

**UK Statement: Briefing by Deputy Secretary-General Amina  
Mohammed on Repositioning the UN Development System**

**ECOSOC, 6 October**

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UK Mission to  
the UN, Matthew Rycroft**

Thank you Madam President and thank you Madam Deputy Secretary  
General for your briefing.

Let me begin by expressing the UK's full support for the significant  
efforts you have taken so far to drive meaningful change. We want to  
achieve a set of organisations that are better equipped to build and  
sustain peace, respond to crises and deliver support for development  
and human rights. We look forward to the Secretary-General's report in  
December, and to what we hope will be a series of bold and ambitious  
recommendations that set out a clear path towards this and a more  
effective and accountable United Nations.

Today I want to give you a flavour of how the UK's thinking is evolving  
on each of the six workstreams you set out in your guidance note for this  
meeting. In the interest of brevity, I will highlight just one point for each  
and we will follow up with a more detailed written response.

First, on your question about a reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system, we expect to see an independent and empowered Resident Coordinator.

One who takes final decisions for the whole UN country presence, including having a final say on their strategic objectives as set out in UN Development Agreement Frameworks.

One who is accountable for all agencies and their budgets, underpinned by a joint and single work plan.

And one who oversees a coherent and coordinated approach to development and humanitarian activity by double-hatting as Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, where appropriate and where they have the relevant skills.

On your second question on a responsive and tailored UN Country Team, we want to see a team that takes responsibility for addressing the long terms causes of conflict through development interventions. Such a team would continually assess the risks and needs of countries, and be able to adapt to crises rapidly.

Third, we look forward to hearing more from ongoing consultations on a system wide strategic document. We believe that coherent reporting and planning system-wide will be vital to demonstrating impact and results.

But this will only happen when agencies undertake the whole programming cycle – planning, operating, monitoring and reporting – as a single process.

Fourth, on system wide accountability and oversight, we are open to changing the structures of the Executive Boards. But we do have concerns about establishing a single ‘mega board’ for the Funds and Programmes, particularly around the impact that would have on the ability of Board Members to provide valuable scrutiny and oversight.

We believe our primary focus should be to make sure the current Executive Boards function properly; there is also still so much that can be done here.

For example, Secretariats of the Executive Boards must be truly independent and serve Executive Board members. This would require moving their reporting lines away from the agencies. We also suggest establishing a single standalone Secretariat of the Joint Meeting of the Boards and giving it teeth to become a decision-making body. And we question the utility of a session in September, occurring just before UNGA - the busiest time of the UN calendar. Efforts to reforming the Boards should be underpinned by wider commitments to transparency, such as making sure all parts of the system are on the International Aid Transparency Index.

Turning to your fifth question on regional functions, policy and data management, we believe this review must clarify the value-add of the Regional Economic Commissions. Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit at the Committee for Programme and Coordination highlighted duplication, including too many documents, with most not well read or used. This is not a good use of limited funding.

Sixth, you ask how the Funding Compact could instil the confidence of donors investing in the system and encourage more investment in core and pooled funding.

We would suggest that adopting the following 5 principles would help meet this need:

First, transparency of budgets - budgets that show exactly how core funding is used.

Second, transparency of results – enhanced results reporting from single ‘annual country reports’ telling investors how and where core funding has been used.

Third, proper funding for oversight functions – audit, evaluation and internal investigation functions have not been properly resourced.

Fourth, voluntary restraint around sensitive costs – like travel and per diems.

And finally, eliminating duplication of operations and moving more quickly to bring together country offices and sharing functions.

We also believe that the UK's initiative on linking 30% of our voluntary core funding to progress on reform and results will make substantial investments in core more defensible and therefore more sustainable long term. By showing exactly how a third of core funding directly impacts the successful delivery of reform, we have created a narrative to our tax-payers on what core can achieve.

I welcome the focus today on drilling down beneath headlines. Setting out practical proposals on how to provide the best delivery on the ground in all circumstances is key. Through QCPR, member-states have already agreed much of the substance of repositioning the UN development system. The SG has the authority - and our trust - to act on this direction set by member states. Where we have not been clear about what is needed, it is great that you challenge us. But where we have been clear, do act.

Thank you.

[ENDS]