



**The President  
of the  
Economic and Social Council**

24 July 2019

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to transmit herewith the summary of the ECOSOC Segment on Operational Activities for Development by the Vice President of ECOSOC, H.E. Ms. Kira Danganan-Azucena.

The summary captures the discussions over the course of the Council's Segment and I trust will serve as an important input for upcoming discussions in the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, and in the context of the consultations on the 2020 QCPR next year.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Inga Rhonda King  
President of ECOSOC

All Member States and Permanent Observers  
of the United Nations

## 2019 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment

### Summary by the Vice President of ECOSOC H.E. Ms. Kira Danganan-Azucena, Vice President of ECOSOC, Charge d'affaires, of the Philippines to the United Nations

The 2019 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment was held in New York, from 21 May to 23 May 2019, with the theme of “**Repositioning the United Nations development system to best support the 2030 Agenda: Acting on our common vision**”. The segment took place nearly three years since the adoption by the General Assembly of the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of UN system operational activities of the UN system (QCPR) and a year after the adoption of the 2018 General Assembly resolution on repositioning the UN development system.

The Segment provided the platform for Member States and other actors to take stock of progress, deliberate on the implementation of the mandates and consider further guidance that may be needed, in particular on key elements of the UNDS repositioning to best support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. High-level representatives of Government, senior UN officials from the field, regional and global levels, as well as other experts and stakeholders participated in the meeting (see [programme](#)).

The discussions were informed by the report of the Secretary-General on the *Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system* [A/74/73-E/2019/14](#) and its addenda on the [Funding Compact](#), the [analysis of funding trends](#) in the UN development system and the [monitoring and reporting framework](#) for the QCPR. The segment also considered the first [report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group \(UNSDG\)](#) on the operational, administrative and financing aspects of the activities of the Development Coordination Office (DCO).

### Opening Session

At the opening of the Segment, **the President of ECOSOC, H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King** recognized the high level of interest of senior representatives of government and the UN system and the shared commitment to the repositioning of the UN development system. She highlighted the added significance of the meeting as the first ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment since resolution 72/305 on strengthening the Council, in which Member States mandated the Segment to serve as an accountability platform for system-wide performance and results and provide guidance to and overall coordination of the United Nations development system.

*“We will for the first time, formally review and deliberate on the implementation of the mandates from the resolution on the repositioning of the UN development system... We will do this bearing in mind the critical role of ECOSOC as the platform for Member States to review and ensure oversight and accountability of the UN development system.”*

*H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King  
President of ECOSOC*



*“ECOSOC is a platform to ensure accountability for, and acceleration of, system-wide performance and results in relation to the 2030 Agenda and provide guidance to and overall coordination of the United Nations Development System. This function of ECOSOC is critical to shaping the future of the UN development system... It is a fundamental Charter mandate that we should treasure and continue to refine and strengthen.”*

*H.E. Ms. Kira Danganan-Azucena  
Vice-President ECOSOC*



**ECOSOC Vice-President and Chair of the Operational Activities segment, H.E. Ms. Kira Danganan-Azucena**, shared that the programme was specifically designed to foster an open and genuine dialogue between Member States on progress with key aspects of the repositioning UN development system and the QCPR mandates. The sessions were built around sets of questions that would enable in-depth a review and discussion of both successes and challenges, thus continuing to build towards common understanding. She encouraged the membership, the Secretariat and the UN development system to continue the conversation so that ECOSOC can truly fulfil its oversight and guidance functions and foster organic adjustments and reforms of the UN development system.

In his keynote address, **UN Secretary-General António Guterres** shared that the UN development system is well on its way in the journey, and had already pivoted towards a new era, with sustainable development as its DNA.

