

ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment 2022

Session 4:

Regional Repositioning: Role of regional leadership in supporting countries
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Intervention by

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[via videoconference link]

Madame Vice-Chair,
Excellencies,
Deputy Secretary-General,
Mr. Moderator,

I am very pleased to have the opportunity today to address the Economic and Social Council and to highlight some of the progress we have achieved in the Europe and Central Asia region in taking forward the regional repositioning of the UN Development System.

The regional piece of the reform has encouraged us to review, streamline and improve the way we collaborate as UN system in the region. In this effort, it has been a key priority to strengthen the policy, substantive, technical and operational support the UN regional offices and entities are providing collectively to the country level. We have worked to ensure that this support responds to the needs and demands of Resident Coordinators, UN Country Teams and, eventually, the governments they serve. We have succeeded to do so in a challenging COVID-19 context for most of the past two years and in the face of the ongoing war in Ukraine that leads to suffering and disruptions on many levels.

In Europe and Central Asia, the main vehicles of support at the regional level have been the Issue-based Coalitions, or IBCs - groups of several UN entities that offer joint support, expertise, knowledge, analysis and advocacy on complex, multi-sectoral issues, such as health, gender equality, youth, social protection, large movements of people, sustainable food systems, data, environment and climate change, and digitalisation. The IBCs have been comprehensively reviewed in response to regional UNDS reform and have sharpened their focus to provide well-targeted support to the country level.

Allow me to highlight two particular areas in which Resident Coordinators and UNCTs from our 17 programme countries have been asking the regional level for support: environment and climate change, and digitalisation.

UNECE's latest assessment of SDG progress in the region highlights that progress towards climate and environmental targets is insufficient.

Against this background and to meet country-level needs, the regional IBC on Environment and Climate Change, comprising almost 20 UN entities and co-led by UN Environment, UNESCO and UNECE, has focused its support to UN Country Teams on technical assistance and trainings, policy advice and advocacy on sustainable recovery after the COVID pandemic and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

For instance, the IBC developed and launched a guidance note on mainstreaming environment and climate change in the UNSDCF processes, which has since been used in the development of Common Country Assessments, for example in Kyrgyzstan. The IBC also addressed several priority issues identified by UNCTs, including air pollution; integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation; and transboundary water cooperation. This type of technical support provided RCs and UNCTs with data, tools and policy recommendations on how to assist member States in improving environmental management.

Moreover, as policy advice, the IBC developed a [compendium of measures](#) for green post-pandemic recovery, which equips RCs and UNCTs with concrete options for "greening" recovery plans.

Turning to the second example, digitalisation also remains a key accelerator of SDG progress. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) allow for the delivery of quality services in many fields, from education to health care, finance, commerce, governance, agriculture and others.

The regional Digital Transformation Group for Europe and Central Asia, an interagency group of also almost 20 members, co-led by ITU and UNECE, has implemented a number of flagship initiatives supporting digital transformation in the region, providing policy guidance to UNCTs and resulting in a number of knowledge products, for example on connectivity in education.

The group has also provided technical advice and capacity-building support through [Data Protection Executive Trainings](#) addressed to RCs, RC Offices and UNCT members in Albania, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

Madame Vice-Chair, Excellencies,

These brief examples show that concrete and impactful support can be provided by the UN system at the regional level across countries in key areas of structural transformation. Under the leadership of the RCP Chair, the Deputy Secretary-General, and together with my Co-Vice-Chair, the UNDP Regional Director, we will continue to improve the match between regional support offers and the needs and demands at the country level.

I look forward to hearing the views of Member States in this regard as well as the experiences from the other regions.

Thank you for your attention.
