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**ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning
of the United Nations development system**

**Statement by Ms Jan Beagle,
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I would like to share some thoughts on how the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM) is contributing to the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system, building on some of the ideas outlined in the background paper, and reflecting on relevant recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's Synthesis report, *The Road to Dignity by 2030*, and ongoing discussions in the CEB.

We believe, Jane, Anne Birgitte and myself, that the development of SDGs represents a key opportunity for the UN system to reflect on its fitness-for-purpose for the transformative post 2015 development agenda.

The work of the three CEB pillars, individually and collectively, is oriented towards stronger coherence and alignment with our common vision at global, regional and country levels, as well as strengthened integration around common programmes and common operations.

Indeed, the strategic repositioning of the organizations of the UN system on the management and operational sides needs to be pursued concurrently with the programmatic one, with an approach that encompasses all three CEB pillars, so as not to risk a disconnect between the goals and the means.

Each of the three pillars has a complementary role in this endeavour: HLCP advises CEB on strategic planning, policy and programme matters of system-wide importance, while HLCM promotes and coordinates global management reforms, and UNDG deals with country level implementation.

HLCM's contribution to the strategic discussion on fit-for-purpose is focused on the redesign of business models and management functions in support of an innovative, agile and results-oriented United Nations system.

HLCM also offers a platform for member organizations to devise and implement appropriate responses to QCPR operational mandates that require policy coordination and headquarters' engagement.

The re-design of UN business models is in line with one of the key messages of the Secretary-General's Synthesis report, i.e. that the UN System post 2015 will need to better capitalize on the strengths of its parts: the normative, the technical, the operational and the emergency-response. Modern operations are a key component of an effective and coherent system which can deliver results.

In recent years, the HLCM has undertaken many initiatives across the whole range of operations to redesign business models. These catalytic initiatives have contributed to create momentum, have produced savings and, just as importantly, higher quality services, new ways of thinking and doing business, and a culture of working together. These initiatives, which are all linked, now need to be scaled up and mainstreamed.

I would touch on three major inter-linked areas, where HLCM aims to offer a distinctive contribution:

1. building a modern workforce for the changing environment;
2. re-designing and innovating business models; and
3. measuring and communicating results.

Clearly resources flows are not the comparative advantage of the UN system. The value-added of the organizations of the United Nations System is the stewardship of international norms and standards and supporting their translation into action at the country level. Our strength lies in the ability to support governments and people with ideas and policies in dealing with complex multisectoral issues, and the ability to view issues from multiple perspectives.

Our workforce is our major asset and investment. That is where we should first assess our fit. Organizations of the UN system are knowledge institutions, and success depends on the quality of our staff.

Now more than ever, as we move to a new paradigm, the system needs a highly skilled and engaged international civil service that can provide independent and evidence-based policy advice, to efficiently meet the evolving requirements of the international community.

The UN system needs to be able to attract, retain and deploy high performing staff across a multitude of geographic locations, programmatic mandates and business models. We need staff with skills to provide specialized advice but also, increasingly, personnel who can work across disciplines and functions, to address complex multi-sectoral challenges.

The system needs to carefully assess the job profiles required in the new environment, for the system to be responsive to the differentiated needs of countries. There can be no one size fits all approach.

The competencies of systems thinking, teamwork, cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity and exercising sound judgment are particularly important.

We need to consider issues such as: the balance between generalists and specialists; longer term career staff and shorter term expertise; how to encourage innovation, flexibility and systems thinking; and how to move people out of their traditional silos. What kind of experiences and expertise is needed to move away from traditional development paradigm, to work together in support of a universal integrated agenda.

Today, very few jobs in the UN system have one dimension. Increasingly jobs require multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches. We need staff who can forge effective partnerships not only with governments, and international organisations, but also with civil society, the private sector, science, academia and other partners, to leverage multi-stakeholder expertise, capacities and resources.

Our leadership and management positions are especially challenging. We need to identify and support visionary and committed personnel, with the courage and sensitivity to promote sustainable development with respect for human rights in increasingly complex and often dangerous environments, where the UN flag is no longer a safety net.

For example, we have recently developed a new Job Description for the Resident Coordinator (RC), which integrates multiple dimensions. The RC may also be Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), Designated Official (DO), Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG), as well as leading the Rights Up Front Approach. The person may be wearing these many hats in

the context of a fragile state, an area of conflict, or great insecurity. This is a really complex leadership position that requires people with broad experience and competencies.