A new generation of UN Country Teams, more integrated, responsive and accountable as they respond to national priorities and needs is being progressively put in place. Those UN Country Teams form a more effective, cohesive and accountable support by the system to the 2030 Agenda, and are guided by updated instruments and platforms. These include a revamped UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (CF), recast as the most important instrument for the planning and implementation of UN operational activities for development in programme countries, to be prepared and finalized in full consultation and agreement with Government, It also includes a Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) that clarifies the new relationships between the Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Team. The new UN Development Coordination Office was also launched on January 1<sup>st</sup> to support the Resident Coordinator system and the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG). Work is under way to strengthen independent system-wide evaluation, in consultation with the Joint Inspection Unit and evaluation offices of UNDS entities. The recently agreed Funding Compact is expected to further strengthen the system's transparency and accountability, and facilitate a shift away from funding practices that foster competition and fragment action.

*“We are also losing the race against climate change. We need to fill the financing gap, drawing on all available sources, public and private, so countries can make focused investments to reach the goals.*

*No one country or institution can tackle these challenges alone. We must work together. For our part, we need a more cohesive, integrated and accountable UN development system to help countries accelerate action and achieve the transformative change our world requires.”*

*H.E. Mr. António Guterres  
Secretary-General  
United Nations*



The reviews of UN regional assets and multi-country office arrangements have started, and the UN system is now working to ensure that every country receives optimal support to achieve results and

to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Important mechanisms are being put in place to enable UN Country Teams to progressively move towards common back-offices and common premises. Methodologies are being developed to track and report on efficiencies across the system, .

The Secretary-General requested Member States to endorse the proposed way forward in four specific areas, namely: improving multi-country offices in consultation with all countries concerned; revamping the UN regional assets through an open and consultative UN system region-by-region change management process; endorsement of the Funding Compact; and the finalization of the system-wide strategic document on the basis of feedback from Member States.

The discussant for the interactive opening, **H.E. Ms. Fatoumata Kaba, Permanent Representative of Guinea to the United Nations**, stressed the need for Member States to coherently and firmly commit to the repositioning of the UN development system, irrespective of whether they are from the North or the South. She emphasized that the United Nations would need leaders at headquarters who can join forces around common goals and priorities, galvanize partnerships and national ownership. Using the example of the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, she illustrated how a unified United Nations development system could be of critical support in crisis contexts. She also underscored that the development system requires a new generation of responses which can respond to the new development agenda and to the promise of leaving no one behind.

*“The repositioning of the UN development system should also facilitate the provision of integrated policy advice and whole-of-system approaches. This applies in particular to the ongoing strengthening of the prerogatives of the resident coordinators.”*

Mr. Liu Zhenmin,  
Under Secretary-General  
Department of Economic  
and Social Affairs  
United Nations



The Under Secretary-General of UN DESA, **Mr. Liu Zhenmin**, briefed Member States on some of the findings resulting from the evidence collected in the past year, as captured in the [QCPR monitoring and reporting framework](#). The system was able to respond to a vastly increasing number of country requests for support on the SDGs with those on specific Goals quadrupling over the past year. At the same time, Resident Coordinators report that in only 13 per cent of cases, this advice could be described as being “integrated”. The development of guidance is already under way within the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) on how and when the system should come together to provide an integrated policy support package.

Solid advances are made on gender equality, spurred by the new system-wide action plan, with most entities having met or exceeded a large number of SWAP minimum standards, and three-quarters of UNDS entities are implementing a common or joint approach on data and statistics. The data also shows that few entities’ Strategic Plans include a systematic approach to develop national capacities, in large part due to lack of sustained, predictable longer-term funding support for such initiatives.

The Under Secretary-General also provided a few highlights of DESA’s comprehensive [analysis of the funding](#) of UN operational activities for development, which reached \$33.6 billion in 2017 -- an increase of nearly 13 per cent over 2016. At the same time, with core resources increasing by 3 per cent and non-core funding by 15 per cent, this resulted in the core share dropping below 21 per cent – the lowest ever. Factors contributing to this long-term decline include humanitarian activities constituting an increasing proportion of the system’s overall operational activities, and the rapid growth of funds channeled to the system through global funds, the private sector and other multilateral organizations, almost all of which is non-core.

