

**UNITED NATIONS**



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**His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser  
President of the General Assembly**

**Opening remarks**

**Dialogue on UN operational activities for  
development: emerging issues and challenges**

**New York, 13 February 2012**

Ambassador Miguel Berger, Chargé d’Affairs of Germany,  
Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of UNDP,

Mr. Sha Zukang, Under Secretary-General for Economic  
and Social Affairs,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to open this seminar. This seminar is the first in a three-part series leading-up to the General Assembly 2012 quad-rennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of UN system operational activities for development. These seminars aim to provide a space where Member States can discuss, in an informal setting, some of the key issues likely to feature prominently in the upcoming QCPR.

From the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the Friedrich Ebert Foundation for co-convening with me this series. My special thanks to Under-Secretary-General Sha Zukang for the invaluable support provided by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs in organizing this dialogue.

I also wish to thank Ambassador Berger and the Permanent Mission of Germany for hosting us this morning.

As you may know, “Global prosperity and sustainable development” is one of the four pillars of my vision for the work of the General Assembly during this session. I am committed to helping forge a united global partnership, with a particular focus on the needs of the most vulnerable.

The United Nations operational activities for development play a central role in those efforts. They are both a symbol and a concrete manifestation of a partnership for a better future.

In this context, the QCPR is of particular importance. The resolution that will conclude the QCPR process will guide the preparations of the strategic plans of UN funds and programmes and UN Women. As such, this resolution will directly impact the day-to-day work of the UN system at the country-level. From a financial point of view, operational activities for development currently account for nearly two-thirds of all system-wide activities of the UN. Hence, this review will influence a large part of the UN system.

A forward-looking reflection on emerging issues in UN development cooperation is critical as we embark on the QCPR exercise.

Few of us would have predicted the enormous changes that have taken place in the broader environment of UN operational activities for development, since the last comprehensive policy review conducted by the General Assembly in 2007.

The 2008 global financial crisis, for example, has shown that financial and economic stability has become a global collective responsibility. Moreover, global political, economic, social and environmental challenges continue to unfold against the backdrop of poverty and inequality, affecting people in every corner of the world. The development landscape has changed in many ways.

At the same time, the international community has accumulated vast experience in providing support to many different countries, which find themselves in very different contexts and stages of development. There is also renewed commitment at all levels to ensure that economic, social and environmental assistance is coherent, and in support of the goal of sustainable development.

Throughout its history, the United Nations has been an important partner and a strong supporter of national development processes. It has always given prime consideration to supporting the development priorities of

developing countries and the poorest members of society.

I would encourage the General Assembly to reaffirm the central role of the United Nations development system in development cooperation. In this respect, it is important to strengthen the system's global perspective and universal reach. UN operational activities should continue to provide relevant support in the design and implementation of development policies wherever they are needed.

Last month, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon shared with us an ambitious agenda for the organization for the next five years, assigning high priority to the issue of sustainable development, while recognizing that global challenges require global solutions, and a stronger and more responsive United Nations. We hope that the Rio+20 conference in Brazil, this June, will lay the foundations for positive social transformations. The world is also looking at various possibilities for shaping the UN

development agenda beyond 2015. We are looking for innovative approaches to pursuing development.

The UN will always be part of the solution, but it may need to reinvent itself, in order to stand up to today's challenges.

These issues are at the heart of the upcoming QCPR. The review is therefore a major opportunity for Member States to strengthen the UN development system. So that it can deliver the development results. So that developing countries can lift their people out of poverty while pursuing the goal of sustainable development.

I am confident that the policies that Member States will adopt in the upcoming QCPR will make a real difference in enhancing the relevance of the UN development system and its coherence, effectiveness and efficiency.

This morning we are fortunate to benefit from the knowledge and experience of two distinguished resource

persons: Mr. Bruce Jenks and Ms. Rima Salah, who have experience as leaders in the UN system.

I have no doubt that many interesting ideas will be shared during this seminar series which we are launching today.

I wish you great success in this exciting dialogue.

Thank you.