United Nations General Assembly, 68th session
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Statement on behalf of Canada and Australia

Item 24: Operational Activities for Development

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(Check against delivery)

Mr Chair

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

As countries actively engaged in the process which led to General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, we were pleased by the evident ways in which the new generation of strategic plans for UN funds, programmes and agencies had drawn on the QCPR. Likewise, we welcome the development of the UN Development Group Action Plan for QCPR implementation and the development of common QCPR indicators.

The new strategic plans represent a significant step forward for UN reform efforts. We welcome, in particular, the increased emphasis on results based management and the common approach taken by agencies in improving and simplifying results chains. We also welcome the integrated budgetary process which links resources to results, and has the potential to increase financial management, and both program and organisational efficiencies. The ability of UN agencies to clearly and tangibly demonstrate the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of their programs is essential for donor governments like our own to justify financial support. We will be closely monitoring the impact of the results frameworks as the new strategic plans are rolled out.

A key challenge which lies ahead of us is the need for vast improvements in UN system-wide results at the country, regional and global levels. The QCPR is clear on the
importance of UN coherence and coordination, including highlighting the very positive gains made through Delivering as One. However, delivering as one and other tools for reform will not live up to our expectations without the necessary incentives for coherence. Pooled funding and support to joint programs are obvious examples of this for the UN, but donors themselves need incentives to provide increased funding to these modalities. Without major improvements in the ability of UN agencies to engage in common monitoring and evaluation, to synthesise their results and to report coherently on the achievements of the system as a whole, funding for coherence will be limited. We must allocate this a high priority for further discussion.

Mr Chair

As Canada and Australia said in our statement to ECOSOC in July, we welcome the inclusion of a number of key elements in the UNDG Action Plan. Priorities include updating the roles and responsibilities of the Resident Coordinator, implementing the decision on inter-agency cost sharing of the RC system, roll out of the standard operating procedures for Delivering as One, and finding ways to take greater strides in coherence of business operations, policies and procedures, and enterprise resource planning systems at the country and headquarters levels. We encourage the UN system to provide stronger guidance for a systematic approach to the establishment of common services across UN Country Teams and a more coherent regulatory framework. Such efforts depend on the full commitment of all UN agencies without exception, including specialised agencies, and we look forward to seeing real improvements as matter of priority.

Some progress is evident in the UN’s efforts to better include the needs of persons with disabilities in policies and programs, as highlighted in the QCPR. We remain concerned, however, about the lack of adequate disability-disaggregated data at the UNDAF country analysis stage. The UN system needs to do more to respond fully to the outcome document of the High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the realisation of the MDGs for persons with disabilities, and ensuring an end to exclusion and disadvantage.

Mr Chair

Canada and Australia expect all UN funds, programs and specialised agencies to ensure timely action for reform in all areas of the QCPR. They must do this both individually and together as one system. Urgent work is needed at all levels – in headquarters, regionally and in country offices to ensure the UN system remains relevant in a rapidly changing world. National governments must also reflect on their own practices and policies. It must be a collective effort.

The General Assembly has shown its commitment to improving the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the UN development system. The QCPR resolution provides a bold and important mandate for reform, and its full implementation is essential. But we must not stop there. The conversation is ongoing, and more is necessary to take the UN development system to the next level, and to fully realise our mutual expectations. We look forward to furthering the discussion.

Thank you.