

Opening remarks

H.E. Carlos Enrique García González, Vice President of ECOSOC

Operational Activities for Development Segment

2014 substantive session of ECOSOC

New York, 24 February 2014

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to open the first Operational Activities Segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council under the new ECOSOC cycle.

The General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of UN operational activities for development, adopted in December 2012, is a landmark resolution. It covers both the “what” and the “how” of system-wide mandates which could contribute to significant strengthening of the UN development system.

It is therefore essential that Member States take strong ownership of the implementation of the QCPR resolution, particularly at the level of the executive boards of the funds and programmes and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, as well as during the deliberations in the Council itself.

At the level of the executive boards of the funds and programmes and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies, it is particularly important to ensure that decision-making needs to be on QCPR implementation is coordinated effectively. We all know that unless the executive boards simultaneously adopt decisions that reinforce the implementation of QCPR mandates, it will be difficult to realize the benefits that this landmark resolution offers in terms of strengthening the functioning of the UN development system.

ECOSOC has also a key role to play in strengthening the functioning of the UN development system through its review of the QCPR implementation process. We thus need to ensure that the Council discharges this role effectively through focused, well-prepared and effective decision-making. This would give a tangible meaning to the new General Assembly resolution 68/1 on ECOSOC reform and contribute to more effective and balanced governance of the UN development system.

The change of the cycle timing will enable ECOSOC to provide leadership early in the year to facilitate a coordinated and coherent approach with the executive boards of the funds and programmes and governing bodies of the specialized agencies.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Solid progress on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the QCPR is essential to position the UN development system strategically and effectively to tackle the next leg of our journey.

That journey is the design of the post-2015 development agenda, and the role the UN development system in supporting Member States in the realization of the development agenda.

Another key objective of this year's segment, therefore, is to initiate a forward-looking dialogue on how the UN development system should prepare to adapt to the significant changes in the broader development environment. These changes include growing number of development cooperation actors, greater focus on results and accountability and the increasing need for collective action to address global challenges.

These changes are also part of the on-going discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. While this agenda is still being defined, it is increasingly clear that it will be a single framework centered around poverty eradication and sustainable development. Such an agenda would require that the UN development System is geared towards:

- policy integration,
- programme coherence,
- developing different types of joined-up efforts, including the Delivering As One model.
- alignment and harmonization of business practices, and
- new and renewed partnerships
- results and accountability

How should the UN System position itself to respond to these demands. I would like to mention four areas:

Firstly, rediscover the spirit of adapting to change,
Secondly, revitalizing the capacity building role of UN entities,
Thirdly, increasing efficiency and lowering transaction costs, and
Fourthly, reforming the funding system of UN operational activities.

I urge all delegates and speakers to focus on these issues in the next three days and beyond.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me share with you our expectations of this segment.

We will start with a keynote address by the Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson., to be followed with a High-level Dialogue. where Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Finance from programme countries, the Chairs of the OECD/DAC and the UNDG, and academia will present their perspective on what the changing development landscape will likely mean for the UN system.,

The annual dialogue with the Executive Heads of the funds and programmes is a fundamental element of the segment to address both how we sustain the development gains of the MDGs as we plan to become more fit for purpose.

As we now move from “planning as one” to actually “delivering as one”, we hope the policy discussion on key QCPR areas between field and headquarter colleagues can illustrate both the hard-won achievements and best practices as well as the remaining challenges, in an open, candid way.

The panel on transition from relief to development targets the same objectives, but in the context of the complex realities of those countries that are in crises or emerging from conflicts.

Last, but certainly not least, it gives me great pleasure that this year’s Operational Activities Segment will, for the first time, include a dialogue with the Specialized Agencies, who will share with us the experiences of their current and evolving business models.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I now have the great pleasure to invite the Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, to deliver a keynote address.

Thank you.