

Remarks for USG Ryder

UNDS efforts in implementing system-wide policies

(UN system-wide action plans on gender mainstreaming, youth, and for disability inclusion)

2024 ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment

May 15th, 5-6pm

Vice-President of ECOSOC,

ECOSOC Bureau,

Excellencies,

Dear friends,

Thank you for the invitation to be part of this important panel discussion on the United Nations Development System's efforts to implement system-wide policies on gender, youth and disability inclusion.

In the past year, we have made significant progress in the implementation of the UN system-wide policies discussed here today, at both global and country level with the strong leadership of RCs and UNCTs.

Our results are no longer measured in the number of mechanisms and frameworks established, nor in the number of staff or new tools. Our results are measured by our impact on the ground.

This year's ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment is an important milestone on our way to the Summit of the Future in September.

The outcome of the Summit – the Pact for the Future – will address the issues discussed here today front and centre:

- **The Pact has a dedicated chapter on the issue of Youth and Future Generations.**
- **Gender is one of the cross-cutting themes of the Pact, and will be address in each of its chapters.**
- **There are also strong calls for specific references to disability in the Pact, and, a more inclusive multilateralism is a key overall objective of the Summit.**

That said, let me focus on some of the key questions concerning the UN system’s progress, challenges and capacities in implementing these system-wide policies.

First, on gender, the internal transformation of power dynamics, leadership approaches, strategies, priorities, structures and accountability are all key tracks in the UN effort to deliver gender equality and women’s empowerment.

There is strong commitment from the UN system to implement the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan. The System-Wide Gender Steering Group, led by the Secretary-General, was convened for the first-time last Wednesday, 8 May.

The 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action next year underscores the need to continue this collective push towards better results for women and girls around the world.

And the Secretary-General is involving all UN entities in the requirement to uphold the zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and create a safe, inclusive work environment at the UN.

Second, action on disability inclusion. Numbers alone show the imperative for inclusion. Persons with disabilities form 16 percent of the global population That is an estimated 1.3 billion people, of whom 80 percent live in developing countries.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for all and realizing the central promise of the 2030 Agenda – to leave no one behind – can only be achieved if persons with disabilities are fully included, participating, and benefitting from delivery of the SDGs.

In June 2019, the Secretary-General launched the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. This is our highest-level commitment as an organisation towards transformative and institutional change in this area.

In practice, implementing the Strategy means, for example, consulting persons with disabilities, embedding disability inclusion in strategic planning, collecting data that is disaggregated by disability, advancing employment of persons with disabilities and meeting physical and digital accessibility requirements.

The growing momentum and dedication within our system towards disability inclusion is evident and tangible.

Yet, as we acknowledge these strides, we must also recognize the challenges that remain. Our efforts must go beyond any lingering tokenism to genuine, impactful and meaningful engagement.

We must remove structural and operational bottlenecks that prevent the UN system from being a truly inclusive environment for everyone.

Third, on youth.

The Secretary-General is fully committed to bringing young people into political decision-making. Not just to listen to their views, but to act on them.

Following the Secretary-General's proposal in Our Common Agenda a new Youth Office was established to advance advocacy, coordination, meaningful participation, and accountability for and with young people.

My fellow panelist and colleague, Felipe Paullier, will be able to tell us more about this and about the renewal of the United Nations Youth Strategy.

Young people will also have a strong role to play in the lead up to, and at, the Summit of the Future in September. That includes a youth-led action day ahead of the Summit begins to ensure their voices are heard from the start.

Excellencies,

As we continue the implementation of these strategies, it's important to move away from a siloed approach. By aligning our strategies on gender, youth, and disability, we can ensure a holistic approach to inclusion, leveraging diverse perspectives to enrich our programming and decision-making processes.

Such an approach not only strengthens the impact of each strategy individually, but also enhances the collective impact of our work at the United Nations.

The significant progress we have made should stand as encouragement to do more.

Member States are our partners on this journey. We count on your continued engagement, support and leadership.

Together, we can create a more sustainable and equitable future for all people, everywhere.

Thank you.