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**THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**2015 OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT  
SEGMENT OF THE SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

New York, 23 February 2015

**Your Excellency, Ambassador María Emma Mejía Vélez, Vice-President of ECOSOC,  
Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**I am pleased to address the Economic and Social Council on the UN's operational activities for development at this historic juncture for the United Nations.**

**We have set the bar high this year, we aim to adopt a truly ambitious sustainable development agenda and, later in the year, to reach agreement on a new universal, meaningful climate agreement.**

**Along the way, we face important milestones, starting next month in Sendai, Japan, at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.**

**In July in Addis Ababa, we are to agree on a concrete framework to underpin the financing for our ambitious global development agenda.**

**We have already broken new ground getting to this point. We have brought an unprecedented range of views into our preparations for the post-2015 agenda. The process has engaged people from around the world and across a wide spectrum of partners. Member States and others have been joined by millions of citizens worldwide, who are raising their voices for the future they want. It is a theme I want to dwell on in this statement to you today.**

**First of all, the level of participation is clearly reflected in the bold ambition of the proposed sustainable development goals. It is one of the reasons why the SDGs reflect an integrated, universal and potentially transformative agenda. Another reason is that the SDGs clearly build on the lessons of the Millennium Development Goals to address the world's many interlinked challenges – poverty, environmental degradation, social marginalization and more.**

**Second, we know from what we have heard that we must use this year to invest in speeding up progress towards the MDGs themselves. We have made some headway, including on goals and targets that are the most lagging like sanitation. I am particularly proud of the role the UN Development System is playing to support the implementation of the MDGs. Such progress will be a springboard to a future free from poverty and marked by a life of dignity for all.**

**The high level of engagement reminds us that we are in a different world from the one in which the Millennium Declaration and MDGs were conceived back in 2000. With this heightened engagement comes heightened expectations.**

**The decisions that will be taken in Sendai in March, in Addis Ababa in July, in New York in September and in Paris in December will have major implications for millions of people around the world and also for the UN's operational activities for development. We have to be prepared for implementing the agenda which will be decided by Member States this year.**

**That is why it is so important to reflect on past experience and discuss future action that is fit for purpose.**

**I welcome the ECOSOC Dialogue on the long-term positioning of the UN development system in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. This is our first collective reflection. I am sure it will strengthen our common understanding and resolve of the way forward.**

**Madame Vice-President,  
Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,**

**The UN development system is, I dare say, valued for its normative role, credibility, impartiality and access to specialized knowledge. The values that it represents enjoy widespread support among older and younger generations, and we particularly need to reach the youth, all over the world.**

**The Secretary-General's report on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review shows encouraging progress in making this system work in ways suited for the SDGs. Already, the majority of partner countries – 86 per cent – consider the UN development system a more relevant partner than two years ago.**

**A response like this requires and invites huge effort across the entire system. At a governance level, you have called for more reporting through governing bodies on the QCPR. We are responding to that call.**

**At a country level, your expectation for a more coherent approach is shaping the UN country presence. More and more partner countries are adopting the Delivering as One approach.**

**It is hard to argue with the direct feedback from governments. Engagement, transparency and alignment are way up in Delivering as One countries. This message should be heard across all UN development system governance structures.**

**At the same time, we are aware that a new development agenda requires a UN development system that can change faster to meet rapidly evolving challenges. It needs to become more flexible in responding to the different capacities and changing needs of partner countries. We have to vigorously reduce transaction costs associated with programming and reporting. We must do this more quickly.**

**To achieve a UN development system that will be “fit for purpose” we need a three-pronged approach.**

**First, we need differentiated responses to respond to differentiated needs and capacities. Inequality, as we know, is a serious problem both within and between countries. At**

**its best, a flexible and agile UN development system can bring integrated and tailored content to match the specific needs and aspirations for each partner country.**

**Second, we need to improve capacities to support governments in leveraging partnerships. Institutional, intellectual and financial resources are becoming increasingly dispersed. Technological innovation is driving new forms of access. A UN development system that embraces innovation can help partner countries tap into these assets towards achieving shared goals.**

**And third, we need to strengthen coordination and collaboration within the UN system and between the system and other actors. The preamble of the QCPR resolution, and the TCPR resolutions that preceded it, have reminded us that Member States take primary responsibility for coordination. Beyond the discussion on coordination within the UN development system, our main challenge is to provide the best possible support to national coordination. This includes, but goes beyond, the discussion on coordination within the UN development system.**

**Let me also add that it is crucial to go beyond the engagement of Development Ministers and also engage other**

**sector ministers, particularly the Finance Ministers but also others. Indeed, if we are to succeed with a truly transformative agenda we need a multi-sectoral approach and one which also mobilizes the private sector, civil society, academic and scientific communities.**

**Next year's QCPR offers a fresh opportunity to ensure that the UN development system can operate as one in supporting Member States' achievement of the post-2015 development agenda.**

**Dialogue on a matter as substantial as this should also happen at the country level. So we look to more country consultations on the longer term positioning of the development system.**

**Madame Vice-President,  
Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,**

**The UN development system has unique core strengths. It has universal presence, legitimacy and convening power. It has depth and breadth of experience. And the UN development system can support partner countries as they translate global norms and standards into national policy**

**and action. This means that we are uniquely tasked to confront the challenges of our time.**

**We intend to build on our strengths. But we are also working to ensure that the UN development system functions more coherently as one, making its component parts work better as a whole.**

**If our ambition as a UN development system is to match the ambition of all the people who have helped to shape the post-2015 agenda, we do not just want to confront future challenges. We want to overcome them. For that, we need our operational activities to combine and join together wherever there is a need or a demand.**

**In his Synthesis report on the post-2015 agenda, the Secretary-General recognizes that the challenges ahead *“demand new heights of multilateral action based on evidence and built on shared values, principles, and priorities for a common destiny.”***

**During this year of the UN’s 70th anniversary, Member States have an opportunity to create a new vision and reality for the UN development system, with great consequences for millions and millions of people around the world. We have a**

**chance to prove that building a future of dignity for all is in the interest of all of our nations. In today's world of increasingly complex and cross-boundary challenges, we need to remember that the good international formula is in the national interest of all Member States.**

**The Secretary-General and I look forward to the outcome of your deliberations. We stand ready to support your work at every stage.**

**Thank you.**