



**EUROPEAN UNION**  
Delegation to the United Nations

**Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States**

**Secretary-General's briefing on the UNDS reform**

**ECOSOC, 10 November**

*Madam Chair,*

I have the honour to pronounce this statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We would like to thank you, Madam Chair, for organizing this briefing. We also thank the Secretary-General for his availability to inform us of developments concerning the United Nations development system's reform process.

The European Union and its Member States fully support the Secretary-General's ambitious reform agenda. It is important to ensure that different ongoing reform initiatives stemming from the Secretary-General's office are closely linked to each other.

We emphasize that the efforts towards the reform of the United Nations development system need to focus on making it more fit for the purpose of supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, that is, better coordinated, more efficient and effective, integrated, transparent and accountable.

The reforms should ideally aim at making existing mechanisms, structures and resources more efficient instead of requesting additional resources or creating new structures without eliminating others. If opportune, redundant structures could be abolished, and resources reallocated to where the need is greatest.

We highlight the importance of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus as well as the Sustaining Peace and prevention approaches. In our view, the reform should enable the UN development system to contribute substantially to the prevention of crises and conflicts, to the stabilization of countries in and after conflict, and to building sustainable peace.

We are looking forward to the second report by the Secretary-General in the context of the follow-up to the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), due in December. This report will deal with issues crucial for the functioning of the UN development system at the country level.

The European Union and its Member States are of the view that the QCPR-mandated strengthening of the Resident Coordinator prerogative in a number of clear steps is key. The Resident Coordinator system should be owned by the whole UN system and embedded in its operational part, it should function in a participatory and mutually accountable manner. Still, the Resident Coordinator should act independently of any individual agency. The Resident Coordinator must be granted sufficient leadership, prerogative, management tools and a mission statement as well as adequate, predictable and reliable

funding. He or she should be able to draw on dedicated gender competence in all contexts. They should have experience and the right skill set, including, ideally, multi-agency experience, experience with planning and delivery, and the ability to conduct holistic assessment of opportunities and risks of the local context. Inter-agency mobility should be encouraged and incentivized.

The UN country presence should be further rationalized: the composition of country teams should be country-contextual and based on needs; most resources (human and financial) should be deployed in countries where capacities are weak or non-existent and needs are greatest (LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, fragile and conflict-affected states); country offices should be integrated to provide a single UN team with logistical and operational services pooled together. Frameworks such as Standard Operating Procedures, Business Operations Strategies and Mutual Accountability Frameworks must be fully implemented in all locations.

Country teams, and Resident Coordinators in particular, must be enabled to draw on expertise from the full set of actors within the UN family, including specialized agencies. Coordination, planning and collaborative leadership between the UN development system and peacekeeping operations should be systematized.

Another aspect to be dealt with in the Secretary-General's upcoming report is a system-wide strategic document for the system's collective support of the 2030 Agenda. The European Union and its Member States believe that this document should propose a global approach to address the SDG financing and capacity gaps with a clear view to establishing the UN's collaborative and comparative advantages in relation to other actors as well as among various UN entities. The UN development system must have capacity to support countries to deliver on all SDGs, where the UN has a clear comparative advantage (the UN should not do everything everywhere). The system-wide document should explain how the UN will work hand in hand with other development partners and develop partnerships. It will need to, under clear leadership of the Secretary-General himself, set out how all UN entities will coordinate more to present a coherent, strategic UN offer in support of the SDG delivery.

We acknowledge gaps identified in the Secretary-General's report of 30 June, such as SDGs 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14 and 15, and support proposals to identify where the UN development system could add value to local delivery in these areas.

The second report on the repositioning of the UN development system needs to elaborate on how gender equality can be further advanced. Achieving parity in nominations is an absolute necessity but the UN cannot stop at that. A gender equality perspective should be mainstreamed throughout all aspects of the UN development system's work, normative as well as operational.

We believe that the upcoming proposals could emphasize even further the unique role of the UN in upholding international norms and standards. This will require integration of a human rights perspective into all UN development system's actions.

The UN development system should strengthen its emphasis on Leaving No One behind and Reaching the Farthest Behind First, through a joint operationalization and monitoring strategy, and certainly not move away from the people-centred nature of the 2030 Agenda.

With regard to the system-wide accountability and oversight, the priority should be strengthening coordination between executive boards and harmonizing working methods using existing instruments. Within existing structures and resources, a space should be found to discuss, monitor and evaluate the joint results of the system regarding its contribution to the SDGs as well as institutional progress around

repositioning of the UN development system. The EU and the MS are committed to working to improve the effectiveness of the existing Executive Boards, including by strengthening the annual Joint Meeting of the New York-based Boards, before any consideration of proposals such as a merger of the executive Boards could be considered. System-wide compliance with the IATI standards and greater external scrutiny of the impact and effectiveness of the UN development system's programming are needed. Critically, strong country-level capacities and performance management of UN staff will be crucial to maximising the UN's contribution towards the SDGs.

The June report by the Secretary-General dedicated a lot of attention to the regional aspect of operational activities for development as well as to the role of the UN Secretariat in the QCPR follow-up. It is the European Union and its Member States' view that DESA should be made more effective, efficient, accountable and transparent in order to better support the implementation of the Agenda 2030, within its existing budget. In this respect, clarity needs to be given about DESA's unique comparative advantage in relation to other actors within the UN development system to guide the DESA reform. The European Union and its Member States would also need more clarity in terms of the envisaged role of regional economic commissions. We do not support proposals aiming at enhancing funding and engagement of regional economic commissions in operational activities. Neither do we support expanding ECOSOC's mandate; the ECOSOC reform will be a subject to a separate process which we do not want to prejudge.

Finally, the European Union and its Member States hope that the Secretary-General's second report will shed more light on the proposal to develop a so-called Funding Compact. We strongly believe that the Compact should not be limited to guidelines for current donors, on the contrary – it should be addressed to the whole UN Membership and strive to broaden the donor base. It should incentivize countries to contribute to the UN development system with better, more predictable financing, including a better balance between core and non-core resources. Increased transparency, accountability for results and financing, efficiency, effectiveness and impact are key to incentivizing any investment.

The Funding Compact should promote funding modalities that incentivize collaboration among the UN development system's entities, inter-agency funding mechanisms, and thematic and pooled funding. It should encompass all means of implementation and include partnerships (with private sector, emerging donors, civil society etc.).

Let us underline in this regard the importance of domestic resource mobilization and innovative financing modalities. We are looking forward to further details of the SG's vision on the latter, including the need for close collaboration with financial expertise of the IFIs.

I would like to conclude by assuring you, Mr. Secretary-General, of the European Union and its Member States' dedication to the reform process. You can count on our constructive engagement and support.

*Thank you.*