



**ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment  
EU Statement during General Debate  
H.E. Mr. Gheorghe Necula, Deputy Permanent Representative of Romania  
United Nations, New York, 21-23 May 2019**

Mr Chairman

On behalf of the European Union and its Member States, please allow me to start by expressing once again our strong support for the reform of the UN Development System, and by thanking the SG, the DSG, UNDCO and the Transition team for all the work over the last year.

We look forward to this session of the ECOSOC's Operational Activities Segment, and to hearing from Heads of agencies and Resident Coordinators about implementation of these reforms on the ground, including the challenges they face.

We must never forget that the purpose of the UN reforms is a UN to respond better to the needs in order to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is crucial that all UNDS entities support implementation of the reforms, including financing the new system, and that we ensure ownership of these reforms by the whole system. It is a joint responsibility and everyone needs to be fully on board and do their part. One concrete example is to align the Country Programme Documents to the UNSDCF's.

For this to happen, information on progress made and challenges faced all reform tracks should be shared in a transparent manner within the system and with the membership, including to the different UN HQs and to the UNCTs. We will of course also do our part in the Boards.

The report is overall robust; outlining progress to-date in clear terms and presenting a candid reflection on the need for more collaboration and joined up work within the system. It eloquently brings all the strands of this complex reform together.

Nonetheless, there are points that we would like to highlight:

1. As we have said since the start, we need more clarity when it comes to efficiency gains, including identifying overlaps and duplications. A year after the General Assembly adopted resolution 72/279, we expect to receive concrete figures and detailed information on progress as soon as possible, as was promised during the Funding Compact discussions.

The JIU has produced an interesting report containing specific recommendations and advocating a combination of programmatic decentralisation and service delivery centralisation. We believe it provides useful ideas to move forward.

We welcome the Funding Compact and the interactive processes in which it was developed. In this context, we would like to recall our reservations on commitment 6 of the Funding Compact. It is our understanding that the costs necessary to achieve those savings are to be found within existing resources, supplemented if needed by in-kind contributions. The target is not contingent on additional financial resources, as the DSG confirmed during her briefing earlier this month.

2. While we commend the update on progress towards the reconfiguration of UN Country Teams, the Multi-Country Offices section of the Report raises a number of questions. We would welcome additional information on the new mechanisms and resource needs listed. Such proposals have to be better substantiated.
3. We encourage you to be as ambitious at the regional level as you have been at the country level. Resources should serve needs, and identifying overlaps and duplication should lead to efficiency gains there as well. We support your five recommendations but we need to have a clearer and evidence-based picture about their full implications, in line with the mandate included in resolution 72/279. The Resolution requested the SG to present options on a region by region basis and we hope to get them as soon as possible to be able to have an informed discussion.
4. Almost three years after the GA mandated the reform of DESA, we expected more details on measures envisaged. As the report correctly points out, "Steps have been taken, but much remains to be done". DESA has a key policy role and should be focused on the 2030 Agenda. Increasing transparency around this reform process has to be a priority going forward and we, therefore, look forward to the briefing in June on the way forward.
5. We are concerned by the lack of progress on the System-Wide Strategic Document. The system was mandated to produce a draft in time for the OAS, providing a comprehensive picture of the UNDS strategy for 2030 Agenda implementation.

In order to address both gaps and overlaps in the UNDS operations while building on the comparative advantage of the different UNDS entities, the System-Wide Strategic Document will need to be much more operational, specific and concrete than the outline that has been shared, which is more descriptive than results-oriented. We look forward to receiving the new report as soon as possible, as we consider it an essential element of these reforms.

6. Human rights constitute the bedrock of development and are entrenched in the 2030 Agenda. A human rights based approach is therefore vital to UN programming. We call upon all UN entities to respect these human rights principles in order to ensure inclusive and sustainable outcomes.

Finally, for these reforms to succeed, the interlinkages between the three reform strands must be factored in. It is critical to the SG's prevention agenda that RCs are able to effectively coordinate and drive joint analysis, joint planning and collective outcomes across all UN actors. The report states this is not yet happening to the extent that it should. We hope to see rapid progress in this area.

Let me conclude by repeating the EU's determination to continue our engagement to ensure the success of these reforms

Thank you.