

13 July 2012

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly,
at the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment**

Your Excellency, Ambassador Desra Percaya, Vice President of ECOSOC and Chair of the Operational Activities Segment,
Mr. Sha Zukang, Under Secretary-General of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be with you this morning.

I thank the President of ECOSOC for his invitation to address this opening of the Operational Activities Segment of the Economic and Social Council.

As we all know, this year's Operational Activities Segment is of particular significance.

It is time to take stock of the progress and challenges in implementing the mandates established in General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review of UN operational activities for development.

It is also a time to be forward-looking.

We are beginning a new cycle with the 2012 quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) – a cycle that will set the mandate and framework for the UN development system for the period 2013 to 2016 and beyond.

Recently, through stakeholder surveys conducted in preparation for the 2012 QCPR, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs found that the UN development system is more relevant and coherent today than it was five years ago.

This progress, in my view, provides a good platform for more ambitious efforts to strengthen the UN development system in the new QCPR cycle.

Your deliberations during this Operational Activities Segment will set the stage for the upcoming QCPR negotiations, which, I am confident, will re-invigorate the capacity of the UN development system to meet both current and emerging global challenges.

As President of the General Assembly, I have designated “Sustainable development and global prosperity” as one of the four pillars of my vision for the Assembly’s work this session.

I am committed to helping forge a united global partnership, with a particular focus on the needs of the most vulnerable.

The United Nations operational activities for development play a central role in these efforts.

They are both a symbol and a concrete manifestation of a partnership for a better future.

This session, I organised in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and UNDESA, a three-part seminar series on the QCPR.

Allow me to highlight a few of the issues that took centre-stage during these discussions, and to offer some personal reflections.

First, new centres of economic dynamism in the global economy, coupled with advances in technology, are transforming the global development landscape.

Accordingly, we must re-assess the effectiveness of our approach to development cooperation, and consider how the work of the UN development system could change in order to remain effective and relevant to variable country needs and contexts.

Second, the changing nature of global challenges means that solutions will increasingly require collective action and new forms of partnerships.

In this context, I envisage civil society and the private sector working closely and seamlessly together with multilateral and bilateral forms of development cooperation.

Third, the issue of the “critical mass” of core funding for UN operational activities for development requires urgent attention and resolution.

The current imbalance in core/non-core funding risks undermining the capacity, independence, partnerships and delivery of UN operational activities for development.

Fourth, we must recognise the important progress made in achieving greater coherence and integration of UN operational activities for development through the Resident Coordinator system, the UNDAF process, the delivering-as-one pilot initiative and the integrated mission concept, among many other initiatives.

We must build on progress to date, to step-up UN development coordination and coherence in the next QCPR cycle.

Additionally, the provision of high quality and cost efficient administrative services is another area where major progress should be expected from the UN development system in the next four years.

Finally, the process of developing Sustainable Development Goals, building on the experience of the MDG framework, will mean a re-doubling of efforts to integrate the core UN pillars of development, security, and humanitarian assistance.

Critical to this effort will be instituting effective horizontal accountability mechanisms for common performance and results assessment by UN entities.

To some extent, the success of the upcoming QCPR may depend on the progress that is made to strengthen horizontal accountability in the work of the UN development system, particularly at the country level.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our discussions have revealed that the QCPR is a most timely exercise, offering a forward-looking reflection on the longer-term strategic re-positioning of the UN development system within the development landscape.

The QCPR resolution that you will adopt this fall will directly impact the day-to-day work of the UN system, and will shape the strategic plans of the 30 plus entities that comprise the UN development system.

Together, these entities currently account for nearly two-thirds of all system-wide activities of the United Nations.

This is no small measure.

I am confident that the Operational Activities Segment will result in forward-looking recommendations for the upcoming QCPR negotiations.

In the coming months, we have the opportunity to shape the future of the UN development system, and to build a lasting legacy for the organization.

We must seize this moment.

Thank you for your attention.