The first report of the UNSDG Chair on the operations, administration and finance of the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) was presented by the Director for Sustainable Development of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Ms. Michelle Gyles-McDonnough. She described the process to standup and establish an independent and empowered development coordination system to increase impact, cohesion, accountability and transparency.

She highlighted four milestones of progress: Firstly, the successful roll-out of the new Resident Coordinator (RC) system with no break in operations. This was a major milestone, but also only the beginning of a process as the selection process, talent management, and resource structures around the Resident Coordinators continue to be strengthened to live up to the expectations of Member States. An independent and rigorous assessment system for RCs, handled by a third-party will bring expertise and impartiality to the process. She also underlined that gender parity and geographic balance are key priorities. Secondly, the advancements in strengthening Resident Coordinator Offices. By the end of the year, it is projected that two thirds of RC office staff will be national and one third international. Thirdly, recruitment of the Development Coordination Office continues unabated, with a total of almost 100 HQ and regional posts advertised with an eye on continuing to improve the geographic balance -- currently: 57% from the north; 43% from the south. She stated that 87% of the total budget for the new Resident Coordinator system is dedicated to country coordination. To support this, one-third of all DCO positions are allocated to the newly created regional desks, located in Addis Ababa, Amman, Istanbul, Bangkok and Panama City. Finally, she underlined that no effort is being spared to ensure an adequate and sustainable funding base for the new RC system. Of the total \$77.5 million expected, \$75 million has already been transferred to the Special Purpose Trust Fund. DCO started collecting the 1 per cent coordination levy on 1 May. To ensure full transparency and accountability, a web-based portal has been set up and went live in February 2019 with real-time information on all funds allocated to the RC system.

## Summary of discussions and key messages

***The repositioning of the UN development system and its leadership by the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General continued to enjoy the strong support of the membership of the United Nations.***

Member States expressed their appreciation for the strong commitment of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and their teams to respond to the ambitious mandates set in the twin resolutions 71/243 and 72/279. The thorough and inclusive consultations with Member States on the reform's implementation was highlighted as a best practice.

***Member States noted in particular the smooth and efficient transition to the new Resident Coordinator system towards putting in place stronger dedicated leadership at country level. Recognizing that it is too early to assess the effectiveness of new Resident Coordinator system and the new generation of UN Country Teams, they underscored, moving forward, the need for deep change in the organizational culture of individual entities and the system as a whole.***

The complex process of de-linking of the Resident Coordinator system from the United Nations Development programme (UNDP) was viewed to be on track, with the Development Coordination

Office (DCO) now part of the UN Secretariat, and supporting a reconfigured UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, with the UNDP Administrator as Vice-Chair.

As Resident Coordinators reported on the beginnings of a changing dynamic at the country-level, the shared view was the Resident Coordinators' focus should be on leadership, rather than operational concerns, and that better communication and information flows are needed between and across the spectrum of RC, UN Country Team, host Government and other development actors as well as between country, regional and global levels, towards strengthening country-level support. More symbiotic interaction is also needed between the normative, analytical and operational faces of the work of the UN development system.

Resident Coordinators saw their role as being primarily that of facilitator and enabler, and highlighted the critical importance of leveraging innovation and partnerships in middle-income countries, and harnessing the power of the private sector to bring in the expertise that the UNCT does not have.

***Recognizing the limited time period since the inception the new UN Development Coordination Office (DCO), further details are needed in future UNSDG Chair's reports on DCO's operational, administrative and financing activities. The rollout of the new system must allow for adjustments based on lessons learned.***

Member States noted that it would be beneficial in future reports to get more granular information from the Development Coordination Office on its operations, administration and finance, as well as on trends related to country-level issues. With much work still ahead, the roll-out should allow for continued improvements and adjustments, based on experiences at country, regional and global levels.

