



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.AustraliaUN.org

United Nations Economic & Social Council

17 July 2012

Operational Activities Segment

Statement by Mr Peter Baxter, Director General, Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)

(Check against delivery)

Mr President

The United Nations is an important partner for Australia's aid program.

The UN development system is uniquely placed to respond to the changing development landscape, and to help meet the needs of developing countries through tailored support. It must be fit for purpose for the final push on the MDGs over the next two and a half years, and demonstrate the flexibility and agility to deliver on a post-2015 development agenda.

Despite a tight fiscal environment, Australia's funding to the UN continues to grow. Recognizing the importance of multi-year, predictable financing for development, we have committed core funding to our main UN partner agencies for the next four years. For those agencies demonstrating results and impact, Australia's core funding will be almost double by 2016.

We are putting our confidence in UN partnerships. Over the next four years, Australia will provide UNDP with over \$125 million and UNICEF with \$177.3 million. Our core funding to UN Women, the World Food Programme, UNFPA and UNHCR will grow.

Australia also understands the importance of multi-partner trust funds to the implementation of UN development activities. In 2011, we increased our contributions to trust funds, including One UN Funds, to nearly US\$35 million. This is a six-fold increase and makes us the fifth largest bilateral donor to such funds.

(6)

Mr President

The UN development system has particular strengths, but we also know it is far from perfect. UN agencies must lift the performance of their development operations on the ground. They need to demonstrate stronger coherence, efficiency and effectiveness. Agencies must demonstrate value for money to donors and to program countries themselves.

Reforms already underway deserve recognition and we thank Helen Clark and the UN Development Group for their efforts. But, much more needs to be done.

The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review is the opportunity to institutionalise critical reforms to the UN development system. There are four areas where Australia sees potential for change: results; leadership; coordination and coherence; and inclusive development in UN operational activities.

First, **results-based strategic planning** and management must be improved at agency and system-wide levels. The UN Development Assessment Framework results matrices must be strengthened. Results should be built into decision-making and communicated to all stakeholders. Indicators and reporting frameworks need to be harmonized, and capacity building of staff should be a focus. Monitoring and evaluation systems must also be improved, particularly at the system-wide level.

Second, we need to strengthen UN **leadership** at the country level. Empowering Resident Coordinators is a practical way to build coherence. Full implementation of the Management and Accountability Framework by country teams is an essential step. We must also improve mutual horizontal accountability, particularly between the RC and country team members. We must strengthen the capacity of RCs' offices, particularly in monitoring and evaluation, results-based management and statistics. And we must ensure RCs are equipped and supported to fulfil their responsibilities, including in humanitarian coordination.

Third, Australia believes the UN has the tools to improve **coordination and coherence** at the country level. It is time to streamline and standardise these tools across the UN system.

The independent evaluation of Delivering as One demonstrated the value of reforms at the country level. We welcome the move towards joint programming, joint action plans and common budgetary frameworks, and the leadership of the pilot and self-starter countries to formalise these processes across the UN system.

But we must remove the remaining bottlenecks to reform.

The UN system needs to be accountable for results at the development assessment framework level. Joint programs should be approved once, not by each individual Executive Board. We need a system-wide governance mechanism to avoid fragmentation of accountability to member states. Funding at the country level should be predictable, flexible and linked closely to strategies and plans. A plan for the sustainable funding of coordination by the UN system itself must be worked out. And urgent work is required to simplify and harmonise business practices across the funds, programs and specialised

agencies. A fragmented approach is not a cost-effective approach; we need to pursue value for money.

Fourth, **pursuing an inclusive approach to development, based on equity**, must be an explicit objective of the UN development agenda.

We have seen an improvement in gender mainstreaming in the UN, although there is scope for much more to be done in this vital area.

By comparison, very little has been done to mainstream the needs of persons with disability in the UN's work. Over one billion people are estimated to have a disability, with 80% living in developing countries. Largely excluded from the MDGs, and often unable to access education, decent work, health care and transportation, people with disability face greater risk of living in poverty.

The QCPR is an opportunity to strengthen equitable access to development, including by mainstreaming disability across the UN development system.

Mr President

Australia looks forward to helping build consensus for UN reform through the QCPR process. We must identify practical solutions to strengthen the UN's role in eradicating poverty and building a sustainable future for all.

Thank you.