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Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

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Operational Activities Segment

Statement by Ms Kathryn Yarlett,
Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations

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

(Check against delivery)

Thank you Mr President

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

Mr President, we are one year on from the historic System Wide Coherence resolution being adopted by consensus in the General Assembly. And we are just over a year away from important discussions on the QCPR, which we hope will set an ambitious agenda for the UN development system in the years to come. This year's ECOSOC Operational Activities segment therefore provides us all a valuable opportunity to take stock of the reform process, and to assess the progress that has been made. It also allows us to plan for the challenges ahead as we continue to move towards a more effective and efficient system for UN development activities at country and headquarters levels.

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

Delivering as One

Mr President, it is well recognised that, for the UN development system, business as usual is no longer an option. Last year's outcome from the meeting of program countries in Hanoi delivered a clear message that Delivering as One is the way forward in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN agencies and ensure they play their part in a coordinated manner to help countries achieve the MDGs and other

internationally agreed development goals. It is the responsibility of all of us, as member states, to continue the momentum in this important process, to build on the progress and the lessons learned so far, and to find ways to further improve the Delivering as One approach as it rolls out in more and more self-starters around the world.

CANZ welcomes the valuable contribution of the Delivering as One pilots in providing lessons and innovations towards a more effective system of support to program countries by the UN system. We look forward to the report of the Independent Evaluation of the pilots and to further building a body of evidence to guide ongoing improvements to UN operational activities and the harmonization of business practices. We look forward, as well, to the Delivering as One conference this year in Montevideo, Uruguay, which will be another valuable opportunity to embed our collective ideas on taking forward this initiative.

Resident Coordinator System

Improving coordination, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, between UN agencies at country level and between the UN system and host governments, is also critical to improve efficiency and effectiveness and to increase the UN's attractiveness as a partner, and its ability to mobilise resources. CANZ encourages further strengthening of the RC system through full implementation of the management and accountability framework as soon as possible. We also urge the UN system to review the regulations and policies on human resources, to ensure they are appropriately supportive of the career paths of RCs and to empower RCs at country level to provide strong leadership to the UN in its response to country priorities.

Critical Mass of core resources

Finally Mr President, we would like to once again strongly encourage the UN funds and programmes to begin dialogues with the respective Executive Boards on the concept of critical mass. These discussions should be at Executive Board level, recognising the specific mandate and business models of these entities. CANZ members are ready and willing to engage in a truly constructive discussion to look at resources in the context of expected results. We need to elevate the debate on critical mass beyond the usual reiteration of standard positions on funding levels. It is essential that we take this opportunity to come to a shared understanding of the definition of critical mass, and its role in agency effectiveness. We look forward to working with all member states and the funds and programmes to this end.

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.

I thank you.