The Stamford Common Understanding

*The Interagency Workshop on a Human Rights-Based Approach in the Context of UN Reform* was held in Stamford, USA, in May 2003, and sought to move forward UN interagency cooperation on the human rights-based approach to development. An important consequence of the workshop was the drawing up of *The Stamford Common Understanding*, which has helped to establish common agreement on some of the distinctive attributes of a human rights-based approach to development. The tree pillars of the common understanding are:

i. All programmes of development cooperation, policies and technical assistance should further the realisation of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments

ii. Human rights standards contained in, and principles derived from, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments guide all development cooperation and programming in all sectors and in all phases of the programming process

iii. Development cooperation contributes to the development of capacities of ‘duty-bearers’ to meet their obligations and/or ‘rights-holders’ to claim their rights.

“*No one agency own human rights. It is the mission of the entire UN system.*”

Opening statement of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to the workshop.