In efforts to ensure an adequate funding base for the new Resident Coordinator (RC) System, cost-sharing contributions of \$75 million had been transferred to Special Purpose Trust Fund (SPTF); the collection of the 1% levy to support funding the RC system began on 1 May, and was expected to contribute between \$30-40 million by the end 2019 and \$60-\$80 million per year thereafter; and \$116 million had been raised through voluntary funding.

The RC system needs more predictable and sustainable funding. While the coordination levy will help bridge this gap, the RC system will need a broader funding base to sustain its capacities in the medium- and long-term.

***The new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF) will entail greater efforts at joint analysis, planning and implementation. Improved synchronization is needed in terms of the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding work. Strengthened transparency and accountability is also necessary in reporting to national governments.***

Coordinated processes in the UN Country Team are needed to best support national needs and priorities, and new UN processes are a key aspect of improving the support. The new United Nation Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF) is aimed at spurring a whole-of-system approach and the new Management and Accountability Framework at encouraging joint work for collective results. These guidelines will help the country teams draft a road map and gain greater

clarity on individual and joint responsibilities. A strengthened country team allows for improved transparency and accountability to the host Government, including through the annual report on results achieved.

In complex situations, the preparation of CFs can be a challenge, especially where coordination mechanisms of stakeholders are weak. Nonetheless, synchronization of development with political, humanitarian and other activities is improving, and best practices such as in Lebanon, can be drawn upon for other countries.

Going forward, a culture shift is needed to overcome the reluctance of some humanitarian and financial partners to integrate peace aspects into a nexus approach. Country teams must work on harmonizing planning instruments and systems, realigning collective support for implementing the 2030 Agenda, and strengthening joint planning. This is being actioned through a more strategic engagement with all partners through the Resident Coordinator and other relevant actors.

***A common thread throughout the segment was the critical role of UNDAF, the importance of partnerships, and the need to strengthen country-level capacity to build the kind of partnerships required by the 2030 Agenda.***

A common thread throughout the discussions was results on the ground for programme countries. It was in this context that the importance, prominence and enhancement of partnerships, at all levels, and the role of UNDAF were stressed as critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda, and to leaving no one behind.

Partnership is very much at the heart of reform. Strengthening partnerships not only helps UNDS entities in fulfilling their own mandates, but can also help other development actors achieve theirs. Enhancing partnerships is therefore critical for achieving the SDGs and leaving no one behind.

More remains to be done to better engage and harness the power of the private sector to bring-in expertise that the UNCTs do not have, in particular through the CF. Engaging with multiple actors is difficult for many developing countries when there are many implementing agencies engaged in activities at the national level. To address this, resident coordinators should have a strong role as facilitator and convener in support of Government's needs, priorities and plans.

***The longer-term reprofiling and restructuring of regional assets was recognized as a very complex exercise which may take some more time to unfold. Member States expect a regional response from the UN development system that is more than the sum of parallel processes. The options for longer-term reprofiling and restructuring the United Nations regional assets remain to be determined, region-by-region, through inclusive intergovernmental consultations.***

Getting the regional architecture right was recognized as a very complex undertaking, with regional assets spread over 145 offices across the globe, of which 54 hubs, and different levels of concentrations. The Segment discussed questions on the current structure, assets and functions of the regional development system; the specifics of the regional offer and its comparative advantage in relation to other actors; functional leadership at regional level; and the interface between country and regional levels, but also with global level.

In terms of the proposals made in the Secretary-General's report, further information was also sought on the regional-level policy and operational functions, and in particular, on the proposed Regional Collaboration Platform, its composition, functions, objectives, value-added, reporting mechanisms, how it proposes to be more than the sum of the two current regional coordination mechanisms, and how it would address the interface between the normative, policy and operational aspects of the work. Questions were raised on who its Secretariat should be. Some felt that further details on the RCPs and other regional actions are required to ensure that platforms would act as an effective convening space for regional policy leadership and do not duplicate existing mechanisms. Creating a better knowledge hub and regional analytical expertise must also be matched by greater efficiency gains and cost-effectiveness through reduced overlaps and staff upskilling.

