

UNITED NATIONS

NATIONS UNIES

2011 ECOSOC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES SEGMENT

Panel discussion: “How to define the concept of “critical mass” of core funding?”

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon 18 July 2011

Geneva

**Introductory remarks by
H.E. MR. GONZALO GUTIERREZ
VICE-PRESIDENT OF ECOSOC**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have another challenging and important topic on the agenda this morning: how to define the concept of ‘critical mass’ of core resources?

Let me first give a warm welcome to Mr. Douglas Lindores who will moderate this discussion, and also to our two distinguished panelists, Ms. Sigrid Kaag, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant Administrator of the Partnership Bureau of UNDP, and Ms. Afshan Khan, Director, Public Sector Alliances and resource Mobilization Office, UNICEF. I would like to in particular welcome H.E. Ambassador Jorge Eduardo Cheng Charpentier, Permanent Representative of Mexico to WFP. Ambassador Cheng Charpentier is attending the Segment on behalf of the Executive Board of WFP as a follow up to the meeting between the ECOSOC bureau and the bureaux of governing bodies of funds and programmes in March.

As we are all aware, a key focus in the debate on the funding of operational activities for development over the past several years has been the need to significantly improve the balance between core and non-core funding.

While non-core resources to the UN development system have risen sharply, the quantity of core resources has remained more or less constant during the past 15 years. Non-core resources are an important supplement – and let me stress “supplement” to the resource base of the UN. In that sense, the General Assembly has repeatedly underscored that “*core* resources because of their untied nature, continue to be the bedrock of operational activities”.

Two other issues which have also surfaced frequently during discussions on funding of the UN system are (i) the predictability of resources and (ii) the extent to which UN agencies rely on just a few donors.

The concept of ‘critical mass’ of core resources arises from these concerns and has gained momentum. It was a key topic of discussion last year during the General Assembly consultations on improving UN system-wide coherence.

At this point, the concept of ‘critical mass’ is still not well understood. This points to the urgency of today’s dialogue. During this morning’s discussion it is

important to keep in mind our main objective in this context: to improve the quantity and quality of funding for programme countries so that funding best supports national development objectives.

After these introductory words, I would like to give floor to our moderator Mr. Douglas Lindores, who is a well know expert on UN system funding and former Senior-Vice President of the Canadian International Development Agency.

Mr. Lindores, you have the floor.