

2022 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment Vice President's Summary

H.E. Ms. Miia Rainne, Vice-President of ECOSOC, Chargée d'Affaires of Finland to the United Nations

The 2022 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment was held in person from 17 to 19 May 2022. The segment considered the progress in the implementation of the mandates of the General Assembly [resolution 75/233](#) on the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR) and resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the UN development system (UNDS). The segment also considered General Assembly resolution [76/4](#) of 28 October 2021 on the review of the functioning of the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, including its funding arrangement. The overarching theme of the segment was the UN development system's support to building back better from COVID-19 and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The segment took place as the world is still recovering from the devastating COVID-19 pandemic and the global inequities it brought to the fore while also having to confront other pressing challenges such as the climate crisis and new and protracted conflicts undermining efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It underscored the importance of international cooperation and global solidarity to address these global challenges and rescue the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN development system continues to demonstrate its value in supporting countries' efforts to recover from the COVID-19 crisis and achieve sustainable development, showing the value-added of enhanced coordination and a whole-of-system approach.

The segment brought together high-level Government representatives, senior UN officials from the country, regional and global levels, participants from the private sector and civil society organizations (see [programme](#)). The Secretary-General introduced his report on the implementation of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, and the Deputy Secretary-General introduced the report on the Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group on the Development Coordination Office. In addition, over forty panellists, discussants and moderators participated, including five Executive Heads of United Nations entities 7resident coordinators operating in 11 countries and territories, as well as some members of United Nations country teams.

The discussions were informed by: 1) the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 75/233 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system ([A/77/69-E/2022/47](#)), including its addendum on the analysis of funding ([A/77/69/Add.1-E/2022/47/Add.1](#)) of the United Nations development system and the annexes containing the [QCPR monitoring and reporting framework](#) and the [Funding Compact indicators](#); 2) the report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) on the Development Coordination Office ([E/2022/47](#)), including a new RC system Results Framework and [UN system-wide results in support of national efforts to achieve the SDGs](#).

Opening session

At the opening of the segment, **the President of ECOSOC, H.E. Colleen V. Kelapile** noted that the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with other pre-existing challenges such as the climate crisis and protracted conflicts, were generating all-time high humanitarian needs, setting back decades of development progress and undermining efforts towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The conflict in Ukraine and the geopolitical and socio-economic tensions it had generated, were posing an additional stress test to the multilateral system. The international community had a collective responsibility on how these challenges could be effectively addressed.

"I welcome the fact that the United Nations development system – guided by the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) – has been assessed as demonstrating its added value in coming together to support countries in their efforts to successfully recover from the pandemic and achieve sustainable development".

*H.E. Ambassador Colleen V. Kelapile
President of ECOSOC*

The United Nations development system (UNDS) is demonstrating its added value in supporting countries' efforts to recover from the pandemic and achieve sustainable development, including through more integrated, efficient and better-quality support to country needs and priorities, guided by a reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system. Addressing critical UN funding gaps by providing sustainable and quality funding, closing the imbalance between core and non-core resources is necessary to effectively deal with current and emerging global challenges.

The segment offered an opportunity for Member States to provide recommendations, based on sound analysis and evidence, on how to further strengthen the UN development system and deliver results, at scale, to address poverty eradication, advance social protection, quality education, universal health coverage, climate action, energy transition and digital transformation, while leaving no one behind.

"We are facing a development emergency of global proportions. Governments and people are looking to the United Nations for support through these difficult times...the United Nations development system has been transformed and is better prepared to respond to countries' needs and priorities, including helping them to overcome these multiple crises.

*H.E. Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General,
United Nations*

In his keynote address, **UN Secretary-General António Guterres** underscored that the United Nations development system was now better prepared to respond to countries' needs and priorities, as demonstrated also through independent sources and evaluations. UN country teams were more integrated and collaborative, resident coordinators' leadership in delivering strategic support to national plans and priorities was increasingly recognized and efforts to provide more tailored support had achieved encouraging results, as for example in support of small island developing states. Over \$195 million in efficiency gains were generated in 2021, 53 per cent more than the previous year, and better use of data, knowledge management and evaluations strengthened transparency and accountability for results.

