

Delivered by Natalie Cohen, Counsellor, Australian Mission to the UN
(4 minute limit on group statements)

Secretary-General, Excellencies

Thank you for this morning's presentations. I am taking the floor on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Secretary-General, CANZ commends you and your team on the progress made in implementing the UN Development System reforms. The last two years have seen tremendous change in the structure and operations of UN development activities, and we have seen better coordination and accountability in the field.

These reforms are more important now, than ever. The global COVID-19 crisis underscores the imperative for an effective and well-coordinated UN, that can step up in support of countries during a complex crisis. The daunting financial needs we face highlight the importance of running efficient and streamlined operations to maximise funds available for assistance.

Never has it been more important for the UN to demonstrate its ability to adapt to a rapidly changing context and deliver the highest quality analysis and programs. Implementation of the UNDS reform has demonstrated its worth through the close coordination that we see between WHO, OCHA, UNDCO and UNDP in leading the three streams of the UN response, and in the UN's coordination with other multilateral partners, including the IFIs, in responding to countries' needs.

This progress is also reflected in the series of reports presented to the Operational Activities Segment, and we thank your team for their work to prepare this information.

We acknowledge the gains made in rolling out the new generation of country teams, identifying efficiency savings for business practices, and the establishment of the UN Development Coordination Office.

CANZ countries encourage you to build on this momentum, and ensure all of the elements are taken forward to:

1. Further enhance the leadership of the Resident Coordinators, secure buy-in to country-level cooperation frameworks and ensure UN-wide policies are reflected in clear guidance from HQ to the country level;
2. Ensure the needs, and the potential, of women and girls, and people with disabilities, are at the forefront of all COVID-19 response measures, and that the promotion and protection of human rights is central to the UN's country-level work;
3. Urgently expand the donor base for contributions to the funding of the RC system; and
4. Implement as a priority the recommendations of the multi-country office review.

We stand ready to work in partnership with you to respond to the enormous challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, I'd like to pose a question:

- Given the increased vulnerability to COVID-19 of people and communities in conflict-affected countries, we would welcome your reflections on how the sustaining peace and conflict prevention agenda is being taken into account in the humanitarian and development response.

Thank you.