

The Deputy Secretary-General

Closing statement - Operational Activities Segment of the Economic and Social Council

[as prepared for delivery]

New York, 23 May 2019

Your Excellency, Vice President of ECOSOC
Excellencies,

On behalf of the Secretary-General and our colleagues in the UN development system, I would like to thank you and the Bureau of ECOSOC for a very dynamic and constructive segment.

We gathered to reflect on how far we have come in our joint efforts to reposition the UN development system to better support the 2030 Agenda, within the context of the QCPR.

From my viewpoint, this Segment has lived up to the renewed expectations we have placed on ECOSOC as a platform for accountability on system-wide results.

Over the last three days, you have assessed progress in the implementation of all mandates granted to us.

You have appreciated the steady pace of implementation and our early achievements – including the successful transition at the start of the year to a new Resident Coordinator system. The RC system is our cornerstone and key enabler for deep transformation across the UN development system.

You have considered additional proposals by the Secretary-General; and have shared your initial positions on these critical mandates.

You have also held all of us in the system accountable on mandates that require further progress – for example to deliver a robust system-wide strategic document.

On our side, we have engaged with a spirit of full transparency and a great sense of responsibility to deliver better results.

We have been candid in outlining natural challenges in our transformative journey – you have heard our Heads of Agencies and first-hand accounts from our Resident Coordinators.

We have listened carefully to your feedback and the new ideas you have put forward.

We are truly grateful for your leadership and engagement as we continue to chart the road together.

Your feedback will enable us to forge ahead with implementation, and to take corrective measures where better outcomes are needed.

Excellencies,

I emerge from this segment with an ever-clearer vision on Member States' positions and expectations on areas that will require a deeper focus moving forward.

I am clear about your expectations for the next operational activities segment, when we meet again a year from now.

And I am crystal clear that we need to continue to move forward together, in a continuous dialogue.

We very much appreciate your strong support to the new Development Coordination Office (DCO). We have now in place the key ingredients to start seeing a step change in the way our country teams operate, with greater impact, cohesiveness and accountability.

We welcome your keen interest in the development of the system's planning and administrative tools that will support the transition on the ground.

As we finalize the guidelines for the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and move forward with the regional and global level components of the Management and Accountability Framework, you will be kept fully informed.

We will do our utmost to deliver on our commitment to track and redeploy efficiency gains towards development priorities, in close partnership with our colleagues in the UN Sustainable Development Group.

We heard with appreciation the positive comments regarding the Funding Compact – an essential tool of mutual-accountability to provide the necessary incentives for the UN development system to be more collaborative and impactful.

And we welcome the feedback provided on the Secretary-General's recommendations to strengthen the impact of our regional assets and multi-country offices.

These recommendations arise from thorough analysis, extensive consultations and reflect our best effort to better service the 2030 Agenda.

We appreciate that these are complex efforts; that no single solution can respond universally to the wide expectations and diverse national and regional contexts of the membership.

We acknowledge fully those delegations that do not feel that their voices were heard.

And, most importantly, we are acutely aware that further dialogue with Member States is important to ensure we can proceed with a shared understanding of the way forward.

Your feedback this week has given us further clarity in terms of your expectations.

We hope we can count on your backing to sustain the momentum and forge ahead to finally address longstanding bottlenecks affecting our ability to maximize the impact of our assets in regions and multi-country office settings.

With your endorsement of the direction of travel, we stand ready to initiate consultations immediately with countries covered by MCOs to discuss a specific implementation plan to operationalize the Secretary-General's proposals.

And we would like to establish a structured dialogue process with Member States to ensure consultations and oversight as we take forward the proposals to strengthen the regional response on a region-by-region basis.

Excellencies,

We must continue to aim high.

And we must continue to do move forward in a spirit of a mutual trust.

In the last year, we have implemented, together, the most comprehensive reform in the history of the United Nations.

We are now in a much better place than we were even a few months ago. There is strong willingness and ownership in the system to drive transformation; our new coordination system is now in place; our Resident Coordinators are getting on with the job; all 'mechanics' have been set up to enable a new generation of country teams.

And changes are burgeoning on the ground.

We trust that you share our views and are reassured about the direction of our travel towards a system that is able and empowered to support countries and people in reaching the sustainable development goals.

We fully realize that this is just the beginning. And we are eager to take our next steps with you in this exciting journey!

I thank you.