The Secretary-General noted, however, that despite these improvements, developing countries continued to face many challenges as a result of and unequal recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the effects of the climate crisis, and the economic shocks to food, fuel and financial markets caused by the war in Ukraine. Results achieved so far had not reached the scale and ambition needed to

rescue the Sustainable Development Goals, which must be the highest common priority in the remaining years of the Decade. The benefits of the UNDS reform needed to be translated into results at an unprecedented scale, by combining the system's assets in support of just transitions in food systems, energy, and digital connectivity amongst others, as entry points for wide-ranging solutions across the 2030 Agenda. Of equal importance, ongoing discussions on reform of the global financial system needed to turn into concrete action, so that power, wealth, and opportunities were shared more broadly for countries to be able to invest in their people.

The Secretary-General identified five areas for urgent attention for the UN development system to deliver on countries' high expectations. First, UN country teams needed to have the specific skills, expertise and configuration to support countries' transitions in energy, food systems and digital connectivity and other strategic areas. Second, Resident Coordinators must fully leverage their convening role to support governments to access the partnerships, know how and financing needed to achieve sustainable development. Third, the Secretary-General called for a change in our approach to collaboration where humanitarian, development and security challenges interact, to achieve the SDGs. Fourth, the effectiveness and efficiency of business operations must continue to improve. And finally, collaboration at the regional level must be further enhanced to bring the full range of regional expertise in support of resident coordinators and country teams. None of this can be achieved without fully delivering on the commitments made in the Funding Compact, in particular in terms of ensuring adequate, predictable and sustainable funding to build incentives for collective work and integration.

In her address, **the Deputy Secretary-General** underscored the critical role of the RC system in rescuing and accelerating action to achieve the SDGs. The Resident Coordinator system is enabling more tailored support from UN Country Teams, more effective convening of partners and stakeholders, and expanded access to SDG financing. Transparency and accountability are improving, including through real time monitoring and tracking of Cooperation Frameworks through UN INFO, and improved operational efficiencies.

In addition to the largely positive assessment by Governments, a majority of UN Country Teams, surveyed for the first time, found the support received from resident coordinator offices to be effective across their areas of expertise: data, communications, partnership, economy and strategic planning.

The Deputy Secretary-General underscored the critical role of UN agencies, their governing bodies and adequate quality funding to realize to the fullest the returns on investments in development coordination

In response to GA resolution 76/4, the Deputy Secretary-General also presented a draft of the multi-annual Results Framework with indicators and targets to track RC system results for further consideration by Member States.

"The many returns on investments in development coordination are clear – independent, authoritative leadership; strengthened convening and better coordination; and improved operational efficiency for more ambitious results."

*H.E. Ms. Amina J. Mohammed,
Deputy Secretary-General,
United Nations*

Summary of discussions and key messages

The UN development system continues to play a pivotal role in helping countries to eradicate poverty and address global challenges through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The system is working in a more integrated and collaborative manner, which is enabling more comprehensive and systematic approaches on the ground in key areas highlighted in the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

Member States recognized the positive progress achieved by the UN development system in establishing more effective, coordinated and whole-of-system approach in support of country priorities and needs at the scale needed, including through individual entities' new strategic plans and results frameworks that are more closely aligned to the SDGs and the reform. RC system leadership played a critical role in enabling more and better integration and collaboration, including by enabling engagement and support by entities based outside countries. At the same time, Member States highlighted the need for more consistent and coherent messaging on reform compliance from entities to their staff at country level, and noted that more consistent guidance and policies by governing bodies could serve to strengthen alignment with the key directions of the QCPR and the UNDS repositioning. They highlighted in particular the primacy of Cooperation Frameworks over entity programme documents and full implementation of the management and accountability framework as important elements to emphasize in that regard.

The UN development system, with the new Resident Coordinator system at its core, is providing countries with more integrated policy advice and support, as made evident in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts should be further scaled up going forward, building on lessons learned, to deliver progress at scale to implement the 2030 Agenda

There was general agreement that the UN development system is increasingly coming together under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator system to provide integrated policy advice and support, as part of the UN response to COVID-19, and in wider efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Social protection was discussed as an area where the system has been particularly effective in integrating its support. The important role of pooled funding, such as through the Joint SDG Fund, in enabling better integrated policy and programming support, and the importance of assisting countries in mobilizing financial resources and engaging international financial institutions were also highlighted. Member States emphasized the central role of Resident coordinators in bringing UN country teams together, convening other relevant actors, and broadly ensuring the right mix of expertise is available in support of countries needs and priorities. The new common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks were found to provide a good a basis for further alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals and countries needs and priorities. In addition, regional platforms and South-South cooperation were highlighted as important means to share lessons learned, best practices and innovative solutions on integrated policies in different country settings to enable replication or scaling up in other contexts.

The reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system and UN country teams are now better prepared to respond to the specific needs of countries in special situations through more focussed and tailored support. Priority should be given to the most vulnerable, including those disproportionately affected by the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and food insecurity.

Member States stressed that the recently adopted Doha Programme of Action 2022-2032 for Least Developed Countries (LDCs), as well as the SAMOA Pathway for small island developing states (SIDS) and the Vienna Programme of Action for landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) are key instruments to accelerate sustainable development in countries in special situations. The engagement of the UN development system to support countries to fully implement these roadmaps should be given high priority. The need for new partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders in support of countries in special situations was emphasized, including the important role of the private sector as a development partner acting as a resource multiplier in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Challenges faced by countries' graduation from the Least Developed Countries (LDC) group category were flagged with strong calls for targeted support and partnerships with international financial institutions and regional development banks.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which constitute the great majority of countries supported through a multi-country office setup, recognized steady progress on the follow-up to the multi-country office review and acknowledged that a "change of winds" could already be felt in enhanced support for all SIDS. The development of a multidimensional vulnerability index for General Assembly consideration, the recent establishment of a multi-country office for the North Pacific, and the set-up of three new United Nations Offices in the Caribbean region in 2022 were deemed as critical steps forward. The additional and improved UN offer was appreciated; yet country representatives underscored that this progress needed to be further strengthened to deliver on the complex SIDS priorities.

Participants also stressed the need to better support Middle Income Countries, (MICs) including through the application of measures that go beyond gross domestic product (GDP), to capture more accurately the multidimensional vulnerabilities and structural weaknesses of MICs. They also welcomed and looked forward to the next steps on the work around the multidimensional vulnerability index and the "beyond GDP" approach highlighted by the Secretary-General in Our Common Agenda .

Improved coherence, cooperation and coordination across humanitarian-development-peace interventions is leading to better results. Still, action across UN pillars needs further strengthening to assist countries address root causes of crises and ensure long-term sustainable development.

Building synergies across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding interventions remains a work in progress. Member States acknowledged achievements had been made on linking humanitarian and development actions, but noted that more efforts was required on the peacebuilding and sustaining peace dimension of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. There was a strong call to invest in prevention and building resilience, especially in cases of protracted crises, whether linked to recurrent natural disasters or conflicts. The Common Country Analysis (CCA) can become an important tool to better understand the root causes of crises to address both immediate needs and develop longer-term sustainable solutions. Enhancing data sharing and interoperability between UN entities can contribute to building synergies between humanitarian, development, and peace action, guided by Cooperation Frameworks as relevant. Providing resident coordinator offices with dedicated expertise on integrating humanitarian-development-peace action as well as strengthening the capacity of UN staff, including through cross-pillar mobility, was also highlighted as important to strengthen work across humanitarian-development-peace interventions.

Member States further recognized that integrated support across pillars cannot happen without funding partners' enabling pooling and scaling up of humanitarian and development funding.

The new regional architecture is now in place and operational, yet the UN development system should continue to review its regional assets to maximize effectiveness, efficiency and value-added in support of UN country teams.

The new regional architecture is showing promise, including on data sharing, financing for development and climate action. Regional Collaborative Platforms have started to bring value-added in bridging national and global level policy support and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Recently established regional knowledge management hubs are poised to deliver broader and deeper specialized expertise to countries. Regional Economic Commissions are increasingly engaged with the work of UN country teams, for example, in support of stronger economic analysis. All five regions have prepared regional results reports, thus contributing to enhanced transparency and accountability at the regional level. Member States also highlighted the continued need for the system's regional architecture to be cost-effective, to avoid duplication in the work of the regional collaborative platforms, for Issue-Based Coalitions to build upon existing regional initiatives, and to ensure the regional offer responds to country priorities.

