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Economic and Social Council

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Operational Activities for Development

Reviewing the longer-term positioning of the UN development system and progress in implementation of GA res 67/226 on the QCPR

**Statement by Mr Peter Versegi, Minister Counsellor (Development),
Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations**

Delivered on behalf of Canada and Australia

(Check against delivery)

Thank you Madam Vice-President.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of both Canada and Australia.

We would like to begin by expressing our appreciation for the work done to date by the UN Development Group, including the funds and programmes, resident coordinators and country teams, as well as DOCO and UN DESA, in delivering the QCPR 2012 reform agenda. We are particularly pleased with the comprehensiveness and quality of this year's Secretary-General's Report, including its monitoring and reporting framework, which adds much with regards to transparency and accountability.

We would also like to thank you, Madam Vice President, and through you the ECOSOC Bureau and the Secretariat, for all the hard work is putting together this week's excellent program of meetings and the draft roadmap for our dialogues ahead of the 2016 QCPR.

Madam Vice-President,

It is clear to all of us that the development landscape has changed in fundamental ways since the Millennium Development Goals were agreed some 15 years ago. It is clear, too, that the UN Development System must continue to reform, and improve operational,

programmatic and policy coherence, if it wants to stay relevant to national and global needs, and at the forefront of the new development agenda.

The 2012 QCPR represented a key step along this path. The robust data and reporting we see in this year's Secretary General's report, as well as the promising progress evident across the spectrum of reforms, is a testament to the commitment by partners to a stronger, more effective and relevant UN development system. We commend these achievements, both at headquarters and at the country level.

We also take this opportunity to urge all partners not to be satisfied with just being able to tick a box, but to look for opportunities to implement reforms, embed them in country team processes, identify and overcome hurdles and blockages at the corporate or headquarters level, and seek improved efficiency and performance - the ultimate objectives of any reform.

Madam Vice-President,

Australia and Canada have worked hard and consistently to support the QCPR reform agenda and its key initiatives. We commend country teams' efforts to strengthen the UNDAFs and government's growing use of them as planning tools for more coherent and results based national development. This is good progress, but we can further streamline planning and reporting processes to reduce the burden on country teams and lift accountability to national governments.

We appreciate the work done to develop system-wide indicators on gender and look forward to ongoing improvements in gender and disability disaggregated data and reporting. We note that seven in ten new UNDAFs referenced the needs of persons with disabilities and half of country teams used disability disaggregated data to inform country analysis. We encourage UNCTs to lift these figures further. Specifically to include the Washington Group short question set in all monitoring data systems, as recommended by the United Nation's Expert Group Meeting on Disability Data in July last year.

We welcome the roll out of the Standard Operating Procedures and the increasing ability of UN entities to support implementation of Delivering as One. We look forward to further reporting in 2015 on the implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures. We also welcome the steps taken to strengthen the strategic role of the Resident Coordinators and improve selection processes. This needs to continue to be a priority over the year ahead, and more work is needed to ensure RCs are sufficiently empowered, that country team members are accountable to each other, and that RC offices are adequately resourced. We stress, in particular, the urgent need for full implementation of the undg cost-sharing modality for coordination.

The pace of simplification and harmonization of business practices remains frustratingly slow and this is an area that requires particular, urgent attention from all agencies and their leaders. The picture is not monochrome, however, and we are very pleased to see the progress at the country level in the roll-out of the Business Operations Strategy which, as we have heard, is reducing the cost of programs and coordination. We are also heartened by early feedback from the Brazil pilot of the Joint Operations Facility – a model which we hope can be replicated elsewhere, not least in multi-country contexts

like the Pacific and the Caribbean islands. We would be very keen to see the full engagement of the UN family, as well as the recommendations from the cost benefit analysis of these pilots as soon as possible.

Madam Vice-President,

Another key challenge for the UN Development System is how it can better harmonise its investments in sustainable development with the work of peace and humanitarian operations. Around the globe we are seeing more and more protracted and complex crises, which can have parallel humanitarian and development needs across decades and generations. It is essential that all UN agencies and missions support and complement each other's work, and that of civil society and national governments, in order to save lives, restore peace, build resilience, and promote sustainable development.

On the ground, this requires strong, collaborative leadership, strengthened cooperation mechanisms and seamless operational and technical support. The QCPR started this process, but there is scope to think more ambitiously about how to strengthen the linkages between relief, peacebuilding and development, and to improve approaches to early recovery and risk reduction. Strengthening coherent funding modalities that can serve as incentives for collaboration will also be necessary to support better coherence for resilience, stability and peace. The Secretary General's strategic review of UN Peace Operations and the UN Peacebuilding Architecture review are key opportunities to take forward this important reform.

Madam Vice-President,

ECOSOC is now turning its attention to the important question of the long-term positioning of the UN Development System, in what is an increasingly dynamic international landscape. The post-2015 agenda, and growing diversity of sources of finance for development, provide a unique and timely opportunity for us to make some deep and significant institutional reforms to complement and build on the incremental country-level initiatives we've been focused on in recent years.

Reform is important for continual improvement in performance and to keep up with the challenges of a changing development landscape. But we don't pursue reform for reform's sake. We need to start with a comprehensive discussion about the functions we want the UN Development System to perform and then consider what suite of reforms can help us achieve this goal. It will be necessary to look comprehensively – at form, at finance, and at governance arrangements – all of them linked intimately to improving functions. It is our strong belief that consensus, although at times difficult to reach, is essential. To be successful in identifying and implementing reforms, member states and the UN Development System have to work collectively to promote behavioural change and to truly become One UN. We look forward to engaging in discussions about these topics, and the future of the UN Development System over the coming months.

Thank you.