To provide the basis for proposals for the rationalization and consolidation of the existing regional architecture to better support results at country level, some felt that more detailed and evidence-based discussions are needed that go beyond the areas highlighted by the report. The options for longer-term reprofiling and restructuring the United Nations regional assets need to be determined, region-by-region, through inclusive intergovernmental consultations.

Member States highlighted that regional dimension of reform must take into account the specifics of each regional commission, and decisions and initiatives should be considered through the corresponding governing bodies. Requests were made for a clear roadmap with timelines and projected resources, and for sharing with Member States the findings of all the reviews from which these recommendations were derived, including the visits by the DSG and the team in charge of the review, and the consultations with think tanks.

***There is need to identify options to strengthen the UN development system's support to better meet the needs of small states and small island developing states [SIDS], including further inclusive intergovernmental discussions on the configuration, capacity, resource needs, role and development services of multi-country offices.***

In response to the mandate under 71/243 and 72/279 for the Secretary-General to conduct a review of the configuration, capacity, resource needs, role and development services of multi-country offices, to improve their contribution to country progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda, a review was conducted. It was designed to deliver better solutions for countries covered by MCOs, a total of 41 of which 38 are Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The review proposed measures including delivering better through individual plans for each country, strengthening UNCT processes and leadership and accountability of Resident Coordinators in MCOs, increasing coordination resources to MCOs to reach out better to the countries they covered, and an additional MCO to be opened in the north pacific. The review also proposed a rethink of organizational arrangements for leveraging system-wide policy capacity to MCOs, strengthening the role of DESA and OHRLLS, and providing better support from the system on financing for SIDS and other MCO countries.

A number of Member States and panelists pointed to aspects of the multi-country office review process, conduct and outcomes that did not meet their expectations, including in terms of the proposed response in different regions. Member States underlined that the circumstances in each country are unique, and that the set-up and planning should take fully into account the specific needs and corresponding support of each individual country covered by an MCO. Some Member States considered the MCO review to still be an ongoing process and called for further consultations with countries covered by MCOs.



Requests were made for further detailed information and briefings on the proposals in the Secretary-General's report and the source of their funding, and whether these proposals were consulted within the system, in particular in relation to the proposed new MCO for the North Pacific. A clear timeframe with milestones, measurable target and indicators, resource implications and their source were also requested for the implementation of the proposed actions to scale up the responsiveness of multi-country offices. Clarification was also sought on the proposed role of the UN Chief Economist in helping multi-country offices through policy support and recommendations, particularly in financing for sustainable development.

SIDS served by MCOs require better support to translate regional strategies into national strategies, plans and programmes, assistance with financing their development needs and responses to climate change and humanitarian crises. Some felt that further concrete proposals are needed to address these and other specific development challenges of SIDS, and the capacities of the MCOs to support them.

Some Member States expressed regret over the late circulation of the comprehensive findings of the multi-country review, and that out of 41 countries covered by MCOs, of which 38 are SIDS, 22 are in the Caribbean but only 7 Caribbean countries were visited, and the others participated through remote consultations and the survey. In order to fully comprehend the multi-faceted challenges facing the Caribbean, it was underlined that more countries should have been visited physically, and in particular, countries that are served by an MCO located elsewhere.

Moving forward, Member States requested further inclusive consultations with all countries concerned on the multi-country office review to guide the conclusion of the review, and its implementation. The role on the Steering Committee representing the Caribbean in providing insights and strategic guidance was also emphasized, and request made for greater clarity on functions and focus on a possible outpost office in the Caribbean.

Finally, a recommendation was also made that the Operational Activities segment in future years includes a dedicated session on MCOs also providing the opportunity to interact with RCs leading MCOs to listen to their experiences on the ground.

***Actions on the UNDS repositioning must be rolled out within existing resources. Efficiency gains need to be realized in the medium- term without incurring additional cost to avoid the risk of losing credibility. Savings should be made available for programming activities.***

Some progress has been achieved on measuring efficiency gains such as through the consolidation of premises in programme countries. The common UN House is becoming a reality across countries and regions, noting that such initiatives are expected to be undertaken in close consultation with national governments. In Mali, for instance, Member States were informed that 10 entities would come together in one UN House by early July, improving efficiency and enhancing collective support to the country.

