



Remarks by the World Food Programme

Mr. Amir Abdulla, Deputy Executive Director

**Economic and Social Council Operational Activities Segment
Dialogue with Executive Heads of Funds and Programmes**

22 February 2016

His Excellency, Vice-President of ECOSOC,
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in this meeting on behalf of the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Ms. Ertharin Cousin.

“Just as 2015 was the year of global action, 2016 must be the year of global traction.” These were the words of the Secretary-General at a recent meeting. We now have the global vision for development and priorities for the next 15 years. The UN development system has an important role to help translate this into reality.

My statement will focus on the following change areas:

- How to make progress in linking the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding dimensions;
- The financial and technological advances that are having an impact on our work and;
- Some of the implications for the UN development system.

Linking the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding dimensions

Through this new holistic agenda, countries around the world pledged to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including the zero-based goals such as the eradication of poverty and hunger. We must now start to take the actions required to accelerate progress against these goals by committing to efforts to reach those furthest behind first.

The World Humanitarian Summit provides a strategic opportunity to deliver on this promise, by committing to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people living in situations plagued by conflict and disasters - in places where the challenges associated to poverty and food insecurity are compounded by sudden or slow onset shocks.

The United Nations Development System, together with the other parts of the UN system, represent a uniquely broad spectrum of actors that can be drawn upon to transcend the humanitarian/development/peacebuilding divide and support solutions that are tailored to context.

This will require strengthening the underlying analysis, strategy and planning that lead to more effective and joined up approaches. Existing frameworks such as the UN Development Assistance Frameworks, Common Country Analysis and Integrated Strategic Assessments must dynamically address all relevant sectors and establish linkages to risk mitigation and conflict prevention, as appropriate to the context.

The key to operationalizing this kind of synergy and coherence is for the UN actors on the ground, and ideally beyond the UN, to use this shared substantive analysis and planning as the basis for collective response. The capacity to do so exists within the UN system, or it can capitalize on its coordination and convening abilities to secure them.

This also requires us to take a deeper look into what is currently being implemented in a country and consider the broader and long-term implications for sustainable development. For example, in Somalia, *how* humanitarian assistance is delivered has supported broader development priorities and objectives. In the 1990s, significant investments were made to rehabilitate the ports so that humanitarian supplies could flow. Today these ports are a foundation for economic activity and development in Somalia. At the community level, cash-based transfer approaches that support humanitarian activities serve as a platform for financial inclusion and generating a digitally-connected network of retailers and users. These examples demonstrate how investments in one area can serve multiple purposes and deliver broader benefits when appropriately designed and implemented.

To maximize the long-term benefits of such approaches, funding decisions must also take into account longer-term planning horizons. For example, humanitarian funding is often provided to deliver rapid, short-term responses to sudden onset emergencies, whereas the majority of people we seek to assist already live in chronic or protracted crises that require comprehensive solutions.

To deliver on the SDGs in such contexts, donors should consider the work of humanitarian and development actors based on a longer-term outlook and support more flexible, predictable and sustainable funding. On the other hand, they should also expect to see responses that are based on demand-driven outcomes and aim to reduce vulnerability and need over time.

Financial and technological advances

The Financing for Development agreement reached in Addis Ababa last year recognized the broader range of partners and enablers of sustainable growth, beyond development aid in the more traditional sense. This reaffirms the opportunities that exist in the new forms of multi-stakeholder partnerships and financing modalities.

The so-called R4 programme¹ is an example of an innovative financing modality being pursued in a partnership with Oxfam, national entities, four different foundations, donors and WFP. The programme operates through a combination of weather-indexed insurance, disaster mitigation activities and savings, in a way that provides small-scale farmers with a buffer in times of climate-related shocks, helping them create productive assets and partake in the local financial market that is generated. The programme has reached over 190,000 people in four countries² and paid out USD 2.2 million in insurance coverage so far.

At the same time, advances in digital technology also provide an unprecedented opportunity to address a myriad of challenges, including isolation and knowledge gaps. For example, the Purchase for Progress initiative connects over a million small-scale farmers in remote locations to markets by accessing real-time price information, including through Commodities Exchanges, and enabling aggregation and response to greater demand. As such technologies become increasingly available and affordable, the challenge will be to ensure that they are flexible and context-specific, and at the same time build on systems that can make them scalable and sustainable.

¹ R4 stands for 1) risk reduction, 2) risk transfer, 3) risk reserve and 4) prudent risk taking

² Ethiopia, Malawi, Senegal and Zambia

Implications for the UN development system

From the perspective of the UN development system, it is important that new forms of engagement are backed by robust and transparent financial and accountability systems.

For WFP, this builds on current practices such as advance financing mechanisms and the application of principles such as full-cost recovery and it goes further, to enhance transparency and accountability in resource management, demonstrating value for money and improving decision-making.

Alongside the preparations for the new Strategic Plan, WFP has embarked on a review and reform of its financial architecture and results frameworks, in order to facilitate a clearer line of sight between planning, budgeting, resource allocation and results.

With closer alignment and use of standardized UN cost categories, WFP will also be better positioned to contribute to harmonized results reporting that captures effectiveness economy and efficiency.

As captured in the new agenda, and as we're seeing reinforced in the lead up to the World Humanitarian Summit, far greater emphasis is being placed on the collective outcomes delivered by the UN system on the ground. Planning and implementation systems being put in place must capture the relationship between key stakeholders, agreed results and budgets.

But we must also capitalize on the opportunity to achieve greater coherence between peacebuilding, development and humanitarian agendas based on a recognition of a more integrated long-term results orientation.

As Albert Einstein would say "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results". We must embrace new ways of operating, jointly and with a broader range of partners, for a better

collective outcome. We must exert the leadership and positive action that the world demands of us, until we deliver peace and prosperity for all, leaving no one behind.

Thank you.