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## **Economic and Social Council – ECOSOC**

**Friday 30 January 2015**

# **Dialogue on the Longer-Term Positioning of the United Nations Development System (Session II)**

**Statement by Chris Stokes, Development Adviser,  
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**Delivered on behalf of Australia and Canada**

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Thank you Madam Vice President. I have the honor to deliver these remarks on behalf of Canada as well as Australia.

We welcome the continuation of these dialogues, as mandated through ECOSOC's 2014 operational activities resolution. We feel that, throughout this process, it is very important to get the perspective from all member states, in particular from program countries, and from UN country teams, which are at the core of implementation, and are in a good position to assess gaps and bottlenecks in operational reforms.

It is for this reason that Canada and Australia are delighted to see today's dialogue focused on country and field-level perspectives.

We recall the paper from Bruce Jenks and Bisrat Aklilu, presented at the first dialogue in December, and the subsequent Explanatory Note, both of which draw our attention and focus to a key question: **What are the core functions that the UN Development System should perform?**

In our view, these core functions should be characterized as follows.

- The UN should support countries to meet international commitments, including in shaping and implementing national sustainable development action plans and strategies for sustainable development financing;

- This will mean the UN will need to adopt differentiated approaches for LDCs, SIDS, fragile states and the broad array of MICs, each with their own unique challenges. The UN will need to adjust its delivery and presence to better respond to their specific priorities, funding needs, and contexts;
- We hear time and again – including in recent studies and in a number of today’s panel presentations – of the need to improve performance of country operations and country coherence, moving genuinely towards One UN – moving, in fact, from convergence of operation to *integration* of operations – delivering results as one;
- We underscore the importance of evidence-based policy advice - solidly grounded in country realities and based on professional data collection, statistical capacities, and knowledge;
- Also, the UN should contribute to the democratization and professionalization of national dialogues, with focus on participatory and inclusive approaches, and on the basis of real and broad partnerships for development;
- The UN must be selective in the support it provides – based on its comparative advantages. As we heard from the panelist from Ghana, the UN must be for all member states – but it cannot be *all things* for all member states. We must focus on the core areas of UN expertise, and on its strengths.
- Finally, we must focus on bridging the gap between humanitarian, development, peacebuilding and resilience-building. As the Ambassador from Timor-Leste said – we need to focus on strengthening the UN’s work in building and strengthening national institutions in this regard.

Madam Vice President

ECOSOC has two tasks ahead of us – both incredibly important. Each of these tasks need to be looked at, and we can’t allow one to overshadow or replace the other.

We must, of course, look forward to the 2016 QCPR. But we also must ensure a sufficient focus on implementation of the 2012 QCPR – itself a very unfinished agenda, including in harmonization of business practices, application of the Standard Operating Procedures for Delivering as One, and strengthening partnerships. We cannot redefine our reforms before having completing the mandates of the current QCPR.

In this regard, and with respect to the governance reforms which will be considered in the context of the 2016 QCPR – there are a lot of questions we must consider.

We need to look at whether the governance arrangements suit the needs and interests of member states – but *also* that governance arrangements help funds, programs and agencies to work smarter and more efficiently, to strengthen their ability to deliver results, to work coherently, deliver as one, and remain flexible.

We need governance reforms that are grounded in country and regional experiences – the sort we’ve been hearing about today – not rushed decisions that may have heavy transaction costs and carry all sorts of risks – including dispersion and partial implementation. They also need to reflect funding realities.

We welcome the growing consensus within the UN Development Group and the ongoing restructuring efforts around 2 main work streams (norms and standards, and operational

work), with a view to realigning areas of UN engagement along key functions and with the new Post-2015 agenda.

Australia and Canada are carefully reviewing the ECOSOC report 2015 on the Implementation of the consensus-based QCPR resolution of the General Assembly from 2012 and look forward to the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment at the end of February. We consider this report very important in providing evidence-based information to Member States on key elements of progress and gaps, to further guide our discussion on repositioning of the UN Development System.

In this regard, we are encouraged by the fact that most program countries who contributed to the SG's report recognize the UN System as a preferred partner in many important areas of sustainable development, and also point to the need for differentiated programmatic approaches and diversified funding sources.

Thank you.