It was acknowledged that investments may be required up-front, but these investments must produce savings in the medium and longer term. Tangible results in accountability are sought at all levels, with efforts that resist using a one-size-fits-all policy and a silo approach. Measures to advance cost savings and efficiency savings may also need to be extended to the Secretariat.

More detailed reporting is needed on efficiencies, including on common back-office functions and common premises. In addition, the system-wide strategic document is expected to include an approach to increase efficiencies by reducing overlaps and duplications.

***Member States welcomed the new Funding Compact which is hoped to move the system towards less earmarked and more predictable funding. They recognized that the current funding architecture does not lend itself to incentivize joint efforts and collective outcomes, that more resources should be allocated to pooled or joint funds, and that where funding is for an entity-specific activity, this activity should be part of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.***

Several Member States highlighted that the current funding architecture does not lend itself to joint efforts and collective results, pointing to issues like the imbalance between core and non-core funding and the narrow donor base. It was recognized that the Funding Compact aims to incentivize a shift in culture and behaviour in the way the UN development system is funded by building Member States' trust in the System. Honoring the commitments of the Funding Compact is therefore a vital part of the overall repositioning effort.

Several Member States as well as panelists underscored the mutually reinforcing aspect of the commitments in the Funding Compact. It is envisioned that if United Nations entities fulfill their commitments in the Compact, such as enhancing transparency of reporting and strengthening its accountability for results, it would help incentivize Member States to shift towards providing less earmarked and more predictable funding as well as broaden the contributor base. It will therefore be important to track the progress made by the UNDS and Member States towards achieving their commitments. Programme country governments must be at the center of the discussion. Predictability of funding is crucial, and both assessed and voluntary contributions are significant sources of funding.

It was emphasized that key to the success of the Funding Compact will be the ability of the UNDS to demonstrate what it is delivering with core and pooled funding versus funding that is earmarked to a single entity and project. Also, vital to achieve the Compact's potential will be the alignment of entity-specific funding dialogues to this process.

It was noted that on the 1% coordination levy, so far, most funding partners have opted for UN entities to administer the collection of the levy. Selecting this option over the "donor administered" option would raise administrative costs on UN entities.

While the Funding Compact includes a commitment to broaden the funding base, it was mentioned that further efforts are required to incentivize it. Widening the contributor-base of the UNDS will be required if the system is to be adequately and predictably funded.

***The development of System-wide Strategic Document continues to be challenging, especially as it was being done in parallel with other complex reform tracks. The Document should adhere to the mandate set by resolution 71/243 and 72/279, and capture the comparative and collaborative advantages of the UN development system identified in the context of other key actors and their role in support of the 2030 Agenda,***

Executive Heads of the UNDS entities shared their full commitment to the repositioning and informed that the process had already resulted in many positive changes in the way the UNDS worked together to more effectively support the implementation of the SDGs. They highlighted those areas where they are already delivering collaboratively on key elements mandated by Member States. These are being operationalized through a stronger focus on impact and results at the country level, driven by a series of revised UNSDG instruments (UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, Common Country Assessments, Management and Accountability Framework) in support of national goals and priorities.

The Executive Heads acknowledged that the preparation of the System-wide Strategic Document (SWSD) continues to be challenging, especially as it is being developed in parallel with other complex reform tracks. It was noted that the expectations and guidance of Member States might, at times, inadvertently slow the progress in system-wide collaboration through micromanagement of the system.

Looking forward, Member States highlighted that the SWSD should more fully illustrate the comparative and collaborative advantages of the UN development system in support of the 2030 Agenda, and take into account the role of other development actors which may be better positioned to support some aspects of the work. It needs to take in account the importance of national leadership and ownership of sustainable development efforts, and respond to both gaps and duplication in the system’s delivery on intergovernmental mandates. The SWSD is not intended to be a substitute for primary planning frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Other key elements that should feature in the final Document includes strengthening partnerships, a rights-based approach and gender mainstreaming.

