

**2012 Substantive Session of ECOSOC
Operational Activities Segment**

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Vice President of ECOSOC**

Closing Remarks

New York, 17 July 2012

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the end of the Operational Activities Segment of the 2012 Substantive Session of the Economic and Social Council.

This year's Operational Activities Segment has discussed many of the issues likely to feature prominently in the upcoming quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the General Assembly of UN operational activities for development.

Your deliberations over these three days have been both substantive and constructive, which bodes well for the upcoming QCPR this fall.

The UN development system is and has been for a long time an important pillar of the multilateral development cooperation system. From a financial perspective only, UN operational activities for development, for example, accounted in 2010 for some one-third of all official development assistance.

By this measure, the UN development system is today the largest multilateral development partner of DAC countries. This demonstrates the continued importance and relevance of the UN development system in global development cooperation.

However, the continued relevance of the UN development system cannot be taken for granted in the current global environment, increasingly characterized by a large number of new actors in development cooperation and growing economic and financial uncertainties in a number of important donor countries.

The future success of the UN development system will therefore depend on its continued ability to respond effectively to rapidly changing circumstances. The system has also to respond to the needs of programme countries, which are wide ranging.

This continuous adaptation to change requires regular stocktaking and reflection by Member States and UN entities on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing the UN development system in the broader environment. This reflection also needs to focus on how it can deliver on capacity development, which remains the highest priority for programme countries.

The QCPR process this fall will provide an important opportunity to Member States. These are some low hanging fruits that the QCPR should be able to harvest. At the same time, it could initiate the process of reflection and change. You have already indicated that it should be a path breaking resolution.

I believe we all agree that the preparatory process for the 2012 QCPR has been both comprehensive and participatory. This year's Operational Activities Segment is a culmination of your formal and informal deliberations in the past 10 months which have

included many workshops and seminars. These extensive substantive preparations will undoubtedly help advance the negotiation process when the QCPR starts this fall.

The outcome of your deliberations at this year's Operational Activities Segment will constitute a key input for the development of the recommendations by the Secretary-General to be contained in his second report for the QCPR to be issued later.

An important message that I have taken from this year's Operational Activities Segment is that many programme countries are expecting the QCPR to result in a genuine revitalization in the functioning of the UN development system at the country level. So the UN system as whole can become larger than the sum of its individual parts.

It should also result in a system that is geared towards meeting the demands of national ownership and national leadership. Programme countries should be in the lead.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This vision calls for a UN development system that has the capacity to systematically utilize synergy among its members and maximize opportunities for efficiency. I believe this is the future we all want for the UN development system.

The "delivering-as-one" pilot and self-starter countries have been striving to do exactly that, as we have heard from the

representatives of the Group that carried the Independent Evaluation and the DaO countries themselves. However, these efforts to promote synergy and efficiency in UN development operations in the DaO countries have often been hampered by inflexible programming instruments and complicated coordination mechanisms at the country level and un-harmonized business practices and fragmented governance arrangements at the central level.

The upcoming QCPR provides an opportunity for Member States to address these weaknesses in the functioning of the UN development system at the country and headquarters level in order to enable the UN to reach its full potential and continue to remain a major player in global development cooperation.

In this process, we must also critically examine the sustainability of the current funding architecture of the UN development system. Has the UN development system lost too much of its multilateral character in the recent decade due to its heavy reliance on extra-budgetary resources? We need to ask ourselves this question in the upcoming QCPR. We also need to launch a structured dialogue within the governing bodies on the future funding arrangements for the UN operational activities. A serious analysis of the “the critical mass” of core resources is also warranted.

The global development landscape is changing, and so must UN operational activities for development. I am confident that the QCPR will not only make headway on some aspects but will also

be a departure point for strategic shifts in UN operational activities for development.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The German poet, Goethe, once said that “boldness has genius, power and magic in it”.

When we look at the challenges and the opportunities facing the UN development system in the present environment, I sometimes feel that we could do with a small dose of boldness when it comes to the work of this important organization.

I therefore hope that we will remember Goethe’s words when we begin the QCPR negotiations in earnest later this year.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I want to express my sincere appreciation to all the panelists, moderators and Member States for their active participation and contribution to the 2012 Operational Activities Segment of ECOSOC.

Through your substantive and constructive engagement, this year’s Segment has been a success. For this I thank you wholeheartedly. I also thank the Secretariat for their professional and efficient support to our work.

I hereby declare the 2012 Operational Activities Segment of the Economic and Social Council closed.

Thank you.