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Statement

by Mr. Hongbo Wu, Under Secretary-General, UNDESA

Operational Activities for Development Segment

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H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly

H.E. Mr. Alejandro Palma Cerna, Vice-President of ECOSOC

Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to participate in the opening of this year's Operational Activities Segment.

Since you met in the segment one year ago, Member States have adopted three landmark agreements, namely the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* and the *Paris Agreement on Climate Change*.

The adoption of these agreements is a seminal moment for the United Nations, which will significantly impact the work of the UN development system in the post-2015 era.

In addition, the broader environment within which the Organization operates is continuously changing. The needs of developing countries for support from the UN development system, for example, are now very different than at the outset of the MDG era. The role of development actors has also changed considerably in the same period. The 2030 Agenda demands even further changes.

This year's Operational Activities Segment is therefore coming at an opportune time. The same applies to the ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system and the comprehensive policy review of the General Assembly of operational activities of the UN system which will take place later in the year.

Your deliberations over the next 10 months will be critical in charting a new course for the work of the Organization for development in the post-2015 era. Achieving that objective, I believe, will require bold and imaginative decision-making by Member States.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is no question that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development marks an important step change in international cooperation for development.

I would just like to highlight a few of the changes inherent in the 2030 Agenda.

Firstly, the substantive breadth and depth of the agenda and the inter-linkages and mutual dependency among the sustainable development goals and targets mean that an integrated and coordinated approach to the implementation process will be needed to a greater extent than ever before. This will undoubtedly have implications for funding and governance of the UN development system, as well as other areas that are the focus of the ECOSOC Dialogue process, namely, organizational arrangements, capacity and impact and partnership approaches.

In this context, I would like to recall the findings of analytical scenarios undertaken by DESA for the Rio+20 Conference in 2012, which concluded that the broad pursuit of sustainable development is far superior compared to a strategy based on achieving single-issue objectives in isolation. These findings mean that the results, impact and cost-effectiveness of development activities such as those undertaken by the UN system can be increased considerably if implemented in a coordinated rather than isolated fashion.

Secondly, the development needs of programme countries are increasingly differentiated. In LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and conflict-affected countries, the UN development system will need to demonstrate capacity to provide effective solutions that are adapted to different country contexts.

Thirdly, the middle-income countries are also increasingly facing complex development challenges, which will require targeted international support.

Fourthly, in countries facing protracted crises it will become especially important to strengthen the linkages between the development, humanitarian and peace and security pillars of the Organization.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to share with you some of the key messages from the SG's QCPR report that will be presented later today. But these messages should be part of the discussions through this segment.

First, the UN development system remains a preferred partner for programme countries. It is considered the best provider of support in addressing global challenges that require collective action.

Second, the UNDS needs to deliver on the expectations of the 2030 Agenda. This agenda requires a much more horizontal and unified approach than the MDGs.

Third, the UNDS does not have to just do things differently. It has to do different things and topping of the list is to moving from coordination, cooperation to integration.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The effective adaptation of the UN development system to these major ongoing changes in the purpose and modus operandi of international cooperation will require a collective response by all entities of the UN development system. This will require some considerable change in mind-set, method and action.

This will also require changes in the role of the QCPR as an instrument to further system-wide coherence, effectiveness and efficiency, as mentioned by the Vice-President. In a world where development challenges are increasingly interconnected, the QCPR will need to serve as an instrument that strategically, effectively and efficiently furthers the objective of system-wide coherence in the UN development system in the post-2015 era.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

For all the reasons I have mentioned, this year's Operational Activities Segment as well as the ECOSOC Dialogue process and the upcoming QCPR provide a historic opportunity for Member States to reach consensus on an ambitious programme of reform which overarching objective could be to ensure that the sum total of the Organization is larger than the individual parts.

I wish you very productive discussions at this year's Operational Activities Segment. I would also like to assure you that DESA will lend its full support to you in the challenging tasks ahead.

Thank you.

