

Deputy Secretary-General's remarks at closing of ECOSOC Segment on Operational Activities for Development [as delivered]

This week you have heard from nearly every speaker about the development emergency before us. It is amidst a world in turmoil and uncertainty, as Ambassador Rae has said, but more problematic to us are all the young people in the world that feels a sense of anxiety.

So indeed it is a time of crisis and countries are struggling still to recover from the impact of the pandemic. There is a war in Europe, and the tragedy and injustices we see in Gaza, in Sudan, in Myanmar.

At this juncture I think it is important for us to pause and reflect on the progress that has been made and set our trajectory for the year ahead. As and such, I want to point out the vital leadership we have had from Ambassador Szcserski in guiding our discussions over the past three days.

I would also like to acknowledge and appreciate you, the Member States, for your constructive and active engagement, and our Principles of our agencies, funds and programs, especially my Vice-Chair Achim Steiner, our Resident Coordinators who participated, the UN Country Teams and the entities who contributed with perspectives and insights from the ground.

Excellencies,

This week we heard a shared readiness to respond to the challenges before us — from Member States, Resident Coordinators, and the UN development system entities. Allow me to set out my humble take aways from this segment.

First, let me say that I have heard from the majority of you that we are delivering on your expectation of a coordinated and coherent system. You were clear that Resident Coordinators must be at the forefront of efforts to deliver on this.

Second, I have heard your concerns about funding and the challenging landscape before many UN development system entities.

Third, I have heard your acknowledgement of the immense progress on delivering on efficiencies but noted that we still have a long way before us on the common back offices, our general services and premises.

You were clear about your expectations for the road ahead, that we need to shift towards a more tailored UN development system. We are in the process of recalibrating DCO to optimize the ability of the RC system to meet country needs and priorities.

As the Director of the System-Wide Evaluation Office highlighted earlier today, derivation of country level programming instruments also have to be strengthened. The country configuration exercises would need to be reinvigorated. And we need to move away from a stagnant UN development footprint and ensure that we have an agile and responsive footprint and presence.

We need to redouble our effort to ensure that entities are fully aligned with the reform imperatives. The business model review of UNSDG entities is an important opportunity to assess alignment and propose some adjustments.

We also need to continue to strengthen transparency and accountabilities. The forthcoming review of the management and accountability framework provides an opportunity to do so. Your acknowledgement of the transparency and information provided is welcome, and a testament to the progress that is being made in enabling your oversight.

Over the course of the next year, we are committed to making progress on these areas. And furthermore, we will continue to strive to provide you with the tools that you need to monitor our adherence to the reforms and encourage you to follow up these discussions at the governing boards.

In my capacity as UNSDG Chair, I will keep you updated on the progress we make, as we tailor the UN development systems response, including the development coordination office.

Many of you have stressed that UN80 could provide a drive for addressing these aspects and others highlighted this week, such as renewed efforts to drive efficiencies and accountability.

UN 80 provides a welcome momentum to continue implementing reforms across the development system.

Now is the time for us to invest in that future.

As we approach 2030, the actions that we are going to take now will have a lasting impact on our ability to deliver on the SDGs and our promise to leave no one behind.

The Secretary-General could not have been clearer. Our efforts will only bear fruit if the broader changes in the international financial systems agreed in the Pact for the Future are implemented.

Therefore, the Financing for Development Conference (FfD4) taking place in Seville, the World Social Summit, the Food Systems Stocktake, and COP all represent pivotal opportunities to put the goals back on track. But also to demonstrate why it is and how it is that the UN system, this incredible institution, brings people together, challenging those who say that things cannot be done, and give hope to how they can be done, particularly at the country level.

Excellencies,

There is no time to lose. We do have a deadline around the corner.

We can transform our current challenges into opportunities, take the dividends from this crisis and make them happen— but we need to act together, and act now.

We must underscore, as Ambassador Rae stated, people have a right to justice, they have a right to a life of dignity, and in solidarity, I believe we can show that this reality is possible, for all people on this good earth.

Thank you so much for the opportunity, we have taken with us lots of homework, to be continued.

Thank you.