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Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

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Operational Activities Segment

**Statement by Ms Natalie Cohen
Permanent Mission of Australia
to the United Nations**

*Contribution to debate
13th July.*

On behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ)

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I am honoured to deliver this statement on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Mr President, everyone is looking to the General Assembly and the Summit on the Millennium Development Goals in September to identify critical areas and successful approaches to achieve the MDGs. The recently adopted General Assembly resolution on system-wide coherence provides valuable and solid guidance to the UN development agencies in a number of important areas to ensure they play their part in helping countries to achieve the MDGs. We also have new guidance from the program countries themselves in the form of the Hanoi Outcome Document, which delivers a clear message that for those countries implementing the Delivering as One approach, business as usual is no longer an option.

CANZ would like to thank the Secretary-General for the four reports to the Operational Activities Segment of ECOSOC and take this opportunity to elaborate on three issues.

1. Coordination

Improving coordination between UN agencies at country level, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, is critical to improving efficiency and effectiveness and to increasing the UN's attractiveness as a partner, and its ability to mobilise resources. The report identifies some challenges in implementing the management and accountability framework of the Resident Coordinator system. These challenges include a lack of clarity around the role of the RC and non-resident agencies, and questions remain about the capacity of UNDG regional teams to deliver on their increased coordinating

responsibilities. It is important for consistent and practical messages to be delivered from all UN agency Headquarters to their staff at country level in support of the RC system, and this will help to better promote and explain the management and accountability system. Coordination is important, but we also must ensure it serves a practical purpose and that it increases efficiencies, rather than adds unnecessary burdens.

2. Gender equality

CANZ welcomes the establishment of UN Women, signaling a significant step forward for gender equality. While UN Women will provide coordinated leadership and a convening role in the UN system, we reiterate that all UN agencies still have a responsibility to address gender inequality in their policies and programs.

At the country level, we were disappointed to read in the report on TCPR progress that very few UN Country Teams have completed the voluntary gender equality and women's empowerment scorecard. It would be great to see more Country Teams using this useful tool.

3. Funding

We are delighted to see that, building on solid increases in 2007, overall funding contributions to the UN development system reached their highest level yet in 2008. As the report states, it is important to increase the number of countries contributing to the UN, especially as foreign exchange currency fluctuations continue to pose risks to income levels. With 16 per cent of development-related contributions to the UN system in 2008 coming from local resource funding by program countries, it is clear that there is very broad support from many countries for the UN's operations and we should recognize that these resources are an important stream of non-core funding to the UN.

Mr President

CANZ countries remain committed supporters of the operational activities in the UN development system and we are confident that our discussions and the guidance stemming from this year's ECOSOC Operational Activities Segment will help to shape a better functioning UN development system.

Thank you