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Economic and Social Council

2015 Operational Activities for Development Segment

“Reviewing the longer-term positioning of UN development system and progress in implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on QCPR”

**Closing remarks by H.E. Martin Sajdik
President of the Economic and Social Council**

ECOSOC Chamber

New York, 25 February 2015

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would first like to convey the personal regrets of Ambassador María Emma Mejía Vélez who could not join you at the closing of the segment due to official travel outside of New York.

We have now come to the end of this year’s Operational Activities Segment. This has been a very rich and fruitful exchange of views.

I am grateful to all of you and particularly to the national policy-makers from capitals and country-level representatives of UN entities, for your active engagement over the past three days.

Your contributions have helped to ensure that ECOSOC deliberations and policy guidance are grounded in country-level realities and that the UN development system will be fit for purpose to support the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many speakers in the segment have described this as a landmark year that offers a unique opportunity to forge a new vision for the UN development system in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

Through the ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system, Member States, in my view, have the right vehicle to forge such a common vision aimed at renewing the capacity of the Organization to serve the countries that need its support the most.

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe our discussions over the past three days have revealed much common ground. I would like to briefly highlight five key messages emanating from your deliberations.

Firstly, the UN development system is at crossroads. A transformative sustainable development agenda will demand adaptation and change from the UN development system as a whole. A truly system-wide approach is called for at all levels. The integration requirements of the post-2015 development agenda will demand the UN development system to develop capacity to shift seamlessly between specialization and integration in the delivery of operational activities. The field presence of the UN development system will also need to be tailored to the level of operational activities in programme countries. And the system will have to become better at communicating to the world-at-large the transformative impact the new development agenda is expected to generate.

For the UN development system to be fit for purpose at the country level, it will need to shift its centre of gravity from providing representation to providing expertise. This need for greater expertise, flexibility and agility in responding to the changing development context at the country level will require significant strengthening of capacity for coordination in the UN development system at both the inter-agency and intergovernmental levels. Also, between humanitarian assistance and development-related activities in transition countries.

The experience with “delivering-as-one” shows that governments in programme countries generally associate improved coordination with enhanced development effectiveness and greater national ownership of operational activities of the UN system. In the upcoming ECOSOC Dialogue, it will therefore become particularly important to discuss how to make sure the vertical design of the Organization is able to meet the integration requirements of the post-2015 development agenda.

Secondly, it will become especially important to ensure that the funding architecture of operational activities of the UN system is effectively aligned with the new functions as reflected in the post-2015 development agenda. The current fragmented funding architecture of operational activities of the UN system is not suited to facilitate cooperation among the various entities in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The use of core, thematic, pooled and system-wide funding

mechanisms will particularly need to be strengthened in the post-2015 era. The role of core funding in leveraging partnerships within and outside the UN system will also become critical in the implementation of the new development agenda. The ECOSOC Dialogue should help forge a compact on the overall financing of operational activities.

Thirdly, The UN development system has made significant progress in implementing mandates established in General Assembly resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the UN system. However, certain gaps remain. It is evident that if these gaps are addressed effectively, it would take the UN development system a long way towards being fit for purpose to deliver on the post-2015 development agenda. It is particularly important to complete reforms at the headquarter level to support common business operations and results management and reporting. Continued strengthening of the Resident Coordinator system and the adoption of common budgetary frameworks should also be accorded high priority in the remaining two years of the current QCPR cycle. The launch of a new generation of UNDAFs based on the recently-adopted standard operating procedures (SOPs) will be especially important in enhancing system-wide coherence by strengthening guidance to country teams in planning, implementing, measuring results and reporting together.

Fourthly, most UN development system entities have identified the promotion of South-South cooperation as a strategic organizational priority in the post-2015 era. Some UNDAFs at the country level already include South-South cooperation as a strategic focus area. Going forward, the number of UNDAFs promoting South-South cooperation is expected to grow significantly. However, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of the expectations of Member States on the role of the UN development system in advancing South-South cooperation.

Fifthly, the capacity development role of the UN development system constitutes the *raison d'être* for operational activities in programme countries. This role has continuously evolved since the Organization was established nearly 70 years ago. As the demand for upstream policy advisory role of the UN development system increases in the post-2015 era, it will become equally important to significantly strengthen the use of national capacities and systems in the delivery of operational activities.

Distinguished Delegates,

As we conclude, allow me to extend my special thanks to the Government representatives and UN officials who served as speakers and panelists in this year's Operational Activities Segment. I have been much impressed by your wealth of knowledge and ideas and heartened by your profound wisdom. I thank you very much.

I also wish to thank Member States and all participants for your insightful and constructive engagement in the segment.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you wholeheartedly for your impactful engagement and valuable contribution to the success of the segment. I would also like to thank DESA and UNDG for supporting this segment. I hope these joint efforts will continue in supporting the ECOSOC Dialogue process.

And I wish those of you who are travelling a safe journey home.

Thank you.