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Operational activities for development (item 24)
Ms. Merete Dyrud Counsellor

Chair,

The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review represents a crucial step forward and contains a clear call for accelerated reform of the UN Development System (UNDS). This needs to be followed up by all. We are pleased to see that the UNDS has moved fast, with the agreement on strategic priorities for 2013–2016, the action plan for following up the QCPR, the Standard Operating Procedures for countries wishing to adopt the Delivering as One modality, and the agreement on sharing the costs of the Resident Coordinator system and the inclusion of the respective shares of some organisations in the budgets for 2014 onwards. We also welcome the progress the major UN funds and programmes have made in integrating reform issues and common QCPR indicators in their new strategic plans and results frameworks. UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women deserve to be commended for the steps they have taken to achieve more equal burden sharing between core and non-core through the implementation of the new cost recovery methodology in their integrated budget for the next period.

The UN Development System has a golden opportunity to improve its relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, and we cannot afford to see its implementation fail. Norway would like to highlight the following.

First, on Delivering as One: Dedicated follow-up of the Standard Operating Procedures is required at country level by all funds, programmes and specialised agencies, and headquarters must make adjustments in internal procedures if necessary. The governing bodies need to establish new routines for approving joint programmes, with agency-specific annexes. This must be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

Second, on the Resident Coordinator system: All aspects of the Management and Accountability system and all agencies have a responsibility to ensure that mechanisms for mutual accountability between the Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Teams are established as prescribed in the QCPR. In this regard, agencies must also provide information to establish one budgetary framework for the UN in countries where this is still not the case.

(Check against delivery)
At headquarters, agencies that have not already done so must follow up the cost-sharing agreement and include their share in the budgets for approval by the governing bodies.

Third, on efficiencies: Experience shows that substantial efficiencies can be gained by headquarters decisions to harmonise business practices further and by establishing common services at country level. Joint procurement efforts need to be accelerated, and we would also like to see more entities in the UN system adopting the joint vendor sanction framework that has been developed.

Fourth, the way we as member states fund the UNDS is crucial for the success of the reform efforts. As called for in the QCPR, funding of individual agencies needs to move further towards core funding and softly earmarked funding. And we have to ensure that there are funds available for programme expenses in the increasing number of countries that are adopting the Delivering as One modality. With the present low level of core funding, the agencies have limited flexible resources that can be used for this purpose. Norway therefore believes that there is still a need for dedicated funding for Delivering as One, in terms of contributions to One Funds at country level as well as to the global gap-filling mechanism that is currently being established – the Delivering Results Together Fund.

Fifth, the impact of the reform agenda needs to be documented through better organisation-wide results reporting by individual agencies and by better joint results reporting at country level.

Likewise, progress on the implementation of the QCPR must be systematically monitored and reported on. Our impression is that close collaboration between DESA and the UNDG has now been established and we are looking forward to a jointly developed framework that makes it possible to monitor the expectations for change in the QCPR in a meaningful way and without over-burdening the system.

Sixth, the System Wide Action Plan (SWAP) must be fully implemented, as this will contribute considerably to the empowerment of women and to gender equality in general - not only throughout the UN system, but also on the ground to the benefit of both individuals and countries, regionally and globally.

Finally, Chair, let me underline that we need the UNDS in countries in fragile situations. Therefore we, the donors, must be willing to accept risk, recognising that the risks of inaction may outweigh the risks associated with action. We cannot ask funds and programmes to work under the most adverse circumstances, without giving them the tools and flexibility needed to achieve results.

Thank you, Chair.