

Talking points OAS Session 'Building a stronger UN Development System for Delivering on the 2030 Agenda'

ECOSOC Chamber, 28 February, 10:45 – 13:00

Introduction

When we adopted the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015 we all knew that this was an ambitious agenda, but we also knew we had the political will and universal commitment to achieve it.

Because of its ambition and because of the scale and complexity of the problems we are addressing, nobody expected instant results. But we do expect to see clear lines of progress.

We could consider 2015 as the year of adoption; 2016 as the year of planning and, moving forward, 2017 *must* be the year marking the kick-start of implementation, where we see real progress each year from now until 2030.

SDG progress 'health check'

Building on the 2030 Agenda, we negotiated the latest QCPR with the aim of mainstreaming the SDGs in the work of the UN Development System. In line with the 2030 Agenda, the QCPR emphasises the primary role of national governments in driving national implementation. To ensure the QCPR's success, it is important that the UNDS must respond and adapt to effectively support implementation efforts to meet new challenges, including addressing emerging nexus issues, and to align development funding and efforts so that we leave no one behind.

The QCPR already lays out many of the actions that we need to take to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Now it should be implemented. In particular:

- (1) By enhancing the inter-agency approach within the UNDS at country level,
- (2) By identifying and implementing improvements to the Resident Coordinator System.
- (3) And by enhancing gender mainstreaming, including through gender-responsive strategic planning and the use of sex-disaggregated data

The turn of the year also saw the installation of new leadership in the UN. We applaud the work of former Secretary General Ban ki-Moon and Deputy Secretary General Jan Eliasson. It was a privilege to work with both of them. What we are discussing today is a proud part of their very fine legacy.

At the same time, we are very confident that the management of the next phase of the Agenda is in good hands and I welcome the renewed and continued contributions of DSG Amina Mohammed and her team. They can be assured of our support in taking bold steps to ensure that the UN Development System is energised, organised and motivated to best guarantee the achievement of the SDGs.

The Delivering as One Approach and gender mainstreaming through the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) and the Gender Scorecard all provide good examples of how UNDS entities and activities can be aligned to the 2030 Agenda. But we need more of this. We need smart use of the resources that are available to us to respond to the massive challenge that is before us. One particular area that needs addressing is to ensure that the

human rights-based approach that is woven into the 2030 Agenda finds its way into the mainstream of operations and the management of the UNDS.

Aligning the UN Development System

Let's not kid ourselves --The UNDS is a complex system with sometimes competing demands and interests. The Agenda is however clear, and it is our job, nationally, regionally and globally to align our effort and our resources with the Agenda and deliver as effectively as we can. In doing so, we need to constantly remind ourselves that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs should be given prime importance; the SDGs should not be made to fit our approach either nationally or in the UNDS, instead the approach of all institutions and programmes must be refocused, recalibrated and if necessary redesigned to fit the SDGs.

In this regard, Ireland looks forward to working with Australia and Argentina as they lead the consultations aimed to enhance synergies and coherence, and reduce overlap in the agendas of the General Assembly, ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, as well as the HLPF and related fora. We hope that these consultations produce sensible, robust recommendations that will facilitate reform and realignment and that they ensure we have a logical agenda that is appropriate for the SDGs. This may mean that existing agenda items need to be approached differently so that they remain relevant and continue to address substantive sustainable development issues. This is not something we need to fear but should be seen as a progressive step that recognises that we are facing up to today's problems in a clear-eyed fashion.

We know and recognise that it is us, as member states, who hold primary responsibility for our own economic and social development; the UNDS can help but cannot be a substitute. Whilst the UNDS must play a role in supporting countries in mainstreaming the SDGs into national sustainable development plans and in providing programmatic expertise, it is also the role of countries themselves to create policies that effectively translate the sustainable development policies contained within the 2030 Agenda into concrete action at the national level. A strong HLPF also has a role to play in forming new partnerships that will enhance the success of sustainable development policies at all levels.

Nexus Issues

The increasing number of "nexus issues" being identified, including the humanitarian-development nexus and the migration-development nexus is indicative of how the SDGs are not discrete actions, but a continuum of indivisible and mutually-reinforcing goals and actions.

With three OCHA Level Three emergencies, and numerous other humanitarian situations there is an overwhelming demand for humanitarian assistance. It is critical that these crises are responded to in a manner that maximises development opportunities. Humanitarian need should not divert attention, efforts or funding away from sustainable development activities. Promoting collaboration and coherence between the UNDS and humanitarian agencies will help guide strategic decision-making that will support effective action within the humanitarian-development nexus.

Conclusion

Achieving the SDGs will require collaborative, coordinated and effective action at all levels. Already the QCPR outlines many key actions to implement the 2030 Agenda. However, there is more that we can do to build a stronger UNDS for delivering on the 2030 Agenda including:

- Strengthening the HLPF to support the formation of new partnerships;

- ensuring that operational activities have a human rights based approach;
- improving coordination through a positive inter-agency approach to best identify and address nexus issues;
- and aligning the UNDS to the SDGs so that we have a logical UN agenda that is appropriate for the SDGs and today's sustainable development challenges.

Eighteen months ago, we all agreed that no one must be left behind. Now we must fulfil our commitment and act to ensure that all people benefit from sustainable development.