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Statement

ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment
Session II-Strengthening the QCPR of
Operational Activities for Development of the UN System
ECOSOC Chamber, UNHQ, Tuesday, 21 May 2019

Your Excellency, Ms. Kira Danganan-Azucena, Vice-President of ECOSOC
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to join you today.

I will briefly supplement the address of the Secretary-General and update you on some aspects of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities of the UN Development System (QCPR). The QCPR is a critical tool for Member States to provide directions to the UN Development System at country level. Its depth and reach have increased in recent years.

The General Assembly resolution on 2016 QCPR, adopted after the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, built on an eighteen-month dialogue of ECOSOC on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system. As a result, it provided very strategic guidance, and requested the Secretary-General to outline his vision for a repositioned UN development system.

This led to the submission of two reports in 2017 by the Secretary-General on repositioning the UN development system, with the launching, in June 2018, of the historical reform efforts to equip the UN development system to best support the 2030 Agenda. Almost a year later, notwithstanding the challenging timeline, the Secretary-General has delivered on his commitment to you. He presented his progress and further proposals today.

The 2019 QCPR report is accompanied by addendums capturing the evidence-base on the implementation of the QCPR, and the early phase of the repositioning. This includes the Monitoring Framework, with indicators that track annual progress against mandates. It also includes the Funding Report, which analyses the financial picture on operational activities for development.

I will share with you some of the findings. First, I will focus on the dimension of integration, so critical to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. I will then

speak about the funding situation of the UN development system, and end with a few words on the 2020 QCPR.

Excellencies,

The evidence we collected shows that the UN development system faces challenges in supporting countries in the elaboration of integrated policies to achieve the SDGs.

The Voluntary National Reviews at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development over the past three years, have revealed that many countries need such support. The 2016 QCPR anticipated this and encouraged the development system to respond effectively.

Indeed, the number of countries submitting requests for UN support in developing integrated policies has increased since 2016. Most notably, requests for support on specific Goals has quadrupled. Despite such a rapid increase, UN Country Teams (UNCTs) were still able to provide support to 97 per cent of the countries that requested it.

However, resident coordinators indicate that the UNCTs generally provide advice through a coordinated process rather than an integrated one. Only 13 per cent of resident coordinators report that the UNCTs delivered policy advice that could be described as integrated.

The UNSDG Strategic Results Group 1, which I co-chair with UNDP leadership, is developing a plan on how and when the system should come together to provide an integrated policy support package.

The repositioning of the UN development system should also facilitate the provision of integrated policy advice and whole-of-system approaches. This applies in particular to the on-going strengthening of the prerogatives of the resident coordinators. Thus far, out of 29 UN development system entities that responded to our survey, 14 recognize reporting obligations to the resident coordinators on planning and programme implementation, and 12 on resource mobilization.

Many entities reported that, in 2019, they will update procedures to strengthen their country representatives' Job Description and to reflect revised accountabilities, in line with the new Management and Accountability Framework. The new Framework will also help encourage joint work and collective results. Likewise, the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework is expected to spur a whole-of-system approach. Member States may wish to further encourage such changes through the various UN development system governing bodies.

Distinguished Delegates,

Cooperation between development and humanitarian actors is an area of solid progress. Out of 54 UNCTs reporting, all have made progress in joint work, especially in conflict analysis and programming. Internal policies are being strengthened to deliver an integrated humanitarian, development and peacebuilding action in the countries concerned. There is also stronger cooperation with the World Bank and the European Commission, underpinned by the

revitalization of the UN Peacebuilding Support Office. A UNSDG Task Team on Transition and Recovery will reflect on how to make further advances.

Our surveys provide a range of other insights about changes on the ground. One example is on country-level data and statistics. Our data reveal that three-quarters of UNDS entities have implemented a common approach in this area. However, only a few entities' Strategic Plans include a systematic approach to develop national capacities. Such approaches need sustained, predictable, longer-term funding support.

Another finding captured in the Monitoring framework is very solid advances on gender equality, spurred by the adoption of the new system-wide action plan (SWAP 2.0). Most UN entities have met or exceeded the SWAP minimum standards. There are two minimum standards that have generally not been met, namely, resource allocation, and gender architecture and parity. The updated Gender Equality Scorecard launched in 2018 is already being implemented in 24 countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Both the quantity and quality of funding impacts whether UN entities truly work in a joined-up approach around the SDGs. The need for voluntary resources can fuel competition among agencies. It can also trigger shifts in priorities, leading to incoherencies in the work of the system, and/or gaps in addressing the SDGs.

DESA's comprehensive funding analysis shows a mixed picture on the *quantity and quality* of the funding for operational activities for development.

Regarding *quantity*, the contributions reached \$33.6 billion. This represents an increase of nearly 13 per cent compared to the previous year, and a continuation of a longer-term trend. In real terms, we have seen robust growth in the overall funding of the UN development system over the past 15 years, with funding more than doubling in real-terms.

However, with regard to the *quality* of funding, core resources increased by 3 per cent and non-core funding by 15 per cent between 2016 and 2017. This has resulted in the core share dropping below 21 per cent – the lowest share ever.

Some factors contributing to the long-term decline in the core share of funding include:

- humanitarian activities, which tend to be non-core, make up an increasing proportion of the system's overall operational activities, and
- a rapid growth in funding channelled to the system through other multilateral organizations, global funds and the private sector, almost all of which is non-core.

But even excluding such factors, less than one-quarter of voluntary funding from Member States to UN development-related activities are core.

At the same time, there has been an increase in contributions to loosely-earmarked, entity-specific thematic funds. And, significantly as well, to inter-agency pooled funds, from \$1.7 billion in 2016 to \$2.5 billion in 2018.

Still, without adequate, predictable and high-quality funding, the UN development system will not be able to fully do its part. The provision of funding hinges on delivering the transparency, accountability, effectiveness and efficiency that Member States have mandated through the QCPR and the repositioning resolution. The Funding Compact, with its 20 mutually reinforcing commitments on the part of both Member States and the UN development system, is an important instrument. It will help to monitor whether the needed changes are happening in the way the system and its individual entities operate, and in the way Member States fund the system.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The next QCPR, to be considered by the General Assembly in 2020, will assess whether we are on the right path to ensure that the UN development system effectively supports the 2030 Agenda. It will need to be anchored in an in-depth, comprehensive set of evidence, data and information, and thorough analysis on where the UN development system stands in the implementation of the 2016 QCPR, including the repositioning mandates.

In addition to data collected from all parts of the UN development system, next year's report will include the results and analysis of four DESA surveys, of:

- Programme Countries Governments;
- Resident Coordinators;
- UNCTs Operations Management Teams; and
- Headquarters of UN entities.

We will revise these surveys and the Monitoring Framework. Complemented with in-depth analysis on selected topics, this will allow the report of the Secretary-General in 2020 to provide a clear picture of progress over the past four years.

In conclusion, we are looking forward to receiving your views and your expectations for the next QCPR, against the backdrop of the major of the UN development system reforms we are implementing.

Thank you.
