

Speech: “We very much hope that the UN will be better equipped to build and sustain peace, to respond to crises, and to deliver support for development”

Thank you Madam President and thank you to Madam Deputy Secretary-General as well. I want to begin by aligning myself with the European Union statement and by offering full British support to everything that you, Deputy Secretary-General and the Secretary-General, are doing to drive meaningful change through the United Nations.

As a result of that change and reform, we very much hope that the UN will be better equipped to build and sustain peace, to respond to crises, and to deliver support for development and for human rights. And we look forward to the SG’s report in December, full, we hope, of bold and ambitious recommendations to set out a clear path towards that end; a more effective and accountable United Nations.

We’ve been doing a lot of thinking on each of the six work streams that you identified in your guidance notes. In the interest of brevity, I’ll just mention one point under each of the six headings, if I may, and send around more detailed notes in writing.

On the first, the question about a reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system, we want the Resident Coordinator in each place to be independent, empowered, taking final decisions for the whole UN country presence, with a final say on strategic objectives as set out in UN Development Agreement Frameworks; accountable for all agencies and their budgets, underpinned by a joint and single work plan; overseeing a coherent and coordinated approach to development and humanitarian activity by double-hatting as Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, where appropriate.

Secondly, on a responsive and tailored UN Country Team, we hope that each team will take responsibility for addressing the long term causes of conflict through development interventions, continually assessing the risks and the needs of countries, and being able to adapt to crises rapidly.

Third, we look forward to hearing more from ongoing consultations on a system wide strategic document. Coherent reporting and planning system-wide will be vital to demonstrating impact and results, but that will only happen when the agencies themselves are undertaking the whole program cycle as a single process – planning, operating, monitoring and reporting.

Fourthly, on system-wide accountability and oversight, we are open to changing the structures of the Executive Boards. We have some concerns about

establishing a 'mega board' – not because we disagree with the intent, which is to improve transparency and to streamline, but just in terms of practicality and whether it's actually able to do the job, or whether actually it would be better to keep the different executive boards in their existing roles and making sure that they function as well as possible. But just to underline, we absolutely support every proposed recommendation to improve transparency.

Fifthly, on regional functions, policy and data management, we believe the review must clarify the value-added of the Regional Economic Commissions because reports of the Joint Inspection Unit do suggest that there is a fair amount of duplication, too many documents that are not read at all, or even if they're read, they never get used. So that does seem to be not the ideal use of limited funding.

And then sixthly and finally, you ask how the Funding Compact could instil the confidence of donors investing in the system and encourage more investment in core and pooled funding, and we do have some principles which I will send around in writing. The thrust of the principles is that we can do everything that we can to improve transparency and oversight.

I did have a final page, but in the interest of time I'll boil it down to four words: get on with it.

Thank you.