



**Vice-President's Summary of the
United Nations Economic and Social Council
Operational Activities for Development Segment
New York, 20 - 22 May 2025**

**H.E. Mr. Krzysztof Szczerski, Ambassador and
Permanent Representative of Poland to the United
Nations, Vice-President of the Economic and Social
Council**

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) operational activities for development segment titled “Keeping the promise on sustainable development in times of uncertainty – The United Nations development system delivering for results” was held from 20 to 22 May 2025, at the United Nations headquarters, New York. The segment was organized under item 7 of the Council’s agenda, “Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation” and its sub-items (a) to (c).

The segment serves as the accountability and oversight platform for the United Nations development system (UNDS), including the Resident Coordinator (RC) system, to accelerate system-wide performance and results in support of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. It provided the critical space for exchanging views on key results, lessons learned and challenges in QCPR implementation and consolidation of the UN development system reforms¹, with a view to have Member States policy guidance and recommendations to strengthen UNDS delivery.²

The 2025 segment was also the first opportunity for ECOSOC, following the adoption of the most recent GA resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (A/RES/79/226), to guide the overall progress of the UNDS reforms, including the Resident Coordinator system, and related mandates. The segment brought together the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, high-level Government representatives, as well as senior UN officials from the country, and global levels (see [programme](#)).

The segment was informed by the following documentation:

1. the [2025 report of the Secretary-General](#) on the Implementation of General Assembly resolution 79/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy

¹ In line with General Assembly resolutions 72/279 and [76/4](#).

² Paragraphs 92, 93, and 127 of General Assembly resolution 79/226.



review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and its [addendum](#) on funding of the United Nations development system;

2. the [2025 report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group](#) on the on the work of the Development Coordination Office and the Resident Coordinator system, including on the operational, administrative and financing aspects;
3. the [2025 report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group System-wide Evaluation Office](#) on the work of the office.

Full documentation about the segment is available on the ECOSOC website ([Guiding Operational Activities for Development | Economic and Social Council](#)).

Opening and high-level dialogues with the Secretary-General and UNSDG Chair

“The UN development system is uniquely positioned to help countries build this resilience [of societies and institutions] – if we ensure it has the tools, resources, and flexibility to deliver” – ECOSOC Vice-President H.E. Mr. Krzysztof Szczerski

The ECOSOC Vice-President, H.E. Mr. Krzysztof Szczerski, opened the 2025 Operational Activities for Development Segment (OAS), stressing its significance as one of the most important platforms for reviewing the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and results of the United Nations development system. The Vice-President underscored that the segment was meeting at a pivotal moment in the final push towards the 2030 Agenda. Guided by the Pact for the Future and the 2024 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), the Vice-President recognized the reforms that have strengthened the system, but noted the Secretary-General's report indicates urgent action is still needed to scale up support, address persistent funding gaps, and ensure impact at country level. He highlighted that discussions would help countries build preventive, inclusive resilience rooted in local partnerships and leadership, striving for a UN development system that is fit for purpose - responsive, empowered, and accountable.

In her opening remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General and Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group, Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, further underscored the vital oversight role of the segment in reviewing the United Nations development system's delivery on the Sustainable Development Goals. The Deputy Secretary-General noted that Member States had provided critical guidance to strengthen coordination, deepen transparency and accountability and sought to revitalise the segment. She stressed the imperative to ensure Resident Coordinators and UN



country teams are equipped with the necessary tools, backing, and quality funding to deliver coherent support. While progress has been made, the Deputy Secretary-General emphasized the need for tailored support and highlighted the opportunities for the international community to ground multilateral ambition through the forthcoming international conferences including the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, the Food System Stocktake, the World Social Summit and COP.

On the invitation of the Vice-President, the Youth representative participated in the opening of the OAS for the first time. The Youth representative, Ms. Chelsea Antoine, from the Caribbean Regional Youth Council and the Major Group on Children and Youth, emphasized that youth are often the "missing implementers" and there was need to invest in the UN's ability to deliver for youth and ensuring youth-led recommendations are considered in decision-making.

