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Remarks

by H.E. Mrs. María Emma Mejía Vélez, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council

*ECOSOC Dialogue on longer-term positioning of the UN development system in the context of the post-2015 development agenda (Session IV)*

ECOSOC

Tuesday, 9 June 2015, 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Excellencies,  
Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to provide you with an update on the progress made during the first phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

As you recall, in ECOSOC resolution 2014/14, the Council decided to convene a transparent and inclusive dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, including the interlinkages between the alignment of functions, funding practices, governance structures, organizational arrangements, capacity and impact and partnership approaches.

This is the first time that ECOSOC has been mandated to conduct such an intergovernmental dialogue on reform of the UN development system.

As I explained last December at the outset of this process, and as reflected in the roadmap document, the ECOSOC Dialogue will consist of both formal and informal sessions over an 18-month period, with the outcome of these deliberations serving as key input to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the General Assembly of operational activities of the UN system in 2016.

We are now at the end of the first phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue process and this is an opportune time to take stock of progress, but also to look to the future.

At the outset, I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Member States for their active participation in the ECOSOC Dialogue during these past six months. I would also like to give a special thanks to the ECOSOC Support Team in DESA, which has worked

day and night to make the meetings successful. Thanks as well to the representatives of UNDG and all of the programmes and agencies that have accompanied us throughout the process. Our discussions, whether in the formal sessions or informal workshops and the retreat, have been both substantive and constructive and, I believe, good progress has been made in identifying a first set of strategic priority issues for further strengthening the UN development system that could become subject to more in-depth deliberations and analysis during the second phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue.

### **The process**

Let me now briefly describe the key elements of the ECOSOC Dialogue *process*.

So far, since last December, the ECOSOC Dialogue process has involved, for example:

- *Three formal sessions* (15 Dec.'14, 30 Jan.'15, 23 Feb.'15). This meeting today, in fact, constitutes the fourth formal session of the ECOSOC Dialogue process.
- *Four informal workshops* (functions (17 Apr.'15), funding (8 May'15), governance (13 May'15) and organizational arrangements and capacity and impact (27 May'15). These have been technical workshops where the key issues have been unpacked and further analyzed.
- *Civil society briefing* (28 Apr.'15). The purpose of this briefing was to elicit the perspectives beneficiaries, partners and other actors that work so tirelessly to advance the cause of development in Member States.
- *High-level retreat* (29-30 May'15). This retreat brought together many Permanent Representatives, and their deputies, along with the Executive Heads of a number of UN funds, programmes and agencies and chairs of inter-agency bodies.
- Preparation of many *background papers* by independent experts, DESA and UNDG.

The participation level in all these meetings has been high. As a result, I believe, Member States have now a better understanding of the current state of play in the UN development system and also the likely implications of the post-2015 development agenda for the work of the Organization for development.

Let me now summarize some of the *strategic priority issues* coming from the first phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue process.

### **Strategic priority issues**

*First*, clarity on the emerging functions of the UN development system in the post-2015 era is critical for ensuring alignment with the other five areas that are the focus of the ECOSOC Dialogue. Based on discussions during the first phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue, the UN development system, in the post-2015 era, can be expected to continue to provide

comprehensive support across a wide range of areas to least-developed and low-income countries and those in humanitarian and conflict-affected situations, as well as high-quality normative and technical assistance to middle-income countries. The universal nature of the post-2015 development agenda will also have implications for the functions in high income countries. A study should be conducted to analyse these implications especially for the work of the UN development system to address the special needs in middle-income countries and see possible implications for high-income countries.

Also, support to developing countries to address global development challenges can be expected to grow in importance in the work of the UN development system in the post-2015 era. In addition, several new functions are emerging in the UN development system which reflect both growing demand from Member States themselves as well as the requirements of the post-2015 development agenda, namely strengthening support to South-South and triangular cooperation; leveraging partnerships for sustainable development; strengthening integrated policy advocacy; and fostering strategic innovations and learning in development.

*Second*, the current funding architecture of UN operational activities has become too unbalanced and not conducive to strengthening of the *normative, leveraging and convening* role of the UN development system that is called for in the post-2015 era. There is therefore need to explore more systematically innovative models to improve the volume and predictability of core funding for UN operational activities, such as, negotiated voluntary pledges and indicative scale of voluntary core funding. At the same time, there is need to improve the quality of non-core resources and use more innovative ways for funding the UN development system.

*Third*, there is need to improve the effectiveness of system-wide governance in the UN development system, including through strengthened role of the QCPR resolution of the General Assembly. There is also recognition that improving the equity, representation and effectiveness of participation of Member States and non-state constituencies in governance, as well as the capacity and working methods of governing bodies in the UN development system, should be accorded priority in the second phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue.

*Fourth*, the UN development system will require differentiated country presence models in the post-2015 era in order to effectively meet the needs of programme countries at different levels of development. It will also be important to further strengthen regional platforms. Moreover, the comprehensive nature of the post-2015 development agenda will require significant strengthening of system-wide results-based planning in the UN development system.

*Fifth*, cost-effective measurement of agency and system-wide results in programme countries will require the UN development system to adopt a coherent results-based management system across entities. The system will also require a work force that is well

trained, equipped, mobile and driven to work for one UN. Moreover, the UN development system will need to fully utilize national capacities, systems and institutions in the delivery of the post-2015 development agenda, including in the areas of procurement, financial management, monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

*Sixth*, successful realization of the post-2015 development agenda will require strengthening of partnerships between governments, civil society, private sector, international organizations and other relevant actors. The UN development system is well-placed to serve as convener of such multi-stakeholder partnerships. It is therefore important to examine what kind of inter-agency arrangements, intergovernmental oversight mechanisms and other organizational measures are needed to help ensure that such partnerships involving many UN entities operate in an effective and transparent manner.

And it goes without saying that deliberations on the above six strategic priority issues during the second phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue process will need to be informed by high-quality analytical work.

Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe that we together have made very good progress during the first phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue process and for that I am sincerely grateful to all of you.

### **The way forward**

I would like to briefly discuss the *way forward* for the ECOSOC Dialogue process.

*First*, we now need to make sure the ECOSOC Dialogue process moves to a higher political level through the upcoming High-level Summit Outcome in September. It is essential that the Summit Outcome injects new political momentum to this process of strengthening the UN development system. I hope we can all cooperate in making sure this issue is included in the Summit Outcome document.

*Second*, I believe it will be important to further strengthen the capacity of the ECOSOC Dialogue process during the second phase by enlisting the support of a group of high-level strategic thinkers and experts to assist Member States in concretizing, analysing and prioritizing options for strengthening the UN development system.

Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's meeting will bring to a close my role as the chair of the first phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue process. I will, of course, remain actively engaged during the second phase, which will start in October, following the High-level Summit in September. It has

been an honour to chair this process during this first phase, which, I am sure, will ultimately contribute many ground-breaking ideas for strengthening the UN development system.

I would therefore like to use this opportunity to sincerely thank all of you for our excellent cooperation during the past six months.

Thank you.