SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE
UN General Assembly

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

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NEW ZEALAND STATEMENT

HE Jim McLay
Permanent Representative

Check against delivery
Mr President

The significance of the General Assembly Resolution 67/226 on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities cannot be overstated. For the first time the UN development system has a common plan of action. The positive response by States and UN agencies means it will has become an important vehicle for driving UN reform.

New Zealand commends the work of the UN Development Group in developing the QCPR Action Plan to implement and monitor the collective action by the UNDG. We also welcome the committed and comprehensive response by UN funds and programmes to the QCPR as shown in their recently adopted strategic plans for 2014-17. Not only are they a big step forward in terms of aligning planning cycles and coordinating and integrating operational activities across organisations, but the plans also represent a significant milestone in UN reform.

We would like to highlight three aspects of which we are particularly supportive in the UNDG Action Plan and the strategic plans of the funds and programmes.

First is the priority given in the Action Plan of a common set of results-based-management tools for monitoring and reporting. Clear and simple reporting of results at the country level will enable us to demonstrate convincingly to our constituencies the positive impact UN has at country and regional level to support mobilisation of resources.

Second, are the actions to simplify and harmonise programming through a lighter and shorter UNDAF, and the integration in the UNDAF of country-specific measures for disaster prevention and transition from conflict or disaster. This has the potential to greatly improve efficiencies at the country level through clear division of labour among UN entities, as well as responding better to the needs and priorities of the country.

Third is the expansion of the second generation of Delivering as One, with the development of an integrated package based on the new DAO Standard Operating Procedures. These will ensure that the achievements and experiences of existing DAO countries can be shared for the benefit of current and future countries wanting to adopt an upgraded DAO approach.

Fourth is the focus on women’s empowerment and gender equality, rights and participation of persons with disabilities, and disaster risk reduction. All are mutually reinforcing – both positively and negatively. Taking an integrated approach to all three will support more inclusive, sustainable and equitable development. The evidence now tells us that without investments in these areas, there is not only a social cost, but an economic one as well.
There are challenges too of course. The most obvious one is the fulfilment of the QCPR mandates. The General Assembly through this resolution has laid the groundwork for a new vision of the UN for the years to come. The UNDG Action Plan and the strategic plans of various UN agencies have produced specific actions and indicators to monitor progress. We must remain resolute in realising the vision.

Another challenge is securing the commitment of all UN agencies, including the specialised agencies, to the implementation of the UNDG Action Plan and the QCPR. This must be a priority and we look forward to hearing more about progress in this area.

Also we would like to hear more about the progress being made in the Harmonisation of Business Practices Plan of Action. The evidence provided from the first phase of this Plan of Action showed enormous potential for cost efficiencies, not just within individual agencies, but across the UN operational activities as a whole. However, greater clarity is needed on how this Plan of Action has been integrated into the reforms institutionalised in the QCPR.

In conclusion Mr President,

We have a unique opportunity before us – the General Assembly has shown its commitment to improving the effectiveness of the UN and reinforcing its relevance. We have a vision, a plan, and the tools to put it into practice and measure progress as we go.

If we can boost our collective effort, we will succeed in not only making the UN more efficient and relevant, but we will have offered billions of people a more dignified, healthier and secure future.