting.

The post-pilot initiative of Delivering as One (stabilization stage) is characterized by a system-wide search for standardization and harmonization of business practices among all UN agencies. Mandated by the QCPR resolution (articles 43 to 48), UN agencies were pressed to find agreements on system-wide standards for financial transactions, human resources management, procurement, information technology, and administration within the UN Development System and report back to the UN General Assembly for the next QCPR in 2017. The harmonization process was coordinated through a third organizational platform: the UN Chief Executive Board (CEB). The CEB is the major inter-agency platform and brings together the thirty executive heads of UN organizations to coordinate and align strategies and policy issues. Its work is supported by three high-level committees: (a) the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) focusing on management issues, (b) the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) coordinating policy and program issues, and (c) the UN Development Group (UNDG), which is in charge of a coordinated implementation of recommendations made by the HLCP and HLCM, and the decisions made by the heads of agencies during the CEB meetings.



Since 2013, important systemic changes took place starting with the system-wide implementation of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and system-wide monitoring and evaluation standards developed by the UN Evaluation Group. A new Business Operations Strategy was developed in 2014[21] to fix the rules for joint strategic planning, common procurement, logistics and transport, ICTs, human resources, audits, financing, and a harmonized approach to cash transfers, as well as the management of common premises. At the same time, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and country programming prin-

21. https://undg.org/home/guidance-policies/business-operations/.

ciples were developed to engage the internalization process of the One UN norms. These new guidelines provide for guidance on programing, leadership, business operations, funding, and communications for country-level development operations on one hand, while on the other hand they guide headquarters through the necessary alignment of policy and procedural changes. We can conclude that the stabilization period is characterized by: (a) UN agencies' headquarters harmonization and alignment to the country level change dynamics, and (b) a continued growth of countries interested in norm shift.

By the time of writing, UNDG counted fifty-four countries that had decided to shift and implement the new One UN norms. Consequently, the pilot countries and self-starters are more advanced in the change process compared to those countries that only decided to go for Delivering as One after the 2012 QCPR (twenty-four countries). The next QCPR in 2017 will assess the entire norm shift process at the country level and the systemic changes that UN agencies' headquarters. Depending on the outcome of the assessments, the UN membership will pronounce for or against the internalization of the One UN norms as the new way for conducting operational activities in developing countries.

Conclusions

The reform "Delivering as One and UN System-Wide Coherence" is a four-stage, norm shift process. The application of Finnemore and Sikkink's Norm Life Cycle framework helped explain the emergence of the One UN norms and principles, the role and contribution of the different norm entrepreneurs, norm leaders, norm messengers, and message entrepreneurs as well as the self-starter countries. Nevertheless, in contrast to the emergence of global social issue-based norms, the emergence of Delivering as One and its One UN norms is a bottom up dynamic that went across three organizational platforms at different times. While the norm emergence and norm cascade of the Delivering as One norms (One UN norms) show similarities with the NLC of issue-based norms, the internalization stage was not yet achieved. The alignment to and system-wide implementation of the One UN norms (stabilization) only started after the norm cascade, and only at the request of UN member states (2012 QCPR). This evidence shows that a fourth stage is needed to manage norm shifts within global systems. The internalization stage of Delivering as One and UN System-Wide Coherence will depend on whether the UN member states (a) accept the One UN norms and principles as the new way of conducting operational activities in developing countries, and (b) approve the system-wide harmonization efforts among UN agencies once evaluation has provided evidence. The QCPR in 2017 will be important as it decides the value of the entire Delivering as One reform process.

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