



ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment

19 – 22 May and 27 May 2020

Statement by Norway

Chair,

Member States have embarked on an ambitious journey for reform of the UN development system. The reform is a complex and challenging task, and we acknowledge that it will still take some time before we can see the *effects* at country level in terms of better partner country achievements in their endeavors to implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. That was the rationale behind the two major reform resolutions of the General Assembly, the 2016 QCPPR (71/243) and the repositioning resolution of 2018 (72/279).

The expectation is that UN country teams will assist countries in a more coherent, integrated, efficient, and effective manner, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. The most valuable items that the UN brings on the journey are its roles as custodian of the values of the Charter and provider of support for implementation of international norms and standards. The major offer of the UN at country level should thus be capacity development, with the aim of helping reduce poverty, inequalities, vulnerabilities, and conflict.

These perspectives are fundamental also when facing the Covid-19 pandemic. Norway appreciates the Secretary General's initiative to place human rights at the centre of the UN's response. We encourage member states to increase their financial support, including to the Covid-19 UN Response and Recovery Fund, which will assist national governments in dealing with the socio-economic effects

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of the pandemic and building back better. The 2030 Agenda and the agreed country-specific Cooperation Frameworks must be the roadmaps.

Norway has noted with appreciation the progress in implementing the reforms. Among the areas that need a further push, we would like to underline the following:

First, the reporting shows that more needs to be done to ensure the authority and leadership of the Resident Coordinator. This is also a question of cultural and organizational change. UN leaders at all levels, and in all parts of the system, must be held accountable.

Second, the Resident Coordinator system must be fully funded. We would welcome a better burden-sharing among Member States. We assume that more transparency and accountability in the management of the Special Purpose Trust Fund would be helpful in that regard. We would like to see a forward-looking results-based and costed plan, which could also form the basis for systematic reporting on progress and bottlenecks.

Third, deep-rooted reform requires the funding of the UN development system to become more flexible and predictable. We are pleased to see some small positive signs in 2018. We trust that the Funding Compact will contribute to further improvements. We note that the Monitoring Framework shows that progress on the part of UNSDG commitments are uneven.

Fourth, gender equality and women's empowerment must remain at the center of the UN's work. We appreciate the progress made but would urge for full implementation of the UN system-wide plan (SWAP 2).

Fifth, we look forward to more information and updated ambitions when it comes to efficiencies and potential savings from increased use of common services and common premises.

Sixth, cooperation at country level across peacebuilding, development and humanitarian assistance must be strengthened, in line with the call for a "whole of system" approach in the 2016 QCPR.

Chair,

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Regarding outstanding reform mandates, we support a short and concise ECOSOC resolution covering the Multi Country Office Review and the Regional Review, as expressed by the Group of G77 and China.

Norway agrees that Small Island Developing States need more and better-tailored support from the UN to implement the 2030 Agenda and the Samoa Pathway. We support the Secretary General's recommendation to strengthen Multi Country Offices, and to cover the enhanced coordination functions through the Special Purpose Trust Fund.

Regarding the regional review, we are in favour of improving collaboration and coordination and enhancing concerted UN engagement to tackle cross-border challenges. We would have appreciated more detailed information on the proposals, and hope that the forthcoming Management and Accountability Framework for the regional level will be helpful in that regard. In the longer run, we are hopeful that increased collaboration will lead to rationalization and efficiency gains. We welcome the confirmation that the Regional Collaboration Platforms will not have any oversight function over the Resident Coordinators and the Country Teams.

On the recommendation to establish an evaluation unit under the Secretary General, we need to know how the independence of the unit will be safeguarded as well as information on its planned capacity and funding. The division of responsibilities between this unit and other UN entities with an evaluation mandate also needs to be spelled out.

Chair,

Looking ahead towards the upcoming QCPR negotiations, member states need to look into the broad range of provisions in the 2016 QCPR and the 2018 resolution. We believe that consolidation is a key word when moving forward.

Thank you.

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