Statement

by Mr. Peter Silberberg

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Head of the Economic Affairs Department of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations

at the

Second Committee of the General Assembly
on item 24 (operational activities of the United Nations for development)

14 October 2014

(check against delivery)
Mr. President,

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by aligning myself with the statement delivered by the European Union.

Germany highly appreciates the speed and vigour with which the UN development system has embraced and started to implement the reforms mandated by the QCPR resolution with the aim of making UN operations in the area of development cooperation more coherent, efficient, effective and accountable.

Let me just highlight a few areas, in which we have seen major progress since December 2012: agreements were reached by the UN Development Group on Standard Operating Procedures for “Delivering as One” and the cost-sharing for the Resident Coordinator Function. In the Executive Boards of a number of UN funds and programmes, including UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women, we adopted new Strategic Plans, which are underpinned by robust results frameworks.

Mr. President,

I will now put the spotlight on a few issues which are of special importance to us and where we see a need for further action:
We were extremely encouraged by the adoption of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for “Delivering as One” in the first half of 2013 and the positive feedback in this regard from programme countries during this year’s Operational Activities segment of ECOSOC. Since then, progress seems to have slowed down. We therefore urge all members of the UN Development Group to expeditiously finalize the operationalization of the Standard Operating Procedures, for both country and headquarters level.

In this context, three issues need to be addressed as a matter of priority:

1. Agency-specific programming, work planning and reporting requirements need to be replaced by common tools;
2. Agency-specific incentives and instructions for the contribution of agency representatives to the functioning of UN Country Teams need to be introduced;
3. Agency procedures need to be harmonized in order to allow “Operating as One” to take effect, e.g. in the areas of logistics, procurement and common finance and audit.

In more concrete terms, this would inter alia require:

Regarding “One Programme”: UN agencies should present proposals to their Governing Boards on how instruments for programming and work planning could be replaced by common instruments with agency-specific annexes and how UN Country Results Report could replace agency-specific reporting requirements of individual agency headquarters.
Regarding “One Leader”: Agencies need to clearly set out how they expect their country representatives to contribute to the functioning of UN Country Teams and on how representatives will be held accountable if they fail to do so; agencies need to take urgent steps to ensure full compliance with the Management and Accountability System for the RC system, including through revising job descriptions, defining reporting requirements and allowing the RC to contribute to assessing the performance of agency representatives at country level.

Regarding “Operating as One”: This will inter alia require the alignment of audit approaches for Delivering as One countries; the alignment of transport and logistics arrangements, including common vehicle pools and fleet management and the utilization of joint procurement at UN HQ level.

Mr. President,

We also look forward to information on the implementation of the cost-sharing agreement for the RC function and an analysis of whether the funds allocated will allow the system to function effectively.

We look forward to receiving information on further progress in these areas in time for the Joint Meeting of the Boards and the ECOSOC Operational Activities segment in February 2014.

Thank you, Mr. President.