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2011 ECOSOC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES SEGMENT

Panel discussion: "Strengthening the leadership of the United Nations Resident coordinator: role of accountability frameworks, resources and results reporting"

3:30 – 6:00 p.m. 15 July 2011

Geneva

**Introductory remarks by
H.E. MR. GONZALO GUTIÉRREZ
VICE-PRESIDENT OF ECOSOC**

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have come to the last session for today. Let me first convey my warm welcome to Ms. Helen Clark and our distinguished panelists. Let me also convey the apologies of Minister Tuwo of Indonesia and Permanent Secretary Dr. Likwelile of the United Republic of Tanzania who regrettably cannot join us today due to urgent circumstances.

Yesterday and today, your rich deliberations pointed rightly and frequently to the importance of coordination. Indeed, harnessing the strengths of a system with around 30 diverse organizations demands coordination of highest caliber. The resident coordinator (RC) system plays a central role in making such coordination possible.

The UN system has strived constantly to make the resident coordinator system work better. For example, UNDP, as manager of the resident coordinator system, established 51 Country Directors during the last four years to unload the day-to-day operational tasks from the resident coordinator. Standards to ensure mutual accountability between members of UN country teams and with resident coordinators are increasingly applied. Performance as a team member is also given growing attention – although this remains work in progress. These are just a few examples.

But, the long-standing challenges remain. I have heard repeatedly that the job of the resident coordinator is a "mission impossible". Resident Coordinators represent the UN without official accreditation. They coordinate without resources and formal authority. They are oftentimes caught in situations where they have to rely on personal leadership to achieve organizational goals.

As we design the 2012 Comprehensive Policy Review of operational activities – the QCPR- we must ask ourselves if this is sustainable. We must ensure the resident coordinator has access to the authority and resources to lead and coordinate the UN country team and account to the government.

This panel is the opportunity to hear the testimony from both sides, the government and the UN system, in particular the resident coordinators themselves. It should give orientations as to how the resident coordinator system should evolve. It should also point to the areas that are of particular value to the QCPR.