



Economic and Social Council:
Operational activities of the United Nations for international
development cooperation

May 22, 2019

Statement by Ms. Mona Juul
Ambassador and Permanent Representative

Chair,

Member States have embarked on an ambitious journey for reform of the UN development system. The destination is improved ability to assist countries in a more coherent, integrated, efficient and effective manner in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We all have to do our part to ensure that the destination is reached.

In this regard, Norway has the following comments:

First, on the reinvigorated resident coordinator system which is the heart of the UNDS reform: Norway has for long advocated for the need for a full-time neutral and impartial resident coordinator who is empowered to lead the UNDS efforts at country level. Our emphasis is on leadership. We have to avoid that the resident coordinators take on an operational role.

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We have noted that the transition of the responsibility for administering the resident coordinator system from UNDP to the new Development Coordination Office in the Secretariat was remarkably smooth. The same applies to posting of resident coordinators. The role of UNDP in this regard cannot be underestimated and is highly appreciated.

The reform is complex and challenging task, and it is still in an early phase. We should therefore be open for adjustments as we move forward, in particular based on experiences on how the reform works out at country level.

In this regard, we also welcome the Secretary General's emphasis on strengthening collaboration through Multi-Country Offices. And we take note of the need for further consultations with the Member States concerned. The strengthening should as a starting point be covered through the existing funding envelope for the resident coordinator system.

Second, the UN cannot do everything everywhere. The UN should act on its comparative advantages when providing support to the development plans of the host government. A Common Country Assessment looking into the root causes for inequality, poverty and vulnerability, and that is broadly consulted would, in our view, be a crucial entry point.

Obviously, economic development is crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDS engagement should contribute to reducing inequalities and promoting international norms and standards. Partnership with other actors, in particular the International Finance Institutions is a "must" for success.

Third, promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, including promoting their economic participation, has a multiplier effect for achieving sustained and inclusive growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The QCPR monitoring shows that the UNDS has a long way to go in improving gender mainstreaming. Norway expects full implementation of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality.

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Fourth, increased efficiencies and cost-savings would make more resources available for programme activities. Norway looks forward to receiving updated information on the ambitions for common back office functions and common premises.

Fifth, the present funding pattern is an obstacle to reform. Norway therefore welcomes the Funding Compact. As Member States, we should all look into how we can improve the flexibility and predictability of our funding. Burden-sharing in the funding of the resident coordinator system is a part of this. Norway is prepared to do our part.

Sixth, transparency is crucial for our confidence in the reform and for our ability to engage actively in the implementation phase, in governing bodies as well as at country level. All internal system-wide guidance documents should be made publicly available at a web site. We would urge the Secretariat to continue improving the web-portal for the Special Purpose Trust Fund for the Reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System, in line with the commitments in the Secretary General's Implementation Plan. Further, we would appreciate getting access to a forward looking work plan or results framework for the Development Cooperation Office that could serve as a basis for measuring progress.

Lastly, the 2016 QCPR provides the guidance to the UNDS for supporting host countries in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Norway would welcome full and systematic reporting on the provisions in this resolution prior to the QCPR negotiations next year.

I thank you.

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