It is essential to focus on intergenerational aspects at a time when a younger and more mobile generation is already filling our ranks. Similarly key is the diversity of our workforce, as increased staff diversity with regard to gender, nationality, age, and culture, is not only a matter of equity but also a programmatic enabler.

HLCM's efforts in this area are grounded in the strengthening of a common UN identity, shared values, and sense of purpose throughout the international civil service. The system's selection, compensation and performance management processes need to support this vision. The ICSC Review underway, in which HLCM is actively engaged, offers an important opportunity to do so. We need common standards and systems that are evidence based and promote transparency, and reduce transaction costs through simplification and technology. We also need to ensure that we have sufficient flexibility to meet different organizational needs.

Building on the successful experiences of some of our member organizations, we are also working towards strengthened performance management systems. We need to recognize good performance, strengthen linkages to career development, recognise contribution toward common endeavours and encourage integrated approaches in work plans and performance appraisals – integrated approaches cannot be an add-on. And we need career paths that are increasingly permeable between the UN and its multiple partners.

Turning to our business models, technological advances have opened numerous possibilities to re-shape the operational models of UN organizations, allowing us to work smarter and faster together, in new and more collaborative ways, and to better monitor and report on results: cloud computing; common service centres, virtual meeting and conference services; inter-operable ERP systems - HLCM is embracing the use of ICT as an agent of change.

The background paper refers to the need to “champion evidence-based policy” . I fully agree. Measurement of impact and cost-benefit assessments are central to HLCM's approach, which is consistently based on feasibility studies and pilots and the development of baselines against which value added and progress is checked.

The underlying objective is always to harmonize, simplify, and modernize the business practices in the UN system to lower transaction costs and better deliver programmatic results.

Let me give you a few examples to illustrate this: with an investment of \$700,000 made by HLCM in promoting common treasury services, we have delivered a steady return of more than \$20 million a year starting in 2011, thanks to the establishment of a platform for joint negotiation which gives us much more favourable rates.

HLCM has also implemented several projects related to headquarters collaborative procurement, which have led to significant savings in Geneva (\$30 million per year), and Rome (\$3 million per year). Such initiatives are being initiated in New York and Copenhagen as well, and include joint contracts for items we all use - travel, stationery, courier services, electricity, telecommunications, etc.

Another way of promoting integration is the increasing utilization of pooled funding mechanisms .. Organizations need to equip themselves with the right risk management and financial tools to underpin this positive trend. This is another central focus of HLCM's recent efforts.

UN system organizations have or are in the process of strengthening their internal control and risk management processes, recognizing the need to focus on key risks and improve their capacity to manage and mitigate them. This is not an area where the UN system has traditionally been strong and we need to address a wide variety of risks - programmatic, strategic, reputational, business disruption, security threats, cyber security. All of which contribute to reputational risk.

As the Secretary-General has emphasized in his Synthesis report, UN organizations sit on a wealth of data. We need to move well beyond data in the traditional sense – not only to better disaggregation – but also to translate the numbers into political advocacy and practical action. HLCM is now investing in developing visualisation tools to leverage UN's data to more effectively tell the story of the impact of the UN system. The objective is to connect the two sides of programmes and resources, and show more strongly and transparently how inputs translate into results.

We are also looking at common standards to harmonize management and programmatic reporting. Many UN agencies are already publishing data according to International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standards and this may be a possible approach for the system.

A collective UN system-wide approach to data definition, collection, analysis and visualization should be advanced, to directly and indirectly support more effective and efficient programme delivery, and also provide modern and transparent accountability platforms for the UN system and its stakeholders.

We need to broaden existing accountability lines to incorporate horizontal as well as vertical lines of authority, working more diagonally – a point also made in the Independent Evaluation on Delivering as One.

In the new environment we will increasingly need issue – based accountability mechanisms that ensure that outcomes of coherent policies can be attributed to multiple organizations and that collective results and impact can be measured.

Through the comprehensive provision of UN system-wide data on resource utilization, results and impact on the one hand, and through modernized risk management and oversight approaches on the other hand, we can strengthen the collective accountability of the UN system.

In concluding, I would like to emphasize that, while recognizing that no one size fits all, there are some key common principles – transparency, accountability, cost effectiveness, results orientation: in short, the best practices of public and private sector management.

Together, we aim to develop a UN system that is geared to provide the best effective support to the new sustainable development paradigm.
