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**Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator and Chair of the UN  
Development Group**

**Speech at briefing session**

**ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning  
of the United Nations development system in the context of 2030**

**Agenda (phase 2)**

**Thursday, 17 December 2015, 10-11 am**

**UN Secretariat, Conference Room 12**

*Word count = 2011 = ~16 minutes*

**I welcome the opportunity to address this briefing session. My  
thanks go to the Vice-President of ECOSOC, H.E. Mr.  
Alejandro Palma Cerna, Deputy Permanent Representative of  
Honduras, for his introductory remarks, and for his leadership  
in the second phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term  
positioning of the UN development system in the context of the  
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

**At the concluding retreat of the first phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue in May, there was a shared sense that 2015 was a moment of historic change and an opportunity to shape the future role of the United Nations.**

**There was recognition that the United Nations, including the UN development system, must continually change to rise to the challenges of our time, and that business as it was is not an option.**

**Since then, Member States have taken very important decisions in setting new global development agendas.**

- In July, in Addis Ababa, the new global agenda for financing development was agreed.**
- In September the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted in New York.**

- **Last weekend in Paris a landmark new climate agreement was reached.**

**In these historic agreements, Member States have committed to eradicating poverty, fighting inequalities, and securing the future of the planet and the wellbeing of future generations. There is no time to lose in beginning the implementation of these bold commitments.**

### **UNDG core principles for collaboration**

**For the United Nations, effective implementation of the global agendas means that we must strive to work more collaboratively than ever before in support of countries' national development aspirations and the achievement of global agendas.**

**Just as countries agreed in Paris that no single nation can address the climate change challenge on its own, similarly, no single agency working in isolation can make an optimal contribution to the 2030 Agenda.**

**Within the UNDG, we have agreed on a set of core principles to guide our collective support for implementing the SDGs:**

- **First, we are following the imperative of national ownership, with our actions firmly determined by country needs and national capacities. Our reform efforts must be flexible to adapt to country context, allowing UN Country Teams either to scale up efforts, or to change course quickly in light of lessons learned.**
- **Second, we seek to deliver integrated strategic analysis, policy advice, and where possible, programme support which draws on the wide range of expertise from across the UN development system. Each entity will need to offer its unique expertise and commit to working together to achieve shared results.**

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- **Third, we will strive for innovation at the global, regional and country levels, including in the use of data, technologies, and public engagement techniques, to open up the agenda to the best evidence, expertise, and partnerships which countries wish to explore.**
  - **Fourth, we will uphold internationally agreed norms and standards, focusing on serving the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized so that no one is left behind.**

**The UNDG has lost no time this year in preparing itself for implementation of 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and to move quickly to put its agreed principles for action into practice. We have been receiving strong demand from governments, with seventy UN Country Teams having already been requested to provide support on the SDG implementation.**

## **UNDG support through ‘MAPS’**

**Responding to Member States’ requests for coherent and integrated support for the implementation of the SDGs, the UNDG has developed ‘MAPS’, which stands for Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support.**

**This approach focuses on policy coherence and multi-stakeholder engagement, paying special attention to the cross-cutting elements of partnerships, data, and accountability.**

**Under the mainstreaming component, the UNDG has developed a common reference guide to support mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda. This guide has been issued to all UNCTs, and is now being piloted in twenty countries.**

**Public engagement will be as critical during SDG implementation as it was during the process of formulating the SDGs. Building on the global conversation which the UNDG facilitated around the SDGs, the new UN SDG Action Campaign**

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– the successor to the UN Millennium Campaign - will help popularize the goals, including by engaging with citizens and assessing perceptions of progress.

To support robust reporting of results on the achievement of the SDGs, the UNDG is currently producing guidelines for UNCTs to support the development of national SDG reports.

### New generation of UNDAFs

Many governments and UNCTs have already seized this historic moment in global development to reposition the UN strategically in their countries. New UNDAFs are currently being prepared in more than thirty countries, and close to forty more will follow next year.

This newest generation of UNDAFs is driven by creative approaches and innovation, including more public-sourcing of data, building in elements of co-design with non-state actors, new partnership platforms, many more joint programmes

among UN agencies, and a more dynamic set of funding strategies. For example:

- 116 UNCTs are supporting national data and statistical capacities.
- Several UNCTs have begun to use new sources of data derived from social media, SMS platforms, and digitized radio technology to generate real-time information for programme monitoring.

