Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative Chull-joo Park

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Core Group, I am honored to present to you the main findings and recommendations that resulted from the Core Group discussion on the working methods of the executive boards in close consultation with Member States at large.

As we would recall, the Core Group was formed in accordance with the relevant Executive Boards’ decisions to lead the joint consultative process on working methods with Member States.

While the issue of the working methods of the Executive Boards has been discussed previously at the JMB and at each respective Executive Board, the creation of the Core Group provided the very first process by which members and observers could systematically and thoroughly review the various proposals to improve the working methods of the Executive Boards.

Meeting history

The Core Group has met 8 times since its creation, twice in January (8th, 14th), once in February (8th), twice in March (4th, 25th), and three times in April (12th, 17th, 29th). Core Group members gathered the inputs from
their respective group members on the topics being discussed and presented their positions at the Core Group discussions.

Other than those meetings, the Core Group organized the joint briefings to the wider membership of the 4 Executive Boards to ensure an open, transparent and inclusive consultative process. Through two briefings to the wider membership, the first on April 10 and the second on May 15, the Core Group was able to collect many useful comments from members and observers and reflect them in the written account to the extent possible. I would like to take this opportunity to express the Core Group’s appreciation for your continuous support to the Core Group.

**Overarching principles**

The overarching objective of the discussions of the Core Group was to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the working methods of the JMB and respective governing bodies, while preserving the executive guidance and oversight of agencies, funds and programmes and without duplicating the function of the ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment and the respective Executive Boards.

The Core Group also recognized that improvements in the working methods had to be made while respecting the different mandates and characteristics of each agency.

**Structure of discussion and the written account**

Following the structure of operational paragraph 46 in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review resolution adopted by the General Assembly in December 2016, the Core Group began substantial
discussion, firstly on the working methods of the Joint Meeting of the Boards (JMB), secondly on respective Executive Boards, and last but not least on the rules, documentation and decision-making methods.

The discussion encompassed the content in the Presidents non-paper on the working methods that was shared with the wider membership in December 2017, the President’s Summary of the 2018 JMB session on working methods, and the joint response of the Secretariats to this President’s Summary. New ideas emerging from the Core Group discussion and inputs from groups were also incorporated in the discussions.

Discussion of each part was categorized in two different areas in the written account. They are areas of convergence, and areas of non-convergence that may require further discussion under the guidance of the four Executive Boards.

Now I would like to move to a brief overview of the major findings of the Core Group discussion, mainly in the areas of convergence and also in some areas of non-convergence.

[Areas of convergence]

1. (Joint informal briefings on JMB topics) Members converged that joint informal briefings/consultations on the JMB topics should be jointly organized by the agencies and strongly encouraged that they be scheduled within socially acceptable hours to allow WFP Executive Board from Rome to participate.

2. (Presidents’ Meeting) The Core Group generally converged on the institutionalization of the Presidents’ Meeting for enhanced harmonization of common issues and increased coordination
among agencies. More concretely, there was general consensus of holding the Meeting on a regular basis and of keeping formal minutes of the Meeting. It is also suggested that the major result of the Meeting be shared with the wider membership, which is helpful for enhancing transparency.

3. **(Bureau composition)** The Group noted that it is the prerogative of the regional groups to nominate respective Bureau members. However, at the same time, stressing the importance of continuity and smooth transition between outgoing and incoming bureaux, the Core Group converged on strongly recommending that, whenever possible, the Vice President for the regional group which is expected to assume the Presidency in the following year be selected as President of the Executive Board. The Core Group recognized that this is already an established practice that works well in some agencies.

4. **(Session)** There was also another general consensus on moving the second regular session of the New York-based agencies due to the workload, especially for smaller Missions, ahead of the General Assembly high level week. Thus, it was suggested to look at the different alternatives of adjusting the dates of the second regular session mindful that it does not overlap with other schedules.

