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**Answer to questions at the Dialogue with UNDS Executive Heads:  
Unlocking transformations through integrated policy support at global,  
regional, and country levels**

**Economic and Social Council Operational Activities for Development  
Segment**

**15 May 2024 - 10:00 – 11:30 am**

**(4 minutes total)**

- Your Excellencies
- Dear fellow panelist and colleague Rebeca Grynspan

It is a great pleasure and honor to participate in this dialogue.

### **Question 1**

***How are UN development system entities supporting countries to achieve the SDGs, particularly in integrated policy support, joint planning and joint programming? What are the constraints faced in making further progress?***

When discussing progress, or lack of it, towards the SDGs, taking into account the general developmental context of each country and region is essential. So, as an example, let me start by characterizing the long term performance of LAC.

We characterize the region as being caught in three traps:

- A low capacity to grow trap, as manifested eloquently in the fact that during the last decade average growth was only 0,8%, less than half the 2% growth of the infamous lost decade of the 80s. It is very difficult -if not impossible- to significantly reduce poverty and informality, and create good jobs, as well as increase fiscal space, when you have rates of growth of only around 1% for 10 years. And this is one of the

reasons why we have proposed a new growth strategy for the region for countries to get out of this trap and have no more lost decades.

- The second trap is the well known “high inequality, low social mobility trap”, and
- The third is a low institutional capacities and weak governance trap.

I invite you to consult the latest issue of CEPAL Review for more details on this diagnosis and proposals.

With this background it is not surprising that in LAC only 22% of SDG targets will be met by 2030, 32% are backsliding and 46% are moving too slowly.

And this is the reason why the conversation about acceleration is so important.

The Six Transitions can be powerful strategies for SDG acceleration, and this is why this year we included a chapter in our report for the Sustainable Development Forum on the six transitions.

We introduced a simple but powerful methodology.

For each transition there is a brief description of the nature and scope of the transition, the way it links up and has traction with key SDGs; the present scenario observed and the desirable scenario towards which to move the transition forward.

And most interestingly, I think, for each transition there is an analysis of means of implementation divided in three categories of instruments:

- i) the strategies, policies, plans and programmes observed in the countries to promote each transition;

- ii) the institutional arrangements; and
- iii) the investment and financing needs.

Countries like Honduras are adopting the six transitions framework in their national policies, and others will probably also follow soon, with support from the UN System not only at the country level but also at the regional level, through the Regional Collaborative Platforms, in which each Regional Commission acts as co-vice-chair together with UNDP.

#### **Question 2**

*How are the United Nations development system entities with no physical presence contributing to the work of United Nations country teams in support of SDG acceleration? What specific constraints are they facing in this regard?*

It is of course a challenge for UN entities with no physical presence in specific countries to contribute to the UNCTs in that country.

A challenge but not impossible. The main constraints include costs, both of transportation and coordination; as well as the reporting system.

Virtual coordination platforms are an important tool to compensate the cost constraint.

Economic Commissions have their own reporting system, and to avoid double reporting, activities are mostly not inserted in UNinfo. This leads to underrepresentation of the work of the commissions in the UNinfo platform.

#### **Question 3**

*What measures are required to help strengthen operational alignment across UN development system entities (including in terms of business models, country configurations and skillsets for the priorities enshrined in the UN Cooperation Framework)?*

As regards operational alignment, let me tell you more about work of the Regional Collaborative Platforms.

The Latin America and Caribbean RCP, or RCP-LAC for short provides several types of services.

First, it has achieved important regional efficiencies with a total estimated cost avoidance of US\$ 4 million between 2022 and 2024.

Secondly, the Issue-Based Coalitions and Working Groups of the RCP-LAC received last year 52 requests for support from 14 Resident Coordinators and UNCTs<sup>1</sup> across the region, including some aligned with the six transitions.

Unfortunately, the shortness of time does not allow me to share some examples with you.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

<sup>2</sup> For instance, the Issue-Based Coalition on Climate Change published a brief on Energy Transitions in Latin America and the Caribbean which helps Resident Coordinators and UNCTs to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the energy sector. The report identified key areas for Resident Coordinator and UNCTs influence, including energy access, affordability, jobs, social protection, and addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

A second example is the work provided by the Issue-Based Coalition on Human Mobility, whose reports and data have been a key source of information for policy analysis of the complex and fluid regional migration trends. The coalition produces quarterly reports on mixed movements and an online dashboard compiling data from various sources to provide real-time access to information on human mobility.

A third example is the support provided to the Resident Coordinators and UNCTs by the working group on gender equality through the preparation of a Regional Gender Equality Profile. This Profile includes both quantitative and qualitative data for a comprehensive understanding of the situation of women and men and helps Resident Coordinators and UNCTs promote the advancement of international and regional commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Of course, more can and should be done on a number of fronts. Let me mention three:

- One is by fostering measures that address the financing for development gaps.
  - Another one is additional efforts to have a better common understanding of country needs and realities.
  - And a third one is to change from a project-based mindset to a long-term transformational approach and a mindset of accompanying these processes of transition or transformation on a continuous basis.
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On Question 4, on what actions are needed or would be desirable from Member states, Chair, if I can have 30 more seconds. I will make three brief points, otherwise I will stop here.

#### **Question 4**

*What specific actions are needed from Member States to support and promote such measures?*

On question 4 let me say that, as you know and have been saying in this Meeting, most countries have taken strong ownership of the SDGs as a State commitment, they have established institutions to support and monitor the implementation and a great majority have presented Voluntary National Reviews to the HLPF.

Specific actions that governments can take and would be very helpful include:

- First, to keep making the best use of the convening power of the United Nations, for instance by continuing their active

participation in the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development.

- Second, to strengthen your own institutions and coordination processes around Agenda 2030, including by creating appropriate spaces in each country for social dialogue and strengthened public-public, public-private and public civil society coordination. Particularly important is to bring the Ministries of Finance into the discussions and coordination.
- Third, to work together with the UN system on drawing lessons about acceleration using, among other tools, the six transition framework.

Thank you.