1. Introduction

1. In an ever more interdependent world, a coherent and strong United Nations is needed to meet an immense set of global challenges and a wide diversity of needs. The United Nations has a key role in ensuring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and the other internationally agreed development goals, enabling countries to lead their development processes and helping to address such global challenges as disease, conflict and the environment, as well as to promote the realization of all rights. The United Nations must be flexible and coherent enough to respond to the operational and policy needs of developing countries, States experiencing conflict, stable low-income countries, emerging economies and developed countries. It should advocate global standards and norms and, in each country, should be focused on delivering results in line with country needs.

2. However, in the face of the preceding challenges, the United Nations is not optimally configured. The Organization urgently needs more coherence and synergy so it can perform as one and be more than the sum of its parts. It should utilize its unique universality, neutrality and capacity to operate in the security, development and humanitarian spheres. It should more successfully perform its roles of convener, standard-setter, advocate, expert, monitor, coordinator and manager of programmes. It should respond to the diverse needs of countries and perform as one at the country level, and have the governance, management and funding practices in place to support those efforts.

3. The recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment (A/61/583), ‘Delivering as one’, present an important opportunity to address those issues in a comprehensive and consistent manner, to ensure that the Organization can respond to the global challenges of the twenty-first century and play a full and effective role at the heart of the multilateral system.

4. Having reviewed and assessed the recommendations put forward by the High-Level Panel, and in the light of the counsel provided by my predecessor, who commissioned the Panel’s work, and with the benefit of having engaged in a range of informal consultations on different aspects of the Panel’s report, I am pleased to signal my broad support for the principle of a stronger, more coherent United Nations and for the recommendations contained in the report.

5. The Panel’s report puts forward a vision of significantly enhanced United Nations system-wide coherence, which I perceive to be very much in line with the de-
mands and objectives of Member States and the concerns they have and continue to voice. That vision is predicated on overcoming fragmentation and bringing together the system’s many assets in order to ‘deliver as one’ at all levels, but particularly at the country level, in line with the principle of country ownership. I believe that this is vital, and as I was quoted as saying in the report of the Panel, ‘the true measure of the success for the United Nations is not how much we promise but how much we deliver for those who need us most.’

6. The Panel’s vision also gives due prominence to the need for the United Nations system to be results based and focused on performance and accountability. This imperative of efficiency, transparency and accountability is also very much at the heart of the demands from Member States for United Nations reform, and forms a cornerstone of my own priorities for the Organization.

7. The present report provides an overview of how I view the Panel’s recommendations in the context of the wider United Nations reform agenda and suggests elements of a process for consideration of ways to take forward intergovernmental consideration of the Panel’s report.

2. Consideration of the Panel’s recommendations

8. As noted by my predecessor, the Panel’s report is very rich in terms of analysis and recommendations and covers a great deal of ground. As he suggested in his transmittal note, the report merits a process of review and dialogue to build broad-based common understanding of its objectives, contents and proposals. Although the main consideration of and decision-making regarding the report’s recommendations should be done by the General Assembly, other policymakers and actors need to be brought into the discussion to build deeper understanding and ownership of the proposals. Those steps include consultations within the Economic and Social Council and with the governing bodies of organizations of the United Nations system.

9. I believe that the proposals in the report should be pursued as an integrated and coherent whole, as the report was crafted as such with many of the recommendations connected to one another. Arrangements for its review should ensure that the different proposals in the report are addressed on their own merits, with outcomes that reinforce each other and advance, together, the overall objectives set by the Panel.

10. The report should be considered within the context of a number of ongoing reform processes. Clearly, the Panel, in formulating its recommendations, was mindful of the other processes and the progress and obstacles they have encountered. In that regard, many of its recommendations are consistent with existing mandates for reform. In those cases, the United Nations system should move ahead to improve coherence without unnecessary delays so as to avoid duplication of effort. Other areas will require fuller discussions and deliberations.

11. One such process, which is highly relevant in terms of the Panel’s recommendations related to enhancing the coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations at the country level, is the forthcoming triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. A number of the Panel’s recommendations reaffirm and give renewed impetus to ongoing reform initiatives mandated by the 2001 and 2004 triennial comprehensive policy reviews,