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Remarks
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What should be the strategic priorities of the UN development system in the next QCPR cycle?

Thank you, your Excellency. I am glad to be with you all this morning.

The question of what the UN development system should prioritise in the coming QCPR cycle is an urgent and important one. So thank you for giving us an opportunity to exchange views on such a fundamental question.

As the timing of the coming QCPR cycle is important, so it is demanding. It will span both the pre and the post 2015 development agenda -- and the existing and evolving challenges therein. It will have to take account of a context in which disparities are widening between and within countries. And it will take place in a much changed -- and rapidly changing-- development landscape.

Regardless of whether we are discussing development pre 2015 or post 2015, at the heart of our priorities as we Deliver as One should be a commitment to deliver results -- sustainable results -- and a commitment to achieve those results with equity and a focus on gender equality.

Because for all our collective and commendable progress: increasing immunizations...enrolling more girls and boys in school...saving more newborns...providing more clean water and sanitation...progress is uneven. And where it is uneven, the most disadvantaged women, children, and young people suffer first. They fall sick. They drop out of school. They fail to achieve their potential. That is just wrong. And all the more wrong because in very many cases, it is largely avoidable.

The coming QCPR must support the UN development system in focusing on the achievement of results for the most vulnerable -- delivering results in a more efficient and effective manner.

For example, the advent of new technologies and new vaccines means that we can reach the hardest-to-reach: the impoverished...people living with disabilities...indigenous groups...and girls -- more quickly and inexpensively than ever before...making equity-focused development more cost-effective than current approaches.

And more than that, a focus on equity is essential to achieving sustainable and inclusive growth and prosperity.

Increasingly, evidence suggests that equitable investment in the social sectors, especially in the health and education of the most vulnerable groups -- and children in particular -- breaks the intergenerational transmission of poverty...creates more stable societies...and contributes to more sustainable growth. Such investment does more than create a social floor -- it becomes an economic elevator of growth.

Let me illustrate this with two examples.

Take nutrition. The Copenhagen Consensus, a group of leading development experts, found that vitamin A supplements yield a cost:benefit ratio as high as 1:100. And the World Bank estimates that investing in nutrition can increase a country's GDP by at least 2 to 3 per cent. Applying the World Bank's estimate to Yemen -- where I visited last week, and where an acute nutrition crisis is unfolding with heart-breaking consequences -- under-nutrition is costing Yemen approximately \$1.5 billion per year.

Or take enrolling and keeping girls in school. Just one extra year of schooling for girls can increase their future wages by between 10 to 20 per cent -- wages which they, more than boys, reinvest in their families, kick-starting a cycle of prosperity and opportunity.

In today's uncertain economic climate, no government can afford to ignore such financial returns.

Another priority for the UN development system in the coming QCPR should be the role that the UN can play in taking advantage of the new development landscape.

The emergence of new centres of economic growth, centres whose growth is based, in part, on overcoming challenges and pioneering innovative approaches, is an exciting opportunity to broaden our engagement during the coming QCPR cycle. The collective experience of the global south is an invaluable source of solutions to many of the challenges millions of people face every day. And so, a hallmark of the coming QCPR can and must be greater commitment to South-South and Triangular Cooperation... making it central to UN country level programming.

Developing new partnerships...scaling up programmes...focusing on green growth... and exploring new areas of cooperation have the potential to accelerate results for those most in need. Because in all that we do -- individually in our respective agencies and collectively as we Deliver as One -- results are what matter. How we best deliver those results in the coming QCPR cycle depends, I believe, on six factors.

First, we must concentrate on how to achieve practical results together, rather than seeing processes as ends in themselves. As we work to achieve results and be ever more accountable, let us make UN-wide coordinating mechanisms more effective by shaping them to fit the diversity of the countries and governments we are supporting. Efficient and country-specific processes, under government leadership, will reduce transaction costs for both the UN and our partners.

In fact, if there is an upside to the current austerity measures we all face, it is that they will force us to focus all the more on achieving results and cost-effectiveness. Although that should, of course, be our approach regardless of the financial climate.

Second, we can best achieve results through issue-specific “groupings of agencies”, so that we come together when and where relevant...and rely on each other’s strengths...as the H5 does on maternal health. Or, as we now routinely work in humanitarian settings, through the cluster approach where relevant agencies with comparative advantages work together to deliver results in areas such nutrition, health, protection, education, and water and sanitation.

Third, and related to the above point, if groupings of agencies and partners plan together using similar timelines that outline their expected results...activities...performance benchmarks...and budgets, we will be increasingly cost-effective and efficient.

Fourth, we must work together to monitor together, so we can show results together. If we use the same results-based management tools and standards to monitor achievement of results, we will better manage for results, and reinforce our horizontal accountability for results.

At UNICEF, we are encouraged by our progress with MoRES -- our new Monitoring of Results for Equity System -- which allows us to report results more rapidly by measuring progress on overcoming development bottlenecks. We believe that it can complement and strengthen other initiatives such as the MDG Acceleration Framework. Already 26 country offices are using MoRES, and many others are moving forward. As MoRES evolves, we are learning from our mistakes and sharing our successes. We hope that such a tool can be adapted and adopted by the UN system, the better to reinforce our mutual accountability and deliver results as one.

Fifth, we must redouble our efforts to simplify and harmonize our business practices, building on promising initiatives such as development of common ICT platforms for use at country level; development of harmonized procurement guidelines; the adoption of IPSAS by a number of agencies; and common practices developed in the area of Human Resources. These initiatives lay the foundation for accelerated progress in this area.

Lastly, in order to achieve these strategic priorities, we need to reemphasise the importance of core funding so that we can put resources where they are most needed, innovate, and best support programme country priorities.

The thread running through everything I have said today is that the principle of coherence, of UN agencies working together, is absolutely right. This principle can, if applied with pragmatism and persistence, produce a powerful device for achieving real results in the lives of many millions of children and women. I am confident that by working together and delivering results as one, we will prove that the whole is greater than the sum of our parts. As it must be.

I look forward to listening to and learning from our other speakers today.

Thank you.