“Let’s continue working as one, in solidarity, to build an even stronger and more effective United Nations — one that is ready to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.” – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres

The Secretary-General opened his high-level dialogue with Member States by noting the 80th anniversary of the UN is tempered by a "stark, undeniable reality" of a development emergency, with the SDGs alarmingly off-track. He further highlighted the intrinsic funding emergency, evidenced by the \$9 billion (16%) drop in total financial contributions to the UN development system in 2023 and expressed his concern that the organisation is increasingly asked to do more with less.

Despite the challenges, the Secretary-General conveyed hope in the progress of reforms that have made the system more efficient and cost-effective. He highlighted that \$592 million in efficiencies were achieved in 2024, exceeding the initial target. He also noted that the UN80 initiative will build on these reforms to drive further change for a more impactful, cohesive, and efficient organisation. The Pact for the Future provides potential to accelerate progress on SDGs, with commitments on financing, debt relief, and strengthening the international financial architecture being more important than ever. The Secretary-General stressed the need to hold fast to SDG commitments and accelerate through bold transformations, tailored support to host countries, and leveraging the revitalised Resident Coordinator system. He noted that the UN development system reform has yielded results, but more is needed to fully realise all the reform imperatives. The Secretary-General urged Member States to implement the Funding Compact 2.0 without delay, particularly its emphasis on core contributions, pooled funds, and reiterated the commitment to continued pushes for efficiencies, all focused on serving the people counting on the UN.



Member States welcomed the Secretary-General's analysis and echoed many of his concerns.

The G77 and China expressed deep concern over shrinking development financing, stating that "multilateralism hangs by a thread". The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) were alarmed by a 3% Official Development Assistance (ODA) decrease in 2024 and urged core funding restoration to meet the 30% funding compact target. The African Group was encouraged by UNDS coherence but stressed the critical importance of financing for development and reorienting the funding compact. The European Union and its Member States emphasized the need for greater efficiency, continued accountability and transparency, as well as stronger inter-agency cooperation. Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ) stressed the importance of accelerating agreed reforms as well as better integrating of the cross-cutting priorities. Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) welcomed RC centrality but urged intensified efforts to address their unique geographical disadvantages and invest in climate resilience. Small Island Developing States (SIDS), including CARICOM and AOSIS, highlighted acute vulnerabilities and dramatic funding declines, cautioning against reduced in-country presence and advocating for application of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI).

"The Resident Coordinator system still remains our most efficient investment to support the sustainable development of countries at scale." – United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed

In her high-level dialogue with Member States as Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), the Deputy Secretary-General reported that the Resident Coordinator (RC) system is delivering essential support for the countries it serves. She highlighted that the work of United Nations country teams is deeply anchored in country needs, with 98 per cent of host Governments affirming strong alignment with their national priorities. Resident Coordinators are leveraging partnerships, including with international financial institutions, and the Joint SDG Fund serves as the "main muscle" for joint programming, reaching millions and catalysing significant investment. The Deputy Secretary-General also acknowledged that fully rooting the RC system as a lynchpin of the UN development system has further to go. A primary concern is the critical funding situation, with a significant shortfall of nearly \$80 million in 2024, resulting in only one third of RC offices being fully staffed in 2024. Governance and business models of UN development system entities are still not conducive to unified approaches. She noted reviews of the business models of UNSDG entities, the Management and Accountability Framework and the Cooperation Framework Guidance are planned to ensure the United Nations system is aligned in structure and process – and guided by clear accountability lines, with much more efficient response. In addition, a comprehensive review of the Resident Coordinator system,



as requested by the General Assembly for the 81st session, will be carried out to ensure the RC system is optimally capacitated and structured.

During the dialogue, Member States welcomed the report findings and expressed strong recognition and support for the Resident Coordinator system as central to coordinated country support and SDG progress. The lack of sustainable funding for the RC system was a dominant concern, with widespread calls for adequate, predictable financial support. They highlighted the importance of fully aligning UN development system entity programming with Cooperation Frameworks and in transforming country level configuration according to national needs and priorities. Member States emphasised the need for tailored support to various country contexts.