More work will be needed on data, partnering with academia, and strengthening national statistics – an area where UNDESA and the Regional Commissions have trusted experience, skilled capacity, and an inter-governmental mandate. The regional UNDGs are collaborating closely with the Regional Commissions to ensure that they are well co-ordinated and can bring the best of our combined expertise in support of country-led efforts.



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We are also seeing a much stronger focus on addressing vulnerabilities, inequalities, and rights issues in the new UNDAF designs – in line with the integration of these areas in the 2030 Agenda.

### Standard Operating Procedures

The UNDG has been rolling-out the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) since last year. These are critical for delivering integrated support at the country level. They help us deliver together, with impact, and to do so effectively. The SOPs have been designed so that they can be flexibly adapted to any country context.

UNDG has just launched a “SOPs tracker” on its website, which provides an overview of progressive implementation of the SOPs in each country. We also expect agencies to begin tracking and reporting their own progress in aligning their corporate policies and procedures to the SOPs.

**This will keep our promise to UNCTs that we are also supporting the change we are asking of them here at headquarters. Our HQ Plan of Action to implement the SOPs therefore remains highly relevant.**

**There are now 52 countries which have formally requested the UNDG to deliver as one in their country, with the Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Guyana, Jamaica, Madagascar, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Swaziland, and Venezuela being the latest adopters of the DaO business model.**

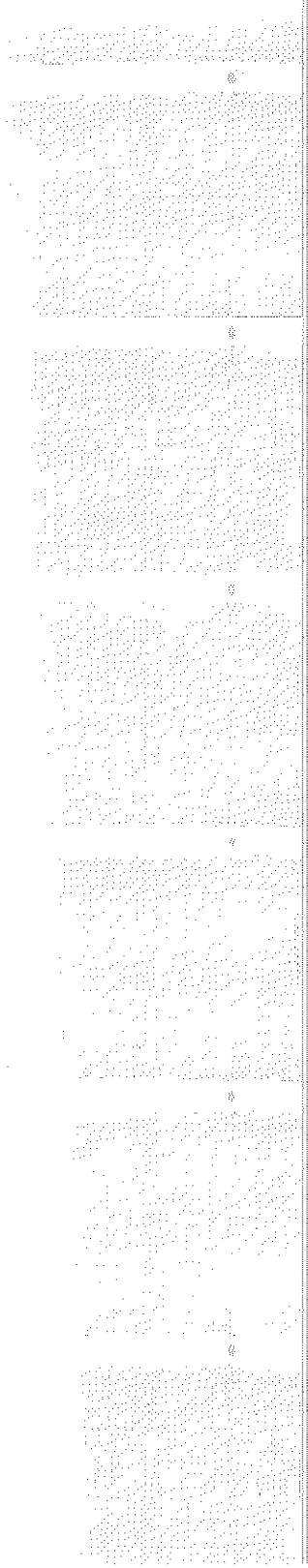
**Successive QCPR surveys show that Governments view UNCTs which are “Delivering as One” as more relevant, better aligned to national priorities, and overall easier to work with.**

### **Integration across UN system pillars**

**The breadth, complexity, and interlinked nature of the 2030 Agenda call for integrated approaches which bring together**

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Background

phase of ECOSOC Dialogue process

- Country perspectives on priorities forward
- Emerging policy issues

- Stocktaking
- Progress review
- Next steps

**BRIEFING SESSION**  
(Dec. 17, 1/2 day)

**New Context (Morning)**

- 2030 Agenda & drivers of change in international development cooperation
- Emerging functions of UNDS\*
- Alignment & integration of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding pillars

**RETREAT 2**  
(Feb. 26-27, 2 days)

**What changes, especially in functions, are needed in UNDS to support Member States in delivering the 2030 Agenda & how to pursue these changes?**

**WORKSHOP 5**  
(Mar. 10, 1 day)

**Funding (Morning)**

- Funding & agency incentives for policy, programme & operational coherence

**Organizational arrangements (Afternoon)**

- Field presence & programming arrangements

**WORKSHOP 6**  
(Apr. 21, 1 day)

**Governance & partnership approaches (Morning)**

- Governance & UNDS coherence
- Partnership approaches & accountability

**Capacity & Impact (Afternoon)**

- Emerging staffing profile requirements
- System-wide capacity needs

\* The emerging functions of UNDS will be a cross-cutting theme in ECOSOC Dialogue meetings and documentation.

