

**Statement by H. E. Ms. Kira Danganan-Azucena,  
Vice-President for the Operational Activities for Development Segment, ECOSOC  
Thursday, 23 May 2019**

Excellencies,  
Madam Deputy Secretary-General,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have arrived at the closing of this year's Operational Activities for Development Segment.

These past three days have been very productive. As the Deputy Secretary-General has said, it is clear that the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment is fulfilling its purpose, laid out in resolution 72/305, as a monitoring and accountability platform for the operational activities for development and the United Nations Development System.

At the outset, the Secretary-General highlighted that this reform is a complex, fast moving and far-reaching process, and that the system is starting to come on board with the various repositioning elements.

He shared his objectives, his sense of urgency, and his request to work together. The political will demonstrated by Member States adoption of the 2030 Agenda and more recently the repositioning resolution, shows that that we can rise to this historic opportunity.

The Secretary-General also requested Member States to endorse the proposed way forward in four specific areas, specifically on multi-country offices, on revamping regional assets, the funding compact, and finally on the system-wide strategic document.

We have heard important feedback on the direction of the repositioning of the system and QPCR mandates.

Excellencies,

The Resident Coordinators have candidly shared how change is taking root on the ground. They gave a frank assessment of the challenges they are facing, and where they need further support. This includes changes in the funding architecture, incentives on the ground, internal communications, two-way information sharing between the RCs and host Governments and a clearer definition of the RCs' role in relation to regional actors.

All RCs saw their role as being a facilitator and enabler. They pointed to the critical importance of leveraging innovation and partnerships in middle income countries, and the need to do more to harness the power of the private sector to bring-in the expertise that the UNCT does not have. The triple-hatted RCs in Mali and Lebanon highlighted both successes and challenges in improving synchronization of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding activities, in a world increasingly characterised by protracted crisis.

We discussed the interface and engagement of the RCs – at both local and national levels, at regional level, and at global fora such as ECOSOC.

This morning we heard how the Executive Heads are updating policies and guidance to align the entity they lead with the various strands of the reform, and how they engage in the UNSDG's work on new instruments and ways of working together. On efforts to produce a System-

wide Strategic Document, it is clear that the development system is finding this a challenge. Member States are of the view that the current draft needs more work to be brought in line with the mandate. The Executive Heads stressed that the approach to entities' mandates or comparative advantages should not and cannot be oversimplified, especially in view of the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda.

Allow me to highlight some other key take-away messages:

*First*, Member States require a strong evidence and information base and continuous intensive consultations to take informed decisions related to several elements of the repositioning.

*Second*, Member States appreciate the smooth the transition to the new RC system. This was a complex process that was not just about the delinking of the RC from UNDP but also to install a stronger leadership at the country level. It was also emphasized that successful implementation of the new RC system requires a culture/mindset change of the UNDS entities on the ground to work together as a coordinated and coherent UNCT. Significant progress has been made in just a few months.

*Third*, actions agreed must be rolled out within existing resources. Efficiency gains need to be realized in the medium- term to avoid the risk of losing credibility – and without incurring additional cost.

*Fourth*, the regional review was recognized as a very complex exercise which may take some time to unfold. Member States were clear they expect a regional response from the UN development system that is more than the sum of parallel processes. The recommendations in the Secretary-General's report were considered initial steps in a process that remains to be determined, region-by-region, in close consultation with Member States. Questions were raised on the functions and functioning of the Regional Collaboration Platforms, who should serve as its Secretariat, and how the two pillars of policy and operations were being envisaged in a manner that does not reproduce the two previous coordination mechanism. Clarity is needed on the next step and in this regard, the proposal of a technical track discussion was put forward as an option.

*Fifth*, there is a broad consensus on the need to strengthen how the UN development system supports small states and SIDS covered under Multi-Country Offices. Member States have raised significant questions about both, the process and the outcome of the MCO review. Clearly, options that better meet the needs of small states in general, and the Caribbean in particular, must still be discussed, in a transparent and consultative process. One request that the discussion of multi-country offices continue to be on the programme of the Operational Activities Segment will be transmitted to the ECOSOC Bureau.

*Sixth*, the current funding architecture does not lend itself to collective outcomes nor to incentivize joint efforts, including on the reform process. There is a need for more resources to be allocated to pooled or joint funds; and where funding is for an entity-specific activity, the activity should be directly part of the UNDAF. It is hoped that the Funding Compact can move us forward towards less earmarked and more predictable funding.

*Seventh*, you stressed the complementarity of the roles and responsibilities the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the governing bodies of the UN development system and the need to further strengthen them so that they can fully fulfil their mandates. The ongoing reform measures will likely bring their own coordination and governance challenges at intergovernmental and interagency levels, therefore needing a close watch and, possibly, corrective measures.

*Finally*, a common thread throughout our discussions has been results on the ground for programme countries. It was in this context that the importance, prominence and enhancement of partnerships, at all levels, was stressed critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda, and to leaving no one behind.

Excellencies,  
Madam Deputy Secretary-General,  
Dear colleagues,

The enthusiasm that has characterized your deliberations over the past three days demonstrates the importance you attach to the successful implementation of the resolutions on the QCPR and on the repositioning of the UN development system. Your deliberations will inform the continued efforts as we move forward on the ambitious undertakings aimed at making the System better equipped to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

There will be further opportunities for Member States to pronounce on all of these issues, either through further consultations, the upcoming ECOSOC resolution recently tabled by the G77 and China, or in the General Assembly through the 2020 QCPR.

Overall, the discussions throughout the three days were extremely rich and will help us launch the process ultimately leading to the next QCPR cycle next year. You will be provided a detailed summary of the Chair in the coming weeks.

We are also most grateful to all the moderators and panellists who helped focus the deliberation. Your contribution was invaluable.

We are very grateful for the strong commitment of the Secretary-General, and Deputy Secretary-General, and their teams to the strengthening of the UN development system in response to the ambitious mandates we agreed upon together.

With these few words, I wish you all a safe journey back home and for those of us based here in New York, we can look forward to a happy long weekend.

I thank you.