



ECOSOC
Economic and Social Council Substantive Session 2011
Geneva, 4 – 29 July 2011

(Operational Activities Segment)

Statement

by

H.E. Ambassador Remigiusz A. Henczel
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in Geneva

on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

at the General debate

United Nations
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**ECOSOC 2011 – Operational Activities Segment
(General Debate)
EU Statement**

Mr. President,

I have the honour to address the Economic and Social Council on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Iceland†, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia, as well as Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

Operational activities are a very visible manifestation of the role of the UN. The EU values the opportunity, during the ECOSOC substantive session, to review the results and the way these activities are implemented, and to provide some guidance ahead of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review next year.

UN operational activities constitute an important flow of resources to developing countries. In 2010 it amounted to about 23 billion US dollars, the equivalent of about 18 percent of the total ODA resources provided by DAC countries in recent years.

In addition to its operational role, the UN system is also the guardian of internationally agreed goals, objectives and norms, convening member states on critical global public goods agreements. Its operational window therefore plays a vital role in the international development architecture. Nevertheless the United Nations development system remains complex and fragmented. We hope that the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review will address questions of effectiveness and efficiency and pay due regard to the need for a delivery that is strong on results and that meets the legitimate and ever increasing needs for transparency and accountability.

A complex system causes both higher transaction costs and heavier administrative burdens, which is not compatible with aid effectiveness and the commitment of the EU to enhance the quality and impact of aid and contribute to greater value for money. As we all work towards a successful outcome in Busan, the highly valued operational work of the UN must demonstrate its ability to reduce the transaction costs associated with delivery of development aid.

Mr. President,

Financial flows in the UN-system have increased substantially over the last decade, with corresponding calls for greater scrutiny of results and effectiveness of donor programs, both bilateral and multilateral.

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

† Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

While core resources remain the bedrock of the mandate and resources of the UN Funds and Programs, recent growth is concentrated in the non-core category of resources. The EU considers that core resources should remain the stable base of funding of UN operational activities. Non-core funding can also provide important additional support and should always be fully aligned with strategic plans and mandates and with priorities of programme countries within the UNDAF. Non-core funding should not be a burden on core-funding. Donors, through their funding modalities, and the UN itself, are both responsible for minimizing transaction costs to a level which ensures that the UN can deliver on its commitments as efficiently as possible.

The EU continues to be supportive of greater stability and predictability in the provision of financial resources, whether core or non-core in nature, and to decrease dependence on a small number of donors. Broadening the funding base is essential in a changing world where emerging economies are playing an ever important role economically and in terms of development assistance.

Mr. President,

Over the years the UN-system for operational activities has grown more complex and the effectiveness and efficiency of the UN development system needs to continue to improve if it is to effectively support national development efforts. This is why the EU continues to support the ongoing One UN reform process by taking coherent positions at different UN governing bodies and by providing political, financial and technical support to the "Delivering As One" initiative at country and headquarter levels. The EU encourages more countries to work in this way so as to improve delivery of development programmes. The EU supports increasing UN system-wide coherence and effectiveness by progressively improving the functioning of agencies and views the establishment of UN Women as a crucial step forward. The EU looks forward to strengthening its partnership with UN Women for the promotion of gender equality and women's rights and empowerment in all countries. We look forward to the results of the independent evaluation of the "Delivering as One" initiative. Its findings will constitute a fundamental contribution to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

Mr. President,

The European Union and its Member States remain sincerely committed to multilateral approaches. We value the UN operational activities and recognize their relevance and contribution. We appreciate all efforts made within the system to strengthen results based management and reporting and we encourage further efforts in this area.

At a time of economic crisis, when all donors need to make special efforts to make good on their ODA commitments, effective and efficient use of the scarce resources available is all the more important. The UN system is making efforts to ensure that it plays its part and it can be assured of full support from the EU as it strives to meet these challenges.

Thank you, Mr. President.