Some Member States stressed the need for interaction with national authorities in order to provide information on the content of the SWSD, especially on how agencies are implementing the strategic document and other aspects of reform such as the regional dimension. It was also stressed that the SWSD should be generic given the different mandates and realities in countries. It should also eliminate gaps, overlaps, maximize efficiency, address regional issues, and work in partnership in a broad sense with private sector and civil society, among others. The SWSD must be inclusive.

The System-wide Strategic Document is a critical reform piece in the repositioning of the UN development system. Without it, the reforms would be incomplete. A more robust version of the SWSD is expected to be presented to Member States soon. The Document should be finalized in close collaboration with Governments, respecting the original mandate.

***Member States welcomed the interactive debate at the Operational Activities segment. Some stressed that transforming the Operational Activities for Development Segment into a more effective accountability platform requires that its guidance has an impact on the work of individual governing bodies of the entities of UN development system.***

The ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment must continue to provide overall coordination and guidance to the UN development system, and to assess whether the objectives, priorities and strategies of the system adequately responded to the policies formulated by the General Assembly, including the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and the resolution on repositioning of the UN development system.

There is a need to improve the function of the Council’s Operational Activities Segment as an accountability platform, including by better incorporating the work of the Specialized Agencies. More details are needed on the proposal to establish a multi-year programme of work for the Segment. The upcoming 2020 QPCR should be an opportunity to consider measures that truly improve governance of operational activities to maximize their impact on the delivery of the SDGs.

***Strengthening complementarities between of the roles and responsibilities the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the governing bodies may generate challenges at individual entity governance levels therefore needing a close watch and, possibly, corrective measures.***

Current development challenges and the delivery of the 2030 Agenda call for more effective system-wide governance of the UN development system. To fulfill the complementary roles and responsibilities of the General Assembly, ECOSOC, and the governing bodies of UN development system entities, the operational activities segment must mobilize individual governing boards around the implementation of relevant General Assembly mandates.

At present, insufficient attention is directed to system-wide governance, resulting in governing bodies of individual entities often working out of sync from the Assembly and Council guidance. Further, the repositioning of the UN development system is likely to bring new coordination and governance challenges at both intergovernmental and interagency levels, which need to be kept under careful review, and measures taken to address them as necessary.

There is agreement that better use of decisions by the Executive Boards might need to be made by ECOSOC. The timing of the operational activities segment may also need to be reconsidered so that its outcome could better feed into the decisions of the governing bodies of individual entities.

## The way forward

The 2019 ECOSOC operational activities segment provided an interactive forum for Member States to review progress on system-wide performance as mandated in the QPCR, and discuss proposals on key elements of the repositioning of the UN development system.

These deliberations helped lay the foundations for the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycle. Ahead of the 2020 negotiations on the QPCR, there is need for an evidence-based, comprehensive, analytical Secretary-General’s annual report on the QPCR and UNDS repositioning to be discussed at the next operational activities segment in 2020.

*“In the last year, we have implemented, together, the most comprehensive reform in the history of the United Nations.”*

*“We trust that you share our views and are reassured about the direction of travel towards a system that is able and empowered to support countries and people in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals.”*

*Ms. Amina J. Mohammed  
Deputy Secretary-General  
United Nations*



Some elements of the repositioning require further effort in the coming months to respond to the needs of Member States, notably the multi-country office and regional reviews and the finalization of the system-wide strategic document. Inclusive structured dialogues with Member States on these remaining repositioning efforts is essential.

Member States expressed their deep appreciation to the strong commitment of the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and their teams to respond to the ambitious mandates set in the twin resolutions. The Deputy Secretary-General noted that the Segment lived up to the renewed expectations of ECOSOC as a platform for accountability on system-wide results.