



Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2012

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Operational activities segment

Ambassador Morten Wetland
Permanent Representative of Norway

President,

I am making this statement on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway.

Every day “UN development” delivers, all over the world. Every day UN staff members, national and international, work hard to ensure that people and governments receive the support and assistance they need and request. Every day the UN delivers results that have an impact in terms of promoting development, reducing poverty, saving lives and building peace.

This is why the Nordic countries continue to support the UN’s development and humanitarian activities, as we have done for decades. We regard the UN as an indispensable international development and humanitarian actor. We are seeking to achieve a UN that is as efficient and effective as possible in delivering sustainable development for all. We are doing so together with other member states in the governing bodies of UN agencies, in steering committees, support groups and other intergovernmental entities. We are doing so in close partnership with the UN itself, at headquarters and at country level. These are our main messages:

“Delivering as One” is a successful project. We warmly welcome the outcome document from the conference in Tirana in June and its concrete recommendations. They clearly demonstrate the leadership and determination of the pilot and self-starter countries in taking forward UN reform and system wide coherence. Member states should listen carefully to what the pilots and self-starters have to say. Now that the pilot phase is over and the recommendations from the independent evaluation lie before us, the time has come to define a strategic and results-oriented One UN as the main approach for the UN at country level.

(Check against delivery)

In order to ensure that the UN is more accountable and delivers effectively and efficiently to produce maximum development results on the ground, there must be a clearer strategic focus, better results frameworks and better monitoring and reporting on results, as well as better evaluation functions. The next generation of Strategic Plans for 2014-17 should to a greater extent include strategic priorities based on the respective agencies' comparative advantages. The budgets should be results oriented. Harmonisation and simplification of business practices should be intensified. The UNDAFs should be made more strategic. Stronger leadership and promotion of DaO principles from headquarters are absolutely key, as the fragmentation of the UN system cannot be overcome in a bottom-up process.

The authority of the Resident Coordinator must be strengthened and made clear to all. In general there is a need to strengthen UN leadership at country level so that it can function effectively and efficiently, including in its role as humanitarian coordinator. In the selection of candidates for RCs, more emphasis should be put on the kind of skills and experience that correspond with the challenges in the country in question. Incentive structures should be improved in order to attract well qualified RCs.

Core funding is essential for the operational activities of the UN system. We are concerned about the high level of strictly earmarked non-core funding that currently underpins UN operational activities. Such funding increases the fragmentation of the UN development system. As it is unlikely that the non-core contributions are going to disappear, it is important that we improve the quality of non-core funding. Soft earmarking, at programme or sector level, would reduce transaction costs and make it easier for the UN development system to work in a more coordinated way to implement strategies agreed by the governing bodies of the respective UN agencies.

With regard to overall funding of the UN's operational activities, the Nordic countries see the need for a discussion about what we as member states can do to help realise the results we envisage for the UN. More specifically, we see the need for a structured dialogue in the governing bodies of the respective UN agencies on how to finance the results we want to achieve during a particular period of time. Such a dialogue should not only result in more adequate and more predictable funding but also in a broader base for the core funding of operational activities. The policy review we are about to embark on provides an opportunity to initiate such a dialogue among the broad membership of the UN.

Within a rapidly evolving global development landscape, the UN also needs to be able to leverage the potential of partnerships with new actors in the development field.

We need the UN in countries affected by conflict and countries that are in fragile situations. This means taking risks. The UN has several comparative advantages that make it an important actor in these countries. At the same time, the UN is subject to more stringent control mechanisms and higher demands for results. This is a dilemma. Risk assessment and management are important issues that need to be discussed further with a view to elaborating a joint framework. The increased focus on fragile settings by UN actors and other multilateral partners further underlines

the need for better integration and collaboration among the various players. The QCPR should facilitate efforts to respond to these challenges.

President,

Stakeholders in programme countries have high expectations regarding the UN development system's ability to support them on the human rights and equity agendas. We know that there is a strong mutual relationship between human rights, peace and security, and development, which is also reflected in the interconnected mandates of the UN. The UN development system needs to be better equipped to respond to address these problems//issues and use a human-rights based approach to development as a practical tool on the ground. We also know that gender equality and women's empowerment are important preconditions and drivers for sustainable development. We welcome the creation of UN Women as a key step forward, but more needs to be done to integrate the gender perspective into all parts of the UN system.

President,

All of these issues demand commitment and leadership from the member states and from the UN as a whole. Not only at country level, but also and in particular at headquarters level. We member states must take our share of the common responsibility and address these issues in this autumn's General Assembly resolution on the UN's operational activities. Member states must send very clear messages to the UN development system. The General Assembly should seize this opportunity to lead the way towards a visionary, effective and results oriented UN – a UN that does the right things, and does them well.

Thank you.