

ECOSOC 2020 Operational Activities for Development Segment – Session 5
Inger Andersen statement (as delivered)

Thank you for hosting this panel and very interesting discussion. On our side, to begin with on the UN reform, we are a small agency with a vast agenda. The planet is our bit in terms of planetary stability and environmental stability. We are not and have never meant to be an operational agency with masses of people and masses of country offices. We do have some country offices but not nearly as many as some of our good colleagues. What we have is deep science understanding of planetary forces, ecosystems, economy and environment green opportunities, chemicals, etc. The spirit of the UN reform, in a sense, has enabled us to become much bigger because we can now work through a platform that is enabled by the Secretary-General. We can work through and with our agencies' friends that have that bigger reach, that have that bigger scope and that have boots on the ground. And so, whether it is with the economic regional commissions where we have close collaboration, whether it is with UNDP, whether it is with FAO or with WHO, each of this land itself very well to the collaboration on environmental matters, planetary health if you like, human health and human well-being..

The Resident Coordinator system has enabled us to - because we do not have universal country presence nor we are expected to have universal country presence and that is not how we are set up - through our other set up, with our regional offices and some country offices in big operational settings, to use through the RC system an infused environmental understanding. This is augmented by our regional directors who have been very proactive in reaching out to their RCs. One of the most successful meetings that we had was hosted in Nairobi. We hosted all of Africa's Resident Coordinators, we only missed 14 out of 53. They all came to Nairobi, they spent a week with us, and we put them through the environmental 101 and 201 and 301 for them to get and to understand the environmental drivers of poverty, the environmental push and pull opportunities, environmental opportunities in terms of green investments. This was really helpful and is something we continue to work on.

Ambassador, in response to your question on COVID, obviously the UNDP Administrator has highlighted it and we will hear from WHO as well, that the first response is clearly the medical and the children response, women response, the human response. At UNEP we understand that, but we had to find and come up with a response, we call it three plus one. Three building blocks plus a fourth building block.

- The first building block deals with the UNEP space in this emergency. Our space is we have the mandate to deal with waste, chemicals, etc. In this crisis, waste flows and chemicals flows have accelerated. So, helping countries dealing with safe-incineration and safe-management, obviously WHO deals with the medical waste but there is much more that has gone into this. We are the host of three conventions, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm that deal with waste management so there is a lot there going on.
- The second block deals with the fact that this disease is a zoonotic disease. A long time ago, more than 15 years ago, WHO, FAO and ourselves came out with a work that spoke to the imperative of managing nature and not allowing for zoonosis to slip away as expeditiously as they now do, with pathogens transfer, into the human population obviously opened through an intermediary species. So, we need to understand what is it that making this happens. Clearly it is the constant push that we have been adding

on nature. It is illegal trade on nature. It is the fragmentation of nature. It is people encroaching into the natural habitat. We are seeing that 75% of new infectious diseases are zoonotic in nature. This is not normal and this as we have seen incidences on zoonosis at rapidly increasing space. SARS, H1N1, Ebola, HIV, Zika and so on, each of these comes from the animal world and into ours. So, the second building block is this. Mexico in fact you were the Presidency of COP 13 of the Biodiversity Convention in which you put a significant emphasis on this during your Presidency and we are now heading to the COP 15 where hopefully we will get a significant new ambitious agreement.

- The third, build back better, through a green economy. We have a long history of working on helping countries, helping the private sector to move into a nature positive environment and positive investment setting. UNEP is committed to supporting countries in recovering from COVID-19 by placing green stimulus packages, fiscal policy and a just transition at the core of its offerings.
- The plus one is environmental governance. We are the host to 15 multilateral conventions which have several meetings each year of their subsidiary bodies and technical workshops. Now, we need to think about how we get much smarter at multilateralism and here today we are sitting in ECOSOC virtually and we are having a very productive meeting. What would it take to take multilateralism 2.0 ? And so, we are engaging in looking at this and thinking what tweaks will need to happen to be more agile, less footprint and just if not more efficient. This is how we are seeking to respond to COVID.

And finally, just to say as you asked about what you may choose to be reflected in the meeting's headlines. From our side, the issue around the one health agenda is the one we preached to from FAO perspective, from WHO perspective and from an environment perspective. is only really now that I think the people understand planetary health, animal health and human health are one health and we need to not deal with it in a segmented manner. We must address it comprehensively, and that means ambitious goals for nature, that means ambitious goals for animal health, domesticated animal health and that means enforcement of the agreements already in place, it obviously means the human health element. So, with that Ambassador let me stop and thank you very much.