5. **(Interactive discussion)** The Core Group also converged on the value in making the Executive Board sessions interactive, while recognizing the necessity to secure time slot for group and national statements. To ensure ample time for interactive discussion, the Core Group strongly encouraged the heads of agencies to provide the full text of their statements or opening remarks online in advance and deliver shorter ones at the Executive Board sessions.
6. (Field visits) There was general support for deciding the destination of field visits two to three years in advance, while allowing the flexibility to change host countries if circumstances dictated. Member States agreed that it was preferable to give host countries as well as agencies as much time as possible to prepare for the visits.

7. (Rules of procedure) Core Group agreed to request the secretariats to produce a comparative overview structure table of rules of procedure of the four Executive Boards. Such a table would assist smaller delegations whose staff often work with multiple organizations. This table is already prepared by the Secretariats and distributed as part of the annex of the written account.

8. (Implementation of Decisions) While recognizing four Executive Boards have their own system for tracking the implementation of Executive Board decisions, the Core Group agreed to introduce a concise tracking matrix of decision implementation for common use and requested secretariats to prepare the draft matrix. This matrix is also included in the annex of the written account.

[Areas of non-convergence]

As mentioned earlier, there were also areas of non-convergence that I, as the Coordinator, feel are worth discussing and exploring further. While there are many, I would like to lay out before you three specific areas of non-convergence that were discussed in the Core Group that can provide some food for further thought.

1. (JMB) In regards to the Joint Meeting of the Boards, the first thing I want to share with you is that Core Group in general is not in
favour of giving any decision-making authority to the JMB, though a few of Members are willing to consider elevating the JMB to a decision-making body. As an Alternative, the Core Group in general was in favor of exploring the idea of a draft decision template prepared reflecting discussions at the joint informal briefings and at the JMB. This template can be used as a basis for negotiations and adoption of decisions at each respective Executive Board session taking place immediately after the JMB. At the same time, I would like to note that some members expressed their concern on this idea, because they think this idea after all could elevate the JMB into a decision-making body.

2. (CPD meeting) The Core Group supported further exploring the proposal of holding one-day special meeting only to approve country programme documents, thus lightening the workload of the main Board sessions. Some Members expressed the need to further understand the implications and the operationalization of this proposal before taking a position on it.

3. (Rules of Procedure) As an annex to the written account, we have shared with you a comprehensive comparative table of the rules of procedure of the four Executive Boards. Some Members were in favor of harmonizing the structure of the rules of procedure of four Boards. As you can realize very easily, the Rules of Procedure of the four Executive Boards have a lot of common parts but the order and categorization differ. So some Members supported the idea of harmonizing those common parts in an agreed order.

Meanwhile, there was also a proposal to unify the rules of procedure for 4 Boards, noting that UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS abided by same Rules of Procedure, despite their differing
mandates and that the different functional commissions of the ECOSOC share a unified Rules of Procedure.

[Recommendations]

The recommendation section requests that each respective Executive Board act on the areas of convergence identified including by incorporating them into the future relevant decision by the respective Executive Boards. So based on the areas of convergence within the written account and the comments from members and observers, the Core Group produced and distributed a joint draft decision template on working methods ahead of the JMB to form the basis of negotiations in each respective Executive Board.

The Core Group recommended that the four Executive Boards consider the way forward for future deliberations on the areas of non-convergence. While the Core Group remains in your hands as to guidance for future discussions, my personal opinion from having coordinated the meetings of the Core Group is that perhaps we should aim to conclude the Core Group activities for in-depth discussion on working methods in 2019 and revisit the issue when deemed necessary by the members in the future, for example, next year.

I think it is not very likely that the position of members on the various proposals in the areas of non-convergence will change significantly in the short term. Thus, I would suggest for us to focus on how to act on the areas of convergence, in other words, how we can implement the areas of convergence. In the meantime, members and observers are able to engage themselves for exchanging views until we revisit the issues for further improvement after giving it some time.
In closing, I, on behalf of the Core Group, would like to express thanks to members and observers for their general and continuous support to the Group’s activities. Also, I would like to thank the Secretariats of the four Executive Boards for their technical support to the Core Group.

At the same time, my special thanks still go to each and every member of the Core Group for their diligent work for the last 5 months and constructive engagement with each other on behalf of their members and observers. /End/