

New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations



Te Māngai o Aotearoa

600 THIRD AVENUE 14TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10016-1901, USA
TELEPHONE (212) 826 1960 FACSIMILE (212) 758 0827 HOMEPAGE: <http://www.nzembassy.com/newyork>

ECOSOC: Operational Activities Segment

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Mr President

The United Nations is a major multilateral partner for New Zealand. In our view the UN remains relevant and central in the multilateral development context.

Despite the huge impact on New Zealand's economy of the 2011 Canterbury Earthquake, and the increasingly tight fiscal situation, New Zealand has maintained its core funding to the funds and programmes. We remain a strong advocate for core funding as the primary mode of support, and are committed to improving the quality of funding across the UN development system.

However, the UN is not only a delivery mechanism for aid funding. Its development system provides an inclusive global platform to advance efforts across all three pillars of sustainable development.

New Zealand is a supporter of the reforms within the UN for enhanced performance. We commend the UN Development Group and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on progress over the past five years in preparation for the QCPR – and for their frank and constructive analysis of challenges ahead.

We all agree that much has been done – just as we agree that there is still much to be done.

Operational activities in the UN system must continue its efforts to be more coherent, efficient and effective – on the ground and within the individual UN organisations. There have been large strides in reducing duplication and waste. New Zealand was the first country to support the Harmonisation of Business Practices Plan of Action, and remains a strong supporter of this work. The evidence

provided from the first phase of this Plan of Action shows enormous potential for cost efficiencies, not just within individual agencies, but across the UN operational activities as a whole. We believe that the pace of implementation of this plan should be increased, and look forward to reports of savings made as a result.

The Quadrennial Comprehensive Review of Operational Activities in the UN Development System provides us with a valuable opportunity to institutionalise reforms to ensure the UN remains relevant and effective within a fast- changing development landscape. It is an opportunity we cannot afford to squander.

Mr President

New Zealand would like to outline six areas where States can provide guidance for improvements through the QCPR. These are: results, coherence, leadership, inclusive participation, transition from relief to development, and Small Island Developing States.

First, more can be done in terms of results-based strategic planning and management, particularly in relation to decision-making, reporting, and communicating results to all stakeholders. Harmonisation of results must be applied across the system, with more robust indicators, improved monitoring and evaluation, and increased staff capacity. Through governing bodies, we as member states need to provide support through strong and consistent oversight, and to provide coherent guidance across the funds and programmes. .

Second, thanks to many motivated pilot and self-starter countries, we now have evidence on how to be better coordinated and coherent across the whole system. Application of the lessons learned and tools to hand is now required to develop common programming, joint action plans, and common budgetary frameworks. New Zealand supports adopting a single approval process for common programming This should reduce time and transaction costs for executive boards.

Third, we reiterate points made by others about the need to strengthen leadership at country level. New Zealand recognises the efforts of the UN Development Group, and Helen Clark as Chair, and encourage continued work in this area. Most urgent is the need to improve horizontal accountability, the capacity of RC offices and implementation of the Management and Accountability Framework.

Fourth, we believe that all development must be inclusive, particularly of women and persons with disabilities. We fully support Canada's statement on gender equality and women's empowerment, especially the system-wide action plan and the gender equality scorecard. Women and girls often

face barriers to equality and empowerment. People with disabilities, male or female, are often the poorest and most marginalised. Increasing inclusiveness of persons with disabilities is a major development issue that can be addressed through the QCPR, building on the work already begun by some UN funds and programmes, those country teams that have mainstreamed disability into UN Development Assistance Frameworks, and existing ECOSOC and General Assembly resolutions on disability mainstreaming. Mainstreaming as an operational principle can be applied systematically across the UN development system, as well as in policies and programmes of individual funds and programmes. The QCPR provides an opportunity to improve coordination and coherence on this issue.

Fifth, we would like to highlight an issue that has been raised in the Executive Boards over the past 18 months – the need to find a more nuanced understanding of transitions. The linear approach of the TCPR is no longer relevant. For the QCPR we need to find a more tailored non-linear and long-term approach to humanitarian, development, state building and security-related challenges. The QCPR provides a valuable opportunity to reinforce the normative principles underlying UN operations in these areas, such as human rights, gender equality and inclusiveness. These must be underpinned by effective systems of mutual accountability for national ownership.

And sixth, New Zealand supports the strengthening of coordination and coherence of support provided to Small Island Developing States by United Nations entities. Mainstreaming of issues of concern to these States into the operational activities would allow them to benefit fully from the support of the UN development system, and would help the system to better tailor its services to the special needs and priorities of those States. For example, processes such as the national capacity self-assessment, common country assessment and the UN Development Assistance Framework offer such opportunities. A strategic institution wide approach that ensures that issues related to the priorities of Small Island Developing States are integrated into the overall context of the global work programmes of the funds and programmes is another.

Finally Mr President

New Zealand, like Australia and Canada, looks forward to working with all Member States in a constructive and practical manner to reach a strong and positive; consensual outcome to the QCPR negotiations. We will be focused on the goal of improving UN performance on the ground,

validating the relevance of ensuring the UN development system remains relevant, and, most fundamentally, eradicating poverty and affirming the human worth of every woman, man, and child.