



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

**ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment
H.E. Ms. Mona Juul, Permanent Representative of Norway to the
United Nations, and President of the Economic and Social
Council
Opening Remarks**

Tuesday, 19 May 2020, 10:00am – 12:00pm

**Excellencies,
Secretary-General,
Deputy Secretary-General,
Colleagues,**

It is my great honour to welcome you to the 2020 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development segment.

**We meet today as the world is facing an unprecedented human crisis.
The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact us all, our health, livelihoods and could set back years of development gains.**

However, during this time of rapid re-prioritisation it is not about making a choice between COVID-19 response or the 2030 Agenda.

On the contrary.

Our commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has not changed, but the urgency to act has.

With the most vulnerable people and countries undoubtedly being hit the hardest. COVID-19 is a harsh reminder of the inequality that we need to address, and the further costs we will incur if we do not.

Our response to the crisis *must* be guided by: the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development – in short: leaving no one behind.

Embodied in the very nature of the Sustainable Development Goals is a call for solidarity and collective action to realise the human rights of all.

This is where our operational activities segment aims to make a contribution. Providing resilience and a better life for people, towards dignity and equality.

Excellencies, colleagues,

Over the past three-quarters of a century, our understanding of development cooperation has progressed.

At the eve of the adoption of the SDGs, Member States launched an intensive ECOSOC dialogue on how to make the UN development system better fit for its new purpose.

Out of this dialogue emerged the 2016 QPCR and the historical reforms for the repositioning of the UN development system.

Now, we gather here today to use the operational activities segment- as suggested by the Secretary-General as an “accountability platform”- to review the performance and results of the UN development system.

**To review progress against mandates agreed by Member States, from the 2016 QCPR and the historic reforms launched by the Secretary-General in 2018
The true test of our success will be whether the UN makes a difference in the lives and societies of people as we strive to recover better.**

We must provide guidance to the UN system on how it can best support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the coming four years.

And in our efforts, the rights of women and gender equality must remain a priority and a crosscutting issue.

As the Secretary-General highlights in his report, the repositioning of the UN development system has been progressing rapidly.

The resident coordinator system has been transformed with empowered and impartial resident coordinators who are better equipped to lead UN country teams.

And programme countries who already consider that the UN system is supporting better their efforts to realise the 2030 Agenda.

**At the same time, we still need to overhaul the ways of working, and the culture- both throughout the UN system, and among donor and programme countries.
This OAS is a prime opportunity to see where our efforts need to be intensified.**

During this segment, we will consider the last pieces of the repositioning reform - the review of regional assets and the review of multi-country offices.

At the same time, I urge you to continue to look ahead and reflect on: where should the UN system be in four years?

We have until the new session of the General Assembly this fall to elaborate the guidance we will provide through the 2020 QCPR.

So- let us: reflect on the evidence contained in the Secretary-General's report, listen to our representatives from the field, and elaborate new ideas to further strengthen the support of the UN system to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Colleagues,

Above all, we meet here today to ensure that our efforts make a real difference in the lives of people.

Together, we will deepen our efforts during this Decade of Action - to recover better, and build a healthier, greener, fairer and a more resilient world. A world of solidarity.

I thank you.