Renewing the UN development system to deliver on the SDGs

Proposals to reposition the UN development system so that it is better fit to support the delivery of the 2030 agenda were the focus of this year’s ECOSOC Segment on Operational Activities for Development (OAS), held in at UN headquarters from 27 February-1 March 2018. Member States and other stakeholders had interactive debates with policy-makers from capitals and UN system senior leadership from HQ and the field on the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and the impact of UN development work through interactive debates.

In his opening statement, the Secretary-General emphasized the need for "building a system that is demand-driven, oriented around achieving results at scale, and accountable in providing support to achieve the 2030 Agenda". He emphasized the need to bolster accountability mechanisms at the country and global level, and highlighted some of the proposals he presented in his December 2017 report including on making operations on the ground “more cohesive, effective and efficient”.

Executive heads and Chairs of Executive Board of funds, programmes and specialized agencies, UN Resident Coordinators and senior government representatives from capitals discussed key aspects to be taken into account when considering a new generation of UN Country Teams led by a reinvigorated, impartial and independent Resident Coordinator system; strengthened partnership and stakeholder engagement; integrated system-wide approaches at national, regional and global levels; revitalizing the UNDS funding architecture and strengthening accountability and oversight of the system.

In general terms, Member States welcomed the Secretary General’s proposals to reposition the UNDS. There was a shared recognition that changes need to support country ownership, improved accountability and collective results. In order to support delivery and results at the country level, regional structures need to be harnessed. Furthermore, support was expressed to fostering system-wide capacities through common standards and criteria as well as the need for a predictable and flexible funding approach. At the conclusion of the Segment, the Vice-President of ECOSOC shared the Chair’s Summary with the President of the General Assembly, where Member States are expected to formally take decisions to reposition the system by May 2018.