



INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY THE DELEGATION OF EGYPT AT THE 2018 ECOSOC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY FOR DEVELOPMENT SEGMENT DURING THE INTERACTIVE PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE REPOSITIONING THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM TO BEST DELIVER FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET: "PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD: BUILDING A NEW GENERATION OF UN COUNTRY TEAMS" (New York, 27 February 2018)

Day 1 - Tuesday 27 February

Session I, Part A: Perspectives from the field: Building a new generation of UN Country Teams

In its Resolution 71/243, the General Assembly underscored the need to reposition the United Nations Development System in order to better address the full range of development challenges and opportunities. A key component of this vision has been the call for a new generation of country teams that are more responsive and able to lead the UN's integrated and impactful contribution at the country level.

In the pursuit of such reforms to the UNDS system, the Group believes that the process should be guided by a set of general principles. First, eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions should be the highest priority and the overarching objective of the UNDS. Second, the repositioning of the UNDS should fully respect State sovereignty, independence, national ownership and leadership, bearing in mind the different development levels and realities on the ground in these countries. Third, the UNDS should be able to support all developing countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in accordance with the national plans and strategies in a comprehensive manner, in line with the mandate of the 2016 QCPR resolution. Fourth, the UNDS reform should be in conformity with the 2016 QCPR, which is a development resolution and thus development should be the focus of the UNDS reform process. The entities of the UNDS, in full compliance with respective mandates, are required to enhance coordination with humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding efforts at the national level in countries facing humanitarian emergencies and in countries facing conflict and post conflict situations. Finally, there is a strong need for robust and predictable core resources for ensuring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as per the national plans and strategies. Flexible financing should not be seen as swapping resources, but to use it with a longer-term vision. Pooled funding could be used to strengthen the UNRC system, drive inter-agency cooperation, and reduce earmarking funding.

The group would also like to make a few specific remarks with regards to the new generation of UN country teams:

1. The UNCT configuration and presence at the country level should be determined in full consultation with and agreement of the national governments to meet the specific needs and challenges of the countries. The most vulnerable group of countries need continued strong presence of the UNCTs. The Secretary-General's proposals relating to reconfiguration or rationalization should in no way affect the physical presence of UNCTs in such countries.

2. Accountability of the UN entities and agencies, in particular through the UNRC, must be ensured to the national governments. They should chair UNCT meetings, in order to foster national ownership and alignment with national priorities.

3. There is a need to enhance and strengthen the capacities and the capabilities of the UNCTs to support the SDGs in a comprehensive manner, including their ability to support all specific national development priorities. The gaps in SDGs coverage need to be urgently addressed as the UNDS currently lacks capacity, capability and resources to support member states in achieving SDG 6 (water), 7 (energy), 9 (industry and infrastructure), 12 (sustainable consumption and production), and 13, 14, 15 (environment related). This clearly undermines the proposed demand driven model of the UNCTs and therefore limits the response of the UNDS to country needs and priorities.
4. Collaboration and synergy within the agencies should be strengthened, while eliminating competition among them, in particular for resources. Complementarity of mandates is the basis for an effective UNCT configuration. Overlaps should be avoided in this regard.
5. Programmatic rationalization and the reconfiguration of the UNCTs should ensure the effective presence of the UNDS in all developing countries, as needed.
6. The UNCT configuration should be decided in consultation with the host country and should be based on a flexible approach, in order to be able to adapt the capacities of the UNDS to comply with UNDAF requirements.
7. The UNCT configuration and presence should be the result of discussions between UNDS entities and the host Government, facilitated by the RC. We strongly consider that the final decision regarding the UNDAF and UNCT configuration must remain in the hands of the host government. The modalities for this process needs to be clarified and elaborated at all stages and shared with the member states, before the finalization of the reform process.
8. The mechanism for the support and engagement of the non-resident UN entities to the programme countries needs to be developed and shared with the member states.

With regards to the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), the Group would like to make the following remarks:

1. There should be active and full participation of the national governments in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the UNDAF, in order to enhance national ownership and achieve full alignment of operational activities with national priorities, challenges, planning and programming.
2. We agree that the UNDAF should be a clear action-oriented document and be able to respond to the development needs of the countries, particularly the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The national governments should have the final decision on the substantive elements of the UNDAF.
3. We stress the voluntary nature of the proposed guidelines for a New Generation of UNDAF.
4. We stress the need to strengthen the UNDAF, agreed upon by the Government concerned, which will be the point of departure in rethinking the activities, presence and composition of each United Nations country team. The composition of the team's membership should be defined at the outset of each Framework cycle, in an open discussion between the host Government and the United Nations development system, facilitated by the RC.
5. Particularly important should be the need to preserve the prerogative of the host country to communicate freely with particular entities of the System in order to address particular needs and/or emerging challenges.

Finally, with regards to Common Business Services and Back-Office Functions, the Group would like to make a few remarks:

1. Regarding the adoption of common operational services/back-office functions as the standard model for country teams, we reaffirm that as stated in the QCPR, this should be taken by, where appropriate, considering the voluntary nature of practices linked to "Delivering as One." It is important that the System fit the needs of all programme countries, regardless of which modality for the delivery of assistance they prefer to adopt.

2. The Group would also like to see explicit consideration of local staffing and procurement as forms of reducing costs.