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Substantive session of 2015

General debate of the operational activities segment

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Statement of Switzerland

Mr. President

We would like to use this opportunity to commend the Bureau of the ECOSOC, and in particular the Vice-President of ECOSOC, her Excellency the Permanent Representative of Colombia, for the way how this year's Operational Activity Segment is structured. The discussions so far have been interactive and educative, which is important, as we are discussing relevant elements of the future positioning of the UN system.

Switzerland welcomes the UN Secretary General for his report on the implementation of the General Assembly Resolution 67/226 on the QCPR. Together with the additional background sources, it allows to closely monitor the QCPR implementation which in turn provides useful insights for our ongoing discussion on how the UN development system should become fit-for-purpose to effectively deliver on the Post-2015 Sustainable Development agenda.

For our collective efforts in making the UN fit-for-purpose, the ongoing ECOSOC dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN system provide an important opportunity to take stock on "what works, what does not work and what lessons learned we can draw". Fundamental issues, such as the alignment of functions,

funding practices, governance structures, capacity and impact of the UN development system on the ground, partnership approaches and organizational arrangements need to be thoroughly analyzed in order to decide on necessary adjustments. Given the complexity of this exercise, **Switzerland believes that Heads of States should use the Post-2015 Outcome Document to place a strong reform call and request an in-depth review of how the different entities can contribute to the realization of the SDGs.**

However, the 2012 QCPR provides already guidance on how the UN development system can become more fit-for-purpose for the post-2015 era. Hence, there is a need to further commit to the full implementation of the current QCPR mandates. In this regard, Switzerland commends the significant progress in advancing in the implementation the QCPR and in moving towards delivering as OneUN. We are particularly seeing the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as crucial tool to advance on this path.

Let me address today five specific topics of particular interest for Switzerland with regard to the implementation of the current 2012 QCPR but also with a view to the 2016 QCPR:

(1) Resident Coordinator system

To ensure coherence amongst the system and to deliver results on a common agenda the role of the Resident Coordinator is absolutely critical. In order to strengthen the role of the Resident Coordinator, Switzerland could imagine that in the future all UN organizations' country directors' annual performance review would be done directly by the Resident Coordinator. This would strengthen the RC's position and help achieving stronger commitment of all UN organizations towards delivering results together.

We note with concern that Resident Coordinators have called for more coherence at the level of agency headquarters and mentioned continued lack of support and even resistance to Delivering as One within some agencies.

Switzerland strongly urges the Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB) to take these points seriously and address them correspondingly. Also, we would appreciate to receive some explanation and ideas from the agency representatives present today, what concrete measures are planned to tackle this issue effectively.

(2) Simplification and Harmonization of Business Practices

The Harmonization of Business Practices mandates is in our view an area which doesn't receive sufficient emphasis from the UNDG. It seems necessary that the UN agencies not only develop an action plan at HQ level. Rather, this action plan with clear timeframe for harmonization of policies, regulations, systems and procedures needs to be proactively communicated to UN country teams so as to facilitate implementing QCPR recommendations at country level. Updates on the progress, also to Member States, should be part of this communication.

Also of concern for my country is the recent decision by some organizations to develop their own regional service centers without a focus on joint action. This is clearly in contradiction to the QCPR, which mandates the UN development system to look into joint global, regional and country level service centers.

(3) Transition from relief to development

According to the presented SG report and from a funding perspective, the United Nations development system appears to be most relevant in countries in transition situations. The Montreux retreats of UN Resident Coordinators working in crisis situations have brought forward a set of recommendations, which should serve as a basis for joint action, as they call for enhanced coherence among political, security and developmental approaches or on more institutionalized collaboration between the secretariat (Department of Political Affairs DPA, Department of Peacekeeping Operations DPKO) and the Funds & Programmes.

(4) Effectiveness of the UN System

Although I talked a lot about processes, however at the heart of our discussion should be the results achieved in the partner countries. "Economic growth/employment" and "industry, trade and investment are areas where partner countries see highest needs for additional support of the UN in the upcoming four years. Unfortunately the UN performance is assessed rather insignificant in both areas so far. We are not sure whether the comparative advantage, beyond norm setting to ensure in particular the sustainability dimension, has to be sought in the UN. However, we see it as critical that the UN embarks into innovative partnerships both with the IFIs but in particular also with the private sector to further advance this decisive agenda.

(5) Strategic guidance and oversight for system-wide coordinated implementation of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development

All in all we see a clear need for better focused strategic guidance and for enhanced oversight on the implementation of such guidance. This guidance could come from an expanded QCPR, let's call it QCPR+, that would not try to micro-manage but rather focus on key system-wide aspects of the UN operational activities, and thereby allow clarifying how the various agencies' mandates complement each other best. This would ultimately translate the post-2015 sustainable development agenda into a tangible practice.

Additionally, it may be needed to clarify an enhanced mandate of the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) to make sure system-wide mandates are sufficiently addressed.

While the executive boards oversee agency specific implementation, the ECOSOC would carry out the oversight function on the CEB work. This would mean the ECOSOC would directly oversee system-wide mandates, including on issues such as how would the UN engage in multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Let me at this stage express Switzerland's concern on a particular point: While during the whole Operational Activities Segment we are discussing relevant elements of the future positioning of the UN system, we seem to undermine our own positions through not fulfilling ECOSOC's critical governance role with a view to its mandated monitoring function of the implementation of the QCPR. We have been provided in-depth documentation on the implementation of the QCPR. However, in order the ECOSOC to fulfill its monitoring function, Switzerland would have expected that by the end of the Operational Activities Segment, we have a negotiated ECOSOC OAS resolution at hand that refers to and comments on the QCPR implementation progress achieved and challenges encountered as laid out in the documentation.

Last but not least, Switzerland is convinced that for a successful implementation of the post-2015 agenda on the ground, the guidance from the political level of the UN needs to be well linked to the UN development system. We must bring General Assembly, ECOSOC, QCPR and HLPF in one line. For this, we require alignment in time with meetings scheduled in a logical cycle and alignment in substance.

Thank you for your attention.