

U.S. Statement on the Long-Term Positioning of the UN development system
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Thank you, Madame Chair, and thank you to ECOSOC for hosting the second session of this important dialogue. Thanks as well to Administrator Clark for her informative statement. I'm very glad to be here to speak about the future of the UN development system. I'd like to focus briefly on a theme, innovation, that we consider integral to the discussions we are currently having about how to position the UN development system for the future. We will also address this on Monday at the Joint Session of the Executive Boards

Trial and error are key elements of the innovation process, and to learn, we need to take risks. Unfortunately, the international development system, including the UN, is risk-averse. Now, in an environment of Strategic Plans and results frameworks, where indicators are linked to budget figures, where we watch every activity and dollar spent, we understand why. However, the UN still needs the space to take risks, try new things, and even, occasionally, to fail. We need Member States and UN institutions alike to create an environment that supports— even demands— new ideas. We need fresh thinking to help the UN to enable innovation in its work, as well as to support governments in creating enabling environments that generate and promote new ideas. It is not only a matter of improving the way the UN designs and implements programs, but also how the entire system can be shifted to value and reward innovation and experimentation.

Madame Chair, we see partnerships with private sector, civil society, and academia—which all have innovation in their DNA— as key drivers for introducing greater experimentation and creativity for change. In 2000, the Global Vaccine Alliance (GAVI) was created to bring together the public and private sectors to give children in the poorest countries the same access to vaccines that children in rich countries enjoy. GAVI saved thousands of lives by increasing the number of children vaccinated worldwide. It created economic incentives for corporations to produce the vaccines by increasing demand and ensuring a stable market for some vaccines, including for Type B influenza and hepatitis B, which had previously been little-used. Its co-financing policy, which requires governments to help pay for the vaccines, ensures that countries have skin in the game and will continue to make the supplies available to their citizens. And it tracks and regularly updates statistics on its performance and impact.

We can and should do more of this in the UN system. We see the problems all around us. We should ask the professional staff of the UN development system to be as creative and innovative as possible in thinking of better solutions to the problems we face, whether it's reducing procurement costs or improving metrics to measure UN country team performance. And we should welcome innovative ideas from outside the system as well.

Let's work together to put these ideas, and others like them, to good use. How can we deploy the limited public funds available to unlock investments by the private sector, philanthropies, civil society, and individuals to do the most good in the most efficient way possible? If we manage it,

we'll be answering one of the most pressing questions of the post-2015 development agenda: how do we attract and provide the best means of implementation to ensure that the agenda's ambitious goals get the resources they need.

And we'd like to reiterate that practitioners and development workers in the field should be part of our ongoing discussions on monitoring and evaluation. We found it immensely useful in last year's ECOSOC substantive session to hear from ministers from Vietnam and Timor Leste, who spoke pragmatically from their experiences with UN development programs in their countries. To find out what works, we should ask those who have done it, and take good notes. In this regard, we are very encouraged to see so many country representatives on the program for the second part of today's session.

As we all look ahead to the post-2015 world, we know that the UN must become "fit for purpose" to deliver on that agenda's bold promises. But they're not the only ones: governments and NGOs will also have to look themselves in the mirror and ask if they're ready to deliver on pledges that they, also, will make in September. Are we, as governments committing to a universal agenda, ready to put our own skin in the game? Are we ready to be held accountable by our citizens? Do we allocate enough money, and in the right ways? Do we, for example, criticize the fragmentation of the UN development system, and then give narrowly earmarked non-core funds for specific projects, as my own government is fond of doing? We all have room to improve.

And are NGOs fit for purpose? Are they responding to the demands of citizens around the world, or the need to prove their relevance to their donors? Do they complement the work of governments, or do they compete for the same few resources and attention? This is a journey, and a challenge, for each of us. We all need to become "fit for purpose." A universal agenda will require change from each and every stakeholder.

Quality, transparency, accountability and innovation must become priorities across the UN development system. Demonstrating that they are will be the only credible way for the UN to make the argument that it is best positioned to deliver the development results the world demands over the next 15 years.

Thank you.