Summary of discussions and key messages

To accelerate SDG progress, the UN development system is providing nationally aligned, integrated support, tailored to diverse country contexts. Maximizing impact requires properly resourced Resident Coordinators, increased flexible and pooled funding, and stronger incentives for system-wide coherence to overcome persistent challenges in different country settings including LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, MICs and African countries.

Member States engaged in a dialogue with countries and Resident Coordinators to consider how an adaptive UNDS tailors its support according to individual country contexts. For countries like Ethiopia and Lesotho, as least developed countries (LDCs) in Africa, the UNDS has offered important contributions to their national priorities including digitization and governance, and national adaptation to challenges like climate shocks. In the context of Papua New Guinea, support for this Small Island Developing State (SIDS) has leveraged innovative pooled funding to help the country address gender-based violence. In Paraguay and Tajikistan, as landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), the UNDS has supported flexible programming for priorities and leveraging data for evidence-based decisions and builds capacity in areas like statistics and early warning systems. In middle-income countries (MICs) like Indonesia, Moldova, and Guatemala, the UNDS supports national development, aligned with priorities, employing science-backed solutions, and mobilizing resources through innovative financing. Tailored support has leveraged common capacities across the UNDS including technical expertise and funding mobilization. Successes have recognized that data and digital initiatives and results-based reporting are crucial for effectiveness, especially with limited financial resources.

Strong national ownership and the RCs pivotal role in convening and coordinating support for national development efforts has ensured more tailored delivery and increased benefits partnerships, in particular in the form of South-South and



Triangular Cooperation. The United Nations' capacity to convene, facilitate inclusive dialogue and integrate global standards like human rights and gender equality is also highly valued.

Despite progress, challenges persist, fueled - in part - by a lack of quality funding.

The new Funding Compact 2.0 drives joint resource mobilization across the UNDS, while sufficient RC resourcing is essential to strengthen their leadership, alongside stronger incentives for system-wide cohesion to maximize impact.

As set out in the Funding Compact 2.0, pooled funds are critical for facilitating inter-agency collaboration, preventing siloed efforts, and attracting further investment and partnerships, including with major partners such as the World Bank.

Delivering better country support through integrated, collaborative, and accountable United Nations action is essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda, especially amid deepening global crises and increased funding constraints.

In an interactive dialogue with the executive heads of ITU, UN Women and UNDP, participants emphasized the urgency of accelerating progress on the SDGs and underscored the importance of integrated, collaborative approaches across United Nations entities to support such progress, including through more joint programming and planning, joint resource mobilization efforts, and results-driven cooperation. The importance of leveraging each agency's strengths through a coherent approach enabled by the Resident Coordinator system was another recurring message. Youth and gender inclusion, sustainable financing, and digital equity emerged as key priorities. Concerns about funding constraints were met with calls for UNDS entities to be more aligned and accountable, to provide clearer articulation of collective impact, and further scaling efficiencies through more shared services.

Various Member States highlighted that UNDS reform is at a critical juncture. While United Nations leaders affirmed their continued commitment to the reform process, Member States urged further action to close accountability gaps and systematically address identified issues. They encouraged greater derivation of entity-specific programming from the Corporation Frameworks in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to further streamline development efforts at the country level. They also called for increased transparency of resource mobilization efforts. The UN80 initiative was described as an "architectural moment" for Member States to consolidate the system's delivery model envisioned by the reforms, to meet current and future development demands while recognizing interlinkages between UN three pillars. Member States were urged to take ownership of the reform agenda through agencies' governing bodies.



Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs), backed by strong UN support and innovative partnerships, are proving to be powerful country-led tools to align public and private resources with national development priorities - offering a path to bridge the SDG financing gap and drive transformative results on the ground.

INFFs are critical instruments to align financing with national development priorities, strengthen domestic resource mobilization, move beyond fragmented approaches and catalyse public-private investments. The UNDS is supporting over 80 countries in implementing INFFs, with UNDP playing a leading role. Similarly, the UN development system is increasingly backing countries in unlocking innovative financing solutions through partnerships, facilitated by strengthened multistakeholder coordination.

