

**U.S. Statement for the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment  
May 18-20, 2021  
New York (Virtual Session)**

*For the record*

The United States thanks the Secretary-General for his leadership in the implementation of the new UN development system (UNDS) with the re-configured Resident Coordinator (RC) system at its core, and also thank him for his comprehensive report to the Economic and Social Council updating member states on the UNDS implementation status.

This year's ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment takes place in an unprecedented context – the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the first full year of UNDS reform implementation. We commend the UNDS for its considerable contributions to the international community's efforts to address the impact of the pandemic.

The United States reiterates its commitment to multilateralism and to working with the United Nations. We remain a strong supporter of UNDS reform and making the UN fit for purpose to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United States has pledged \$23 million to the RC System in 2021, matching our annual contributions since 2019 and bringing total U.S. contributions to \$69 million.

In assessing progress in implementing UNDS reform over the last two years, the United States agrees with the Secretary-General's observation that while the UN has made considerable progress in standing up the RC system, a number of areas still need to be developed and strengthened. Based on our assessment, areas for continued improvement include the role and responsibilities of RCs, RC system accountability, system-wide evaluation, the RC-UN country team (UNCT) relationship, regional transparency, and efficiency and cost-savings goals.

**RCs' roles and responsibilities:** In addition to technical skills, two UN documents -- the RC Leadership Profile and Job Description for UN Resident Coordinators -- outlined a number of norms that RCs are expected to follow in their work, such as promoting and advocating for the fundamental values, standards, and principles of the UN Charter, including respect for and protection of human rights. The United States notes that both the Secretary-General's and Deputy Secretary-General's reports outline agency and RCO-led activities related to human rights. We also appreciate encouraging information on RC and UNCT efforts to implement the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus. However, more could be done to ensure better transparency, data, and monitoring of such activities related to RC performance and report to Member States. How will the UN collect and communicate systemic data on RC performance to ensure their accountability to these expectations and achieving results? The United States believes that for the RC system to function effectively and efficiently it is important to minimize bureaucratic layers between the Development Coordination Office and RCs. To that end, it will be useful for the UN to construct an RC system organogram (if it has not done so already) and share it with Member States.

**System-wide evaluation:** We appreciate the progress in establishing an independent system-wide evaluation office as a critical part of UNDS and RC system accountability to performance and results-based outcomes. The office's independence and Member State oversight is essential to ensure its credibility, reliability, and quality of its work. Member States have received little information about the office's structure, scope, budget, and funding plan and we would like to see more information on this going forward.

**RC leadership of UNCT and Management Accountability Framework (MAF):** It is encouraging that RCs and UNCT members report growing familiarity, receptivity, and compliance with the MAF. As the UN continues to update and improve the MAF, it is important to foster a mutually accountable relationship between the RC and UNCT members that strikes the right balance between RC authority and the flexibility agencies need to respond to evolving needs on the ground.

**Regional Collaborative Platforms:** The ECOSOC discussion last year on the regional configuration proposal left many Member States with unaddressed concerns and questions. The United States requests further information and consultations with Member States, as called for in the QCPR and last year's OAS resolutions, to allow greater visibility, clarity, and transparency on the roles and expected activities of all regional actors, particularly in the context of the Regional Collaborative Platforms.

**Efficiency gains and cost savings:** The United States welcomes the Secretary-General's goal of achieving annual savings of \$310 million by 2022. We are encouraged by the Secretary-General's report showing the system achieving \$100.7 million in savings so far. The United States looks forward to learning how UNDS will achieve additional efficiencies and cost-savings, including on its methodological approach, to reach the \$310 million goal.

The United States looks forward to working with the Secretary-General, his team, UN entities, and Member States to bring greater transparency and Member State oversight to the UNDS, so we can all play a role in ensuring the RC system meets the expectations we set in our collective vision for UNDS and its efforts to achieve the SDGs.