

Remarks by Ms. Shanchita Haque, Minister, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN in
New York at the OAS on the Regional Dimensions
22 May 2020

My deep appreciation goes to all the panelists.

My delegation emphasizes the importance of the regional architecture of the UNDS in carrying out the mandates of the UN.

Also, I want to take the opportunity to thank ESCAP for their work in the Asia Pacific region during the pandemic.

My delegation thanks SG for covering Regional structures in a detailed manner in his Report particularly for giving us details on Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs), Knowledge Management Hubs, SDG Gateway, Annual reports on UN system-wide results at the regional level of 2030 Agenda, and Development of regional business operations strategies. While we support these initiatives, we want to be assured that these will not cut the cost of the existing works of the Regional Economic Commissions (RECs). Our question is: Will these initiatives entail additional cost? Or, the cost of these initiatives will be met from the existing resources?

We hope that the original mandates of the RECs will be preserved, and they would enjoy autonomy required to pursue their priorities and plans in consultation with the national governments. Any arrangement undertaken should not compromise the prerogative of the Governments to communicate directly with the regional entities. We understand that the RCPs' substantive work will be guided by the Issue-based coalitions (IBCs) and the priority issues for the IBCs will be identified by the RECs and regional UNSDG, on the region-by-region basis.

My delegation would like to ask: Is there any mechanism for the Member states to participate in RCPs? How are we going to be informed about its work?

My last point is related to the pandemic: While responding to COVID crisis, what are the challenges the RECs are facing that require to be addressed for better response to such crisis in future? We want to reaffirm that while responding to COVID situation and executing the recovery plans, the pre-existing vulnerabilities of the countries, particularly of the LDCs, LLDcs, and SIDS are not overlooked.

Thank you.

The regional work of the UN needs to be more coherent and efficient by fostering better coordination, communication and collaboration, as mentioned by you. I want to thank you for briefing us on efforts made to implement the Secretary-General's transformational package for revamping the regional architecture.

I hope that the new generation of UN country teams will dovetail RECs to better leverage regional assets and expertise in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the country level.

A unified mechanism in each region will foster better coordination on sustainable development across the UN entities operating at the regional level. From that perspective, Regional Collaborative Platform (RCPs), is expected to provide better regional and country collaboration by adopting a consolidated yet tailored approach to each region. I am happy to see the core functions of the RCPs. However, we hope that it would not make them lose sight of the regional and country priorities.

Engaging with the multiple actors of the regional architecture namely, RECs, regional teams of UN Sustainable Development Group, the UN country team and the Resident Coordinator is difficult for many of the developing countries when there are also multiple implementation Ministries on the side of national governments. A single, dedicated interface with national

governments would perhaps address this development coordination challenge and here some role of the RCPs could be envisaged.

While launching transparent and results-based management at regional level is definitely crucial, introducing too many initiatives may make the regional architecture too loaded. I hope that RECs would remain mindful about it.

We are of the view that the centralised function through Development Coordination Office (DCO) will streamline reporting lines and reduce coordination costs across various UN agencies. However, the original mandates of the RECs need to be preserved, and they should enjoy autonomy required to pursue their priorities and plans in consultation with the national governments.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that it is fundamental to ensure national ownership and leadership in the operations of the revamped regional architecture. Any arrangement undertaken should not compromise the prerogative of the Governments to communicate directly with the regional entities.

Thank you.