

**Draft Opening remarks**  
**H.E. María Emma Mejía Vélez Vice President of ECOSOC**  
**Operational Activities for Development Segment**  
**2015 substantive session of ECOSOC**  
**New York, 23 February 2015**

Excellencies,  
Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to open this year's Operational Activities for Development Segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council.

This year's segment has two overarching objectives, *firstly*, to fulfill the mandated role of the Council in reviewing progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review – or the QCPR - of operational activities of the UN system, and, *secondly*, to contribute to the recently-launched ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

I believe these two objectives of the segment are closely linked. For instance, effective implementation of system-wide mandates established in the QCPR resolution of the General Assembly are necessary for the longer-term positioning of the UN development system in the post-2015 era. Yet, these are not sufficient. The system has to be adjusted to better support the implementation of the new development agenda..

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a landmark year for the United Nations. For the first time, a universal and unified development agenda will be adopted in September.

There is strong recognition among Member States that the post-2015 development agenda will constitute a very different mission for the UN development system than the current one driven by the Millennium Development Goals.

A particularly challenging aspect of the post-2015 development agenda will be the need to simultaneously pursue the twin objectives of eradicating poverty and achieving the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

The emphasis on integration, for example, will require significant strengthening of the ability of the UN development system to pursue activities in

close collaboration rather than in silos. This will require greater coordination capacity in the UN development system at both inter-agency and intergovernmental levels.

Over the last 30 years, the QCPR resolution of the General Assembly has been the most important instrument at the intergovernmental level in fostering system-wide coordination.

When the General Assembly decided to establish the QCPR process in 1977, an important objective was to strengthen the system-wide character of operational activities of the UN system. The primary objective was to ensure that the Organization as a whole could operate at higher level of effectiveness and efficiency in this important policy area.

The policy-makers that introduced the QCPR process undoubtedly saw the numerous benefits that common regulation of voluntarily-funded operational activities could have on the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the UN system. Today, operational activities account for nearly two-thirds of all the work of the Organization and, importantly, some 95 per cent of those operational activities are *voluntarily funded*.

There are several processes that are common to all the entities that engage in the delivery of voluntarily-funded operational activities, namely those relating to programming, operations, results-based management and evaluation. Such common processes, however, are currently regulated differently by different entities

This is a paradox that needs to be examined more carefully by Member States, if the objective is to strengthen the strategic positioning of the UN development system as a whole in the post-2015 era. The upcoming sessions, workshops and retreats of the ECOSOC Dialogue will undoubtedly provide ample time and space for Member States to discuss this important issue.

In fact, the Ecosoc Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN Development System provides a unique opportunity for the Council to conduct technically-oriented, purposeful and inclusive discussions from a system-wide perspective. This eighteen month process that we started last December should contribute to an ambitious QCPR resolution of the General Assembly at the end of 2016, in order to adjust the UN Development System to better support the implementation of the new development agenda.

Also, any discussion on the future of the UN development will need to be grounded in common understanding of the drivers of change in the broader environment of the UN development system.

From my perspective, I would particularly like to highlight six such change factors:

*Firstly*, the need to provide coherent and integrated support tailored to changing country needs and priorities of programme countries,  
*Secondly*, increased demand for improved efficiency, lower transaction costs and greater use of national capacities and systems at the country level,  
*Thirdly*, growing demand of programme countries for more effective and participatory governance of the UN development system, particularly the major funds and programmes;  
*Fourthly*, increased demand for results and accountability, including with regard to the implementation of system-wide mandates established by central governing bodies such as the General Assembly and ECOSOC;  
*Fifthly*, greater competition from other development cooperation actors, providers and modalities, and,  
*Sixthly*, the growing realization that many global issues cannot be effectively tackled without a collaborative and multi-stakeholder approach.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

These are some of the issues which will undoubtedly be raised by many participants during the next three-days.

We will begin this year's segment with a keynote address by the Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, after which we will move to the first session focusing on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system. This session is also an integral part of the ECOSOC Dialogue process.

I expect our dialogue this morning on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system also to inform subsequent discussions in the segment, including the annual dialogue with the Executive Heads of the funds and programmes as well as deliberations on funding, South-South cooperation and national capacity development.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to first invite the Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, to deliver a keynote address.

Thank you.