Examples include advances in blended finance in South Africa, Cambodia's public-private partnerships; blue and green bonds in Barbados, Indonesia, Tajikistan; and climate/SDG debt swaps in Barbados, Jordan, Tunisia and Mauritania. These instruments are attracting public and private capital, and unlocking multistakeholder investments across the full spectrum of the SDGs.

Partnerships with IFIs - such as the World Bank, IFC, and Union of Arab Banks - have been particularly successful. In Uruguay, for instance, the United Nations country team has led the Renewable Energy Innovation Fund (REIF) which is finalizing a \$30 million partnership with the World Bank- IFC. In the Arab region, in partnership with ESCWA, the Union of Arab Banks has committed to mobilizing \$1 trillion in SDG-aligned finance by 2030.

In the session on SDG financing at the country level Member States expressed support for the upcoming Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) to advance restructuring of the international financial architecture to reduce fragmentation, improve access, and promote risk sharing. Delegations emphasized that Official Development Assistance (ODA) should be used strategically to leverage additional financing. The discussion reaffirmed the United Nations' role in providing technical assistance, promoting financial innovation, and building institutional capacity to strengthen national leadership and ownership, to ensure sustainable financing solutions that leave no one behind.

Independent evaluation is essential to a coherent, accountable, and effective United Nations development system - supporting system-wide learning, guiding reform, and ensuring that UNDS delivers results which advance the SDGs at scale.

The session included the presentation of the first annual report of the System-Wide Evaluation Office (SWEO). The report referred to the adoption of the UNSDG Evaluation Policy, the completion of two evaluations on the Spotlight Initiative,



and two ongoing system-wide evaluations on the new generation of UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. Key findings referred, among others, to the limited evidence that the Cooperation Frameworks have had a substantive impact on the programmes in country, and that UNCT configuration remained largely an administrative exercise. The Office also flagged significant funding challenges, noting reliance on extra-budgetary resources and calling for more stable financing.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) highlighted its evaluation of the RC system in complex settings, noting improvements in coherence but also finding that the RC system remains insufficiently capacitated in complex settings.

Member States welcomed the value of independent evaluation in advancing reforms, and providing useful evidence in the context of the Secretary-General's UN80 initiative. Some encouraged efforts to strengthen synergies among existing evaluations entities to avoid duplication. Member States also noted the need to hold the United Nations system accountable, promote national evaluation capacity, and ensure that recommendations grounded in strong evaluative evidence translate into meaningful change and implementation.

Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse is not optional - it must be continually institutionalized as a core responsibility across all United Nations operations, with survivor-centered action, strong leadership, and sustainable funding at the forefront to ensure accountability, build trust, and uphold the integrity of the United Nations system.

The segment underscored the critical importance of a survivor-centred, transparent, and accountable approach to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (PSEAH) across all UN operations, including in both development and humanitarian settings. Institutionalizing system-wide mechanisms requires committed leadership, predictable and sustainable funding, and coordinated interagency action. Embedding PSEAH into the core operations of every United Nations entity and integrating accountability mechanisms is key to building trust and improve outcomes.

Investing in survivor-centred responses must remain a priority. Even in a challenging financial landscape, promoting a meaningful participation of survivors in shaping policy and response mechanisms remains essential. Delegates emphasized the importance of stronger protection for whistleblowers in reporting mechanisms.

Delegates welcomed the progress made through the adoption of a model PSEAH clause in United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and the growing number of victim support functions across United Nations country teams, with the number of designated focal points having doubled in recent years.



A case study from Bangladesh demonstrated the effectiveness of interagency PSEAH networks involving UN entities, NGOs, and civil society. These networks have enhanced training, reporting, and collaboration with government actors. However, challenges persist, including limited country-level investigative capacity, the need to adapt tools designed for emergency contexts for development settings, and the lack of mechanisms to track perpetrators system-wide.

Member States have a critical responsibility to enforce PSEAH policies and ensure their consistent implementation, including through United Nations governing bodies and within their own institutions. This includes strengthening transparency and accountability mechanisms, aligning national systems with international standards and ensuring credible reporting structures.