**minds, capacities, and resources from across the development, human rights, humanitarian, and peace and security pillars of the system.**

**The UN Secretary-General has called upon all of us to “work across the Charter”. The need for much greater collaboration across the UN system was discussed during the last CEB session in November.**

**The Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, and CEB principals support integrated planning frameworks across the UN pillars at country level, based on shared strategic outcomes, root cause analysis, risk assessment and management, planning, and monitoring. The UNDG is actively taking this forward.**

**With our global presence, the UN development system can also feed into early warning systems, and share its analysis and**

**recommendations with governments and with the humanitarian and peace building communities on building more resilience in communities against conflicts and disasters.**

**Under the leadership of the Secretary-General, key areas of focus for principals in the short-term will be:**

- **ensuring greater harmonization of operational practices, compatibility of human resources policies and procedures, and harmonization of managerial practices to promote and incentivize integration; and**
- **reviewing country case studies on integration successes and challenges in order to learn from real-life experiences in pursuing joined-up UN action.**

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## Financing integrated approaches

As was recognized in the first phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue, funding must support the agreed priority function of the UN development system of delivering results at the country level.

This includes support for the UN development system's operational role – across policy work, its convening and leveraging role, capacity development and, where needed, service delivery – according to country context and operational reality.

Core resources are essential for supporting the operational “platform” of the UN's work at country level. They support us to be strategic and responsive to countries' needs; strengthen accountability, transparency, and oversight; advance UN coherence; and provide predictable and differentiated services across countries. Unfortunately support for core funding is not what it was. We need that support to increase, and we invite a

**much wider range of Member States to be part of funding this backbone of our system.**

**Within the UNDG, we recognize and value the potential for pooled funding and joint financing strategies to promote better integration across our work.**

**As a complement to the traditional funding of individual UN entities, Member States could also consider committing funding to pooled mechanisms which allow for flexibility and joint responses across the UN pillars.**

**We also ask for funding approaches to be consistent and coherent across the system by using common principles, standardized funding agreements, and streamlined reporting requirements. This would go a long way towards incentivizing and supporting the integration agenda.**



## **Resident Co-ordinator system funding**

**For the system to work in a truly joined-up way so it can deliver results together, high level co-ordination, backed by strategic capacity, institutional reforms, and targeted funds, is required.**

**RCs and UNCTs need the means to design and provide joined-up support around new, cost-effective solutions to the challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda.**

**Investments in the RC system are critical for delivering results.**

**The system-wide cost-sharing in support of the RC system which the UNDG has been implementing since 2014 has been a critical milestone in this regard.**

**Our immediate goal is to close the funding gap of \$17.5 million for the upcoming 2016/2017 biennium. Seventeen of the eighteen UNDG member entities are contributing. Some still need to provide their full amounts. The contribution of the UN Secretariat, which accounts for \$13.5 million of the funding gap,**

**is currently still pending approval by the Fifth Committee. I call on all Member States to help us secure the UN Secretariat's critical share of support for the RC system so that we can continue our co-ordination efforts at the current level.**

### **Conclusion**

**To conclude, the undg has made huge efforts to ensure that UNCTs are ready to deliver on 2030 Agenda implementation. Many are already actively engaged with governments in that endeavor.**

**MAPS, the next generation of UNDAFs, innovative joint policies and programmes, the SOPs, and a collectively owned RC system are the essential building blocks for delivering the integrated approaches and results called for by the new agenda.**

**The 2016 QCPR provides an opportunity for Member States to set out a truly strategic framework for the role of the UN**

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development system in supporting the implementation of the  
SDGs.

The UNDG hopes to see a resolution which is strategic and  
defines a set of streamlined mandates which are firmly focused  
on enabling us to make major sustainable development impact.

We look to the QCPR to promote innovation at the country level,  
to recognize the distinction between management and oversight,  
and to articulate a robust yet streamlined monitoring and  
reporting framework.

The second phase of the ECOSOC Dialogue is an opportunity to  
think through the UN system's role in the implementation of the  
historic agreements reached this year, and how Member States  
can best support that role.

We look forward to discussing with you in the months ahead  
how we can continue to foster a UN system-wide approach, and

**maximize our collective impact in support of sustainable  
development around the world.**