

## Second regular session of the Executive Board, 2017

### **Ms Amina J. Mohammed** **Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations**

**Ms Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations:** Executive Director, WFP, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. I really am truly grateful for being given the opportunity to meet with you today and it is a day where we will mourn those are lost in the earthquake in Iraq and Iran but also for the child that is lost in the next five minutes to childhood diseases and the many hundreds of women that will be lost to childbirth by the end of today. The daunting challenges that I faced as a minister in Nigeria absolutely pale in significance. That was 180 million people and today the challenge I have of serving with António Guterres is looking at a constituency of 7.5 billion people when we say, “leave no one behind” on the goals of the sustainable development agenda. So, I thank the Executive Board of the World Food Programme for this timely opportunity to discuss the efforts of the Secretary-General as he repositions the United Nations Development System. I look forward particularly to hearing your views on the response that we will have from the World Food Programme informed by our strategic priorities in becoming also fit for purpose to deliver on the 2030 Agenda. I also look forward to sharing with you how we really do go from the humanitarian dollar to the development opportunity. That truly is a dividend for peace.

The United Nations funds and programmes like WFP have always made efforts to abide by the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the General Assembly and I commend WFP for its constructive engagement and leadership role in this process, both over the two-year long ECOSOC dialogue for the repositioning of the United Nations Development System and in the QCPR follow-up.

WFP’s contribution has been instrumental in consolidating some of the parameters for reform and in leading the United Nation Development Group to act on it. Since January the Secretary-General has heeded the calls of Member States and moved forward as asked by the resolution. In June, the Secretary-General presented his vision through his report for repositioning the United Nations Development System to effectively support the 2030 Agenda. It has included 38 concrete ideas and actions for discussion. Combined, these ideas offer a preliminary road map for change that will significantly enhance the system’s effectiveness, cohesion, leadership and accountability. These changes we believe would pave the way for the emergence of a new generation of country teams, which can provide more cohesive and responsive support to partners on the ground with new skill sets, new profiles and strengthened leadership.

Yet, we are acutely aware that many questions still require further consideration. Many Member States have said to us the devil is in the detail.

We want the answers to be informed by you, ahead of the Secretary-General’s follow-up report in early December and this is why the Secretary-General has decided to be as concrete as possible in his first report. We are consulting closely with your representatives here in Rome and also in New York to further detail his proposals working forward and I really would like to pay tribute to Mr Abdulla who has been leading that response for us, always being available to the number of questions and instances that we try really to take the rhetoric to the practice on the ground.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are now turning an important corner in our efforts to align the United Nations Development System with the 2030 Agenda and the

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Paris Agreement. Allow me to outline a few key work areas aimed at ensuring a system that is fit for purpose and designed to deliver shared results.

First, the development of a system-wide strategic document for collective support to the implementation that will guide that on the ground of the 2030 Agenda. It will focus on areas where system-wide action truly adds value that of coherence, instruments such as data, funding and partnerships.

Second, the review of the RC system and the United Nations country presence. We are very clear on the need to ensure that resident coordinators – impartial, non-political – and United Nations country teams remain focused on sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Third, a revamped regional approach. The Secretary-General has proposed to proceed in two steps by optimizing existing arrangements and refocusing the regional economic commissions to become the think tanks and providers of the inter-governmental platforms in that regional space and that requires that even more so today the challenges of our countries go across borders. They know no borders in the way in which we recognize them over the last decade or two and the Sahel is one example among many.

Fourth, the development of a funding compact to provide Member States with sufficient accountability, transparency and value for money to build a strong case for more flexible money. A funding compact is critical to the success of all proposals. Fragmented funding can only deliver fragmented results and this is different to financing but it will require this capacity to support financing for development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, the dual humanitarian and development mandate of WFP and its key role under the guidance of its Executive Board can play an important part in helping the Secretary-General realize the changes needed to reposition the United Nations Development System. WFP's leadership can bring together the development and humanitarian community to navigate the transition from crisis to development, this clarifying that grey area, the grey area where there are many red lines and those red lines do not exist on the ground so bringing closer together the intentions at the global level to the realities at the country level.