Development and peacebuilding must be pursued in a complementary manner in complex settings - through integrated, data-driven and nationally-led approaches that prioritize resilience, inclusivity, and long-term impact.

The session “Supporting countries in implementing the SDGs in complex settings: interlinkages between development and peacebuilding” was an innovation, introduced in order to extend the scope of discussions of the OAS and place the activities of UNDS in a broader context of multiple challenges. The segment underscored the interdependence of peace and development, especially in conflict-affected settings. Participants highlighted that countries furthest behind on the SDGs are those affected by protracted crises. To address these challenges, the UNDS must adopt integrated, context-specific strategies that bring together humanitarian response, long-term development, and peacebuilding.

Participants emphasized that strong Resident Coordinator leadership, inclusive planning through Cooperation Frameworks and Common Country Analysis, and flexible, pooled funding are essential for delivering coherent, collective and lasting results, and called for stronger mandates and increased support for Resident Coordinators, and greater system-wide coherence.

To this end, some Member States considered that the link between development and peacebuilding interventions should be included in various ongoing United Nations processes such as FfD4 and the Peacebuilding Architecture Review. Others noted that peacebuilding must be integrated in UNDS programs. Consequently, calls were made towards closer collaboration between ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission. Innovative tools like peace and development advisors and surge deployments were also highlighted as critical enablers for integrated action in emergencies and post-mission transitions. The cases of Chad and Mozambique illustrated how development actions must integrate the “emergency mode,” without postponing the achievement of sustainable development, by bridging immediate needs and long-term transformation.



Durable solutions for internally displaced persons must be nationally led, rooted in development, and shaped by the agency of displaced people themselves.

The segment underscored the critical importance of nationally led, development-based long-term approaches to achieve durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs), with sustained support from the United Nations system, IFIs, and other partners. The Secretary-General's Action Agenda has been a significant driver of change and progress, with Resident Coordinators acting as force multipliers. The designation of the executive heads of UNDP, UNHCR, and IOM as Solutions Champions and the establishment of the inter-agency Solutions Hub are tangible demonstrations of the system's renewed commitment.

Country examples from Colombia, Iraq, Nigeria, and Sudan illustrated the importance of integrated, area-based approaches that guarantee the rights to safe housing and documentation, and essential services such as education and livelihoods. In Iraq, nearly half of returnees have made meaningful progress toward reintegration with support from joint government-UN coordination platforms. In Sudan, the National Durable Solutions Working Group supported the strategic integration of durable solutions across humanitarian, development and peace assistance.

Delegates welcomed the catalytic role of the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund and the deployment of temporary advisers. Speakers emphasized the importance of government leadership, community engagement, and data-driven planning, while also calling for greater investment in prevention, particularly in the face of climate-induced displacement. The segment stressed the urgency of early, flexible, and predictable financing, including through IFI-administered concessional financing mechanisms. The segment concluded with a reaffirmation that solutions must be shaped with IDPs, not for them.

The way forward

Strengthening support at the country level, with the Resident Coordinator system at its core, remains paramount. This involves ensuring RCs are well-resourced and empowered to provide tailored support that fully aligns with national priorities as per Cooperation Frameworks. Improving the alignment of entity programming with these frameworks is key, as is leveraging partnerships, particularly with International Financial Institutions, to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Addressing the development emergency requires urgently resolving the funding crisis, marked by a significant decline in contributions and in quality funding. The way forward demands adequate, predictable, and sustainable financing from Member States, and full implementation of the Funding Compact including increased use of pooled funds. Advocacy for broader international financial



architecture reforms and leveraging innovative financing at the country level are also seen as critical.

The United Nations development system must also fully commit to continuous reform and improvement, propelled by the UN80 initiative. An agile, efficient, and accountable system, building on acknowledged efficiency gains, must accelerate streamlining of operations. Member States have an important role to play in continuing to enhance oversight and coordination across the system through its governing bodies.

Following the OAS, ECOSOC adopted an intergovernmental decision on operational activities for development ([E/2025/L.13](#)), in line with ECOSOC's oversight functions over the Resident Coordinator system.