There is a need to further consolidate gains made through the UN development system reform at all levels, and continue to advance critical priorities, including efficiencies and system-wide reporting, ensuring a culture shift across the UN development system to focus on impact of actions undertaken.

Member States highlighted the importance of consolidating gains at all levels. They also recognized this will require incentives to enable deeper collaboration—including in the form of adequate, flexible and predictable funding and to dismantle silos across UN development system entities, including to address cross-border challenges, such as those related to climate and environment, but also energy and food crises, and people on the move.

It was also noted that business efficiency efforts have allowed for greater allocations towards development assistance, but that further efforts were needed to deliver efficiency gains. Member States referred in that regard to the recommendations and discussions of the side event convened by the UNSDG Business Innovation Group and that provided a comprehensive briefing to Member States on efficiency initiatives and results.

Member States underscored the need for further transparency and accountability, including timely reporting to donors and programme countries at global and country levels. Some stressed the need for timely results reporting to the membership at global level and to host governments at the country level. Some pointed to the value of system-wide evaluations to help close accountability gaps, requesting a dedicated briefing on the establishment of the system-wide evaluation office. Several Member States welcomed the elaboration of a reform checklist for entities' governing bodies to track reform implementation.

Member States also highlighted the importance of the RC system results framework introduced as part of the UNSDG Chair's report on DCO, as well as the need for further consultations with Member States to finalise it.

Current trends in the funding of the UN development system are of concern, in particular in terms of decreasing levels and quality. Voluntary funding of the RC system continues to fall short of expectations, and progress on the implementation of Funding Compact commitments is uneven.

Calls for stable, predictable and sufficient funding, for the UN development system were voiced throughout the segment. In particular, the adequacy, predictability and sustainability of funding for the RC system, which this year continued to fall short, despite Member States' commitment to fully fund the system, was underscored by all.

Member States acknowledged the solid progress that the UN development system had made on several Funding Compact commitments, while noting their own challenges in meeting their commitments, mostly due to the need to address urgent crises. Indeed there was a general concern that the rise in humanitarian needs translated into a further deterioration of support to longer term development concerns, further undermining the prospect to find lasting solutions to current crises. This trend that started some 10 years ago, steeply accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, and more recently the war in Ukraine.

Global pooled funds such as the Peacebuilding Support Fund, the Joint SDG Fund and the Central Emergency Response Fund were noted as instrumental in fostering integrated, joint work and should be fully supported. Member States recognized that these efforts were counterbalanced by backward trends in terms of the level of core, flexible and predictable funding. The need for stable, predictable and sufficient funding for the RC system was also emphasized as essential. Similarly, The need to continue efforts to communicate clearly on flexible funding instruments at all levels, and to further communicate results and efficiencies achieved through pooled funding was underlined, including as an opportunity to attract further funding for these instruments.

The way forward

The 2022 Operational Activities for Development Segment confirmed Member States' commitment to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals, highlighted the progress achieved towards that end with the benefit of the reform of the UN development system and the new Resident Coordinator system. It also provided some important recommendations on how to accelerate action towards that end.

Member States recognized the impressive trajectory of the reform process since 2018, as made evident in particular through the concerted and swift UN response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, these gains need to be further consolidated, with urgency, to keep the promise of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. This will necessitate full alignment of all UN development system entities with reform efforts, consistent and coherent messaging, from individual UNDS entities' corporate level to their staff at the global, regional and country level. There was also a call for strengthened, dedicated attention from Governing Bodies on their respective entity's alignment with the SDGs and reform efforts.

Member States also indicated that the UN development system can go further to assist countries in overcoming complex development challenges. Based on the positive experiences in 2021 with the United Nations Food Systems Summit and the High-level Dialogue on Energy, UN entities must

expand the adoption of a system's approach that recognizes the complex interrelationships and interdependencies of development challenges. Concerted efforts will be needed to continue to embed the change in culture and mindsets to deliver on that objective. In countries, resident coordinators have a crucial role to play in guiding integrated, whole-of-system approaches to address such major challenges as the financial, climate, and food crises.

Member States reaffirmed the importance of bolstering partnerships to realize the Sustainable Development Goals, including with international financial institutions and multilateral development bank. An overwhelming majority acknowledged that our collective success in rescuing the Sustainable Development Goals hinged heavily on the provision of adequate, flexible and predictable funding to the UN development system.