

United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities (17 May 2024, 3:00-6:00p at UNHQ New York)

Concept Note

Background

The United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities has been held annually each November, under the auspices of the General Assembly from 1979 until 2020, as mandated by General Assembly resolution 32/197.

However, the Conference has not fully delivered on the expectations of Member States to provide an integrated platform for comprehensive discussions on the funding to the UN development system and on donor commitments. As such, the Secretary-General, in his 2021 report to ECOSOC on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) (A/75/905) encouraged Member States to reimagine the UN Pledging Conference for Development Activities to serve as a platform for announcing pledges for core and unearmarked voluntary contributions, and the capitalization of joint funds such as the SDG Fund.

In response, the General Assembly adopted in 2021 [decision 75/511](#) (see Annex I) to reform and modernize the Pledging Conference. This decision puts forward three notable changes to the Conference:

- Broadening the scope of the Conference to include all UN system entities with operational activities for development (whereas only UNDP, UNICEF, UN-Women and UNFPA participated in the previous format).
- Focusing the Conference on activities that the UN system delivers together.
- Moving the timing of the Conference from November each year to just after the ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development segment (OAS).

The first new Pledging Conference is scheduled to take place on 17 May 2024, the day after the end of the 2024 ECOSOC operational activities for development segment (14-16 May 2024). The Pledging Conference will build upon the discourse at the operational activities for development segment of ECOSOC.

Objectives and format

With the broadened scope, new focus and new timing, the Conference would now not only center around pledges, but also include a substantive dialogue between representatives of Member States and the UN development system on the current funding situation, including opportunities and challenges. It will dive deeper into the system-wide funding aspects of UN operational activities for development.

The Conference must be focused, manageable and provide added value. Specifically, it is proposed that the 2024 Pledging Conference will be centered around the following two objectives:

- 1) Update Member States on the latest trends in the funding of the UN development system, including recent highlights related to inter-agency pooled funding;
- 2) Enhance the visibility of Member States' contributions to the UN development system, including core contributions, as well as contributions to pooled funds and other lightly earmarked funding mechanisms.

The outcome of the Conference will be a written summary by the President of the Conference.

The Pledging Conference will provide Member States with the opportunity to increase the visibility of their contributions to the UN development system. This includes financial contributions from Member States from the South that provide funding to the UN development system for programmes supporting their own development or development in other host countries. This would help highlight the universality of the 2030 Agenda and Member States' shared responsibility to implement it, while expanding the potential sources of funding for the UN development system. The 2024 Pledging Conference will also provide an opportunity for traditional contributors to the UN to demonstrate their continued commitment to multilateralism and report on their own progress towards implementing the commitments in the Funding Compact, including by announcing efforts they are making to fund the core budgets of UN entities, or other flexible funding mechanisms such as inter-agency pooled funds and the SDG Joint Fund.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs will present the main highlights of the recently released addendum to the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system (QCPR), which provides an overview of the funding situation of the UN development system. This presentation is expected to contextualize and frame a substantive dialogue on the funding situation of the UN development system.

Despite its name, it is essential not to measure the success of the new, revamped Pledging Conference by the volume of funds it raises. However, it is the intent that the 2024 Conference would lay the foundations for a higher engagement by Member States in the following years.

Proposed Draft Programme (17 May, 3:00-6:00pm UNHQ New York)

1. Opening statement by temporary President
2. Election of President of the 2024 Conference
3. Opening remarks by the President

4. Setting the scene: Presentation and discussion on trends in development funding (panellists TBD)
5. Statements from Member States, including announcement of pledges
6. Closing remarks by the President

Annex I

PLEDGING CONFERENCE DECISION A/75/511

United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities

The General Assembly, reaffirming the importance of the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, recalling its resolution 45/215 of 21 December 1990 on the administrative arrangements for the Conference, recognizing the need to improve funding practices to make voluntary funding more predictable, transparent, flexible, effective and efficient, less earmarked and better aligned with the national priorities and plans of programme countries, as reflected in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, as well as with the strategic plans and mandates of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, in order to enable the United Nations development system to work at all levels in a coherent, coordinated, efficient and, where appropriate, integrated manner, reducing duplication and increasing impact, and noting the call made in the report of the Secretary-General on the review of the functioning of the resident coordinator system¹ to consider repurposing and recalibrating the Conference:

- a) Decided to include in the scope of the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities all United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies engaged in operational activities for development, including the members of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, as well as system-wide activities around collective results, whether at the global, regional or country level;
- b) Also decided to convene the Conference on an annual basis shortly after the operational activities for development segment of the Economic and Social Council session, in order to be informed by the discussions, within existing resources and seeking additional funding through voluntary contributions, as necessary;
- c) Urges the United Nations development system entities to continue to enhance the visibility of Member States' contributions, including those to core resources and pooled funds, and related results;
- d) Urges Member States to consider increasing their contributions to the United Nations development system activities.

¹ A/75/905.