

Deputy Secretary-General's remarks at the presentation of the report on the Development Coordination Office at the ECOSOC Segment on Operational Activities for Development [as delivered]

Thank you very much your Excellency – the Vice-President of ECOSOC - Excellencies, colleagues,

We come together today following a hallmark year for the Resident Coordinator system and entities across the UN Sustainable Development Group.

As we heard from the Secretary-General yesterday in the presentation of his report, this year has pressed the development system – and we know the year ahead will be ever more testing.

Six years into the repositioning, we have a resident coordinator system that is delivering for those we serve. And we know that this support is needed now more than ever.

And that the UN system needs to come together in a coordinated, cohesive manner to provide this support.

Around the world, people are confronting a convergence of crises. Entrenched conflict, economic instability, persistent poverty and inequalities, constrained multilateralism and declining support for development funding and financing.

This is precisely the moment in which we must recommit to accelerated action that delivers the Sustainable Development Goals for people and planet – as guided by the roadmap that the 2024 QCPR has set.

The UN development system, with the leadership of Resident Coordinators, is redoubling its efforts to align with Member States' expectations, while finding ways to do so more effectively.

I am grateful for the leadership that Member States have shown in continuing to guide our work.

Excellencies,

My annual report tells the story of a UN development system constantly in motion — resilient, adaptive, ambitious— and firmly anchored in country needs.

UN teams are delivering - in countries beset by crisis or in communities facing down persistent poverty and inequalities.

In 2024, 98 per cent of host governments reported that the UN's activities, as articulated in the Cooperation Frameworks, were closely aligned with national priorities.

93 per cent of host Governments indicated that RCs and UNCTs provided support for changes in national policies and regulatory frameworks to advance all the SDGs. A 7 per cent increase over the previous year.

90 per cent of contributing countries agree that the RC system has scaled up collective action for the SDGs.

And 84 per cent agree that the RC system helped improve coherence in UN activities and in reducing the duplication of efforts.

These are more than numbers. They represent a shift in how we work together as a UN system.

And the RC system is the engine of this accelerated support to countries.

First, Resident Coordinators are leveraging national and global processes to boost systems transformation for SDG acceleration.

Cooperation Frameworks increasingly embed integrated approaches on the priorities agreed with Governments. They are maximizing interventions across multiple SDGs to amplify the impact and ground international commitments in countries.

RCs and UN country teams spearheaded over 100 national initiatives with Governments to leverage the Summit of the Future to accelerate SDG implementation.

Second, from civil society to financial institutions, Resident Coordinators are convening the partnerships that scale impact and sustain results.

Notably, collaboration with international financial institutions is growing — with 73 per cent of UN country teams reporting active engagement with IFIs.

90 per cent of host governments reported that Resident Coordinators have helped to leverage partnerships to support national SDG efforts.

Third, Resident Coordinators play a key role in channeling global and country-level sources of funding that incentivize joint work and unlocking financing for SDG solutions.

The Joint SDG Fund has been the main muscle behind the Resident Coordinators' efforts to foster joint, transformative and coherent programming.

In 2024, the Fund supported RCs and UN teams to initiate 136 new joint programmes across 90 countries in transformative areas such as food systems, energy, digitalization, jobs, and social protection. Cumulatively, the fund has reached over 206 million people and catalyzed \$1.6 billion in investments.

Fourth, the Resident Coordinator system is guiding the UN country teams to deliver development results and enable the realization of efficiencies.

Resident Coordinators track implementation of Business Operations Strategy, negotiate arrangements for common premises, facilitate common back offices, and promote the shift towards global service centers.

Fifth, the Resident Coordinator system is fostering increased accountability and transparency for results.

They are spearheading efforts to strengthen the accountability to member states including by providing comprehensive Results Reports and improve use of digital platforms for sharing information on the work of UN country teams.

Excellencies,

Some of you may be familiar with this positive legacy of the repositioning, however, there are some notable shifts in the past year.

Member States responded to the Secretary-General's proposal to provide more funding for the Resident Coordinator system from the regular budget. While the increase of \$53m from the regular budget provides a thin but essential cushion of funding –it still falls far short of providing an adequate and sustainable base.

We still count on Member States to provide voluntary contributions. We rely the UNSDG to pay their portion of the cost-sharing. And we look to both to dutifully pay the levy.

We are preparing a comprehensive review of the resident coordinator system as requested by the General Assembly for the 81st Session, informed by robust data and analysis. This recalibration exercise will ensure the RC system is optimally capacitated and structured.

In 2024, because of lack of funding, only 33% of RCO were fully staffed.

The intake of candidates for the RC/HC talent pipeline had to be paused, with implications on the diversity of expertise available in the future.

The Resident Coordinator system still remains our most efficient investment to support the sustainable development of countries at scale. Resolving the long term shortfall - which was nearly \$80m in 2024 - must be resolved to enable it to fully deliver on the mandates that you have given.

There are other lingering challenges which we must overcome.

The early findings of the system-wide evaluation on country configuration and derivation are stark. As you will hear from the Executive Director of the UNSDG System-Wide Evaluation Office tomorrow, the need for action will be clear.

Dialogues on UN teams' configuration have yet to transform country-level presence or expertise, and entities' programming instruments are still not fully derived from the Cooperation Framework.

Over the course of this year and next, we will work with Member States and UN Sustainable Development Group Entities to right this ship.

I count on your leadership, in this forum and in the governing bodies, to ensure that we are all pulling in the same direction, towards more tailored, cohesive, coordinated support. Ensuring that each entity plays to their comparative advantage.

We are working to ensure that the tools and structures are optimally aligned with the needs of countries.

The forthcoming reviews of the business models of UNSDG entities, the Management and Accountability Framework and the Cooperation Framework Guidance provide a critical window to ensure the UN system is aligned in structure and process – and guided by clear accountability lines, with much more efficient response.

Excellencies,

We are now entering a decisive window — the second half of the 2030 Agenda. And there is absolutely no time to lose.

In the Pact for the Future, Member States recommitted to advancing the SDGs.

Let us strengthen the system to enable us to deliver on this commitment.

And let us ensure that the UN development system receives the support it needs to deliver for the people it serves.

Let us invest in the United Nations development system, as a matter of shared responsibility and a strategic necessity for a sustainable future that leaves no one behind.

Thank you.