The nexus will not be about diverting resources out of development, confusing mandates or infringing on the humanitarian space. It is about ensuring that all efforts contribute to long-term development and the SDGs while meeting the immediate humanitarian needs. It is also about ensuring that long-term development and building resilience are at the core of all our activities, even in emergency phases. It is about better integrated analysis, a focus on common results and much, much more accountability.

The nexus necessarily takes different forms in each context. In countries of protracted crises, for example, the RCs are double-hatted, the need for coherence is most evident. At the same time, we know that in any emergency the long term must be central. It is an imperative that we are prepared to invest in development as we transition out of crisis. To this end the Secretary-General has established a joint steering committee under my leadership to advance the humanitarian development collaboration that will guide policy setting and foster greater synergies in humanitarian and development action at the country level to implement the SDGs.

In addressing governments, strategic guidance is critical to drive this process of change including to respond to the increased demand for accountability, transparency and

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oversight. Changes are required in the governance of the system to fill the governing gap to guide a system-wide approach. The proposed progressive merger that we have of the New York-based boards would unify the voice of Member States and ensure that we have a coherent approach in guiding the system to deliver in line with decisions taken in the United Nations principal organs such as the General Assembly and ECOSOC, while building on all entities' strengths and comparative advantages at the country level.

This would also create a robust interface with the Rome-based entities and the boards in Geneva. In recent times WFP engagement at the New York joint meeting of the boards has been extremely helpful. Additionally, we intend to strengthen the work of ECOSOC on operational activities for development in order for it to be the focus for strategic guidance, discussion, thought leadership and oversight on collective functions and tools, such as the system-wide strategic document so that really we have an ECOSOC that truly becomes the accountability platform for system support to SDG achievement. We really would like to see it to be the go to place for that thought leadership that is grounded in country realities and the state-of-the-art expertise.

During the next few weeks it will be critical to build the architecture around the vision for change set out by the Secretary-General, your requests and the QCPR resolution. We are now halfway to that change process that could deliver a much stronger repositioned United Nations Development System. The ambition that was set out by Member States in framing the SDGs has to be met with the same or even more ambition in the recommendations that we put forward in how we will be fit for purpose to deliver on that agenda. This is an outcome of work and leadership of Member States captured in the 2030 Agenda to deliver a United Nations that advocates for the marginalized and vulnerable and works with national partners in the advancement of all human rights.

We need to pick up the pace as we move towards 2030. There certainly is not any time to lose, expectations are incredibly high, especially with our youth and women who bear the brunt of the burden of most of these challenges. We have a unique opportunity to reposition the United Nations Development System and we simply cannot miss that window. The work ahead will be uncomfortable, it will be intense and it will be complex and so it should be. The agenda that you have put forward for us to attain by 2030 is just that: a response to the global challenges that we have today.

Delivering on the QCPR will be a joint endeavour. It is also key to the other two reform streams that we have on management and on peace and security. Looking at that delegated response to taking service closer to the point of delivery, but also looking at political and mission settings in order that we can achieve the one stronger peace pillar ensuring that we have a focus on prevention which is key for us to sustaining peace and development.

We count on the insights and perspectives from this Board. Help us keep the ambition high from a system that is better able to deliver and we also count on the expertise, knowledge and network of WFP to lead by example, to bring the system closer together across the pillars of our work, to exert their influence within the system to spur change and ultimately, to ensure that the system comes together to deliver collectively at the country level on the 2030 Agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the Secretary-General and I will remain deeply involved in this to ensure that by the end of this year we stand on solid ground, fit to deliver the 2030 Agenda. What I personally will ask of you, is that the outcomes that you get in the Secretary-General's report are not ones that we negotiate to the lowest common denominator but ones that you

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interrogate to ensure that we meet the ambitions and expectations to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

I really do look forward to proceeding on our collective journey and once again, I would like to thank the Board and our leader here, David Beasley and his team, on this unique opportunity for sharing our thoughts on the road ahead. I thank you.