



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council Operational Activities Segment
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General Debate – Statement by Australia, New Zealand and Canada

Statement by Ambassador Gillian Bird
Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

Mr President

I am making this statement today on behalf of the Governments of Canada and New Zealand and also my own country, Australia.

I would like to convey our shared delight in Amina Mohammed taking up her new role as Deputy Secretary General, and like everyone in this room, we applaud her drive, her passion and her analysis of what needs to happen to implement our shared agenda.

In lending our strong support to the Executive Office we would make the following points.

First: we have the political guidance and the mandates that we require to make UN reform a reality.

We have agreed to reform in Addis, Sendai, New York, Paris, Istanbul and Quito.

We have agreed to reform in the development system, in the humanitarian system, in the name of sustaining peace, in the name of Secretariat and ECOSOC reform, and in the name of General Assembly alignment.

At this juncture, what we need most is strong leadership to make our proposed reforms a reality.

Second: in undertaking reform we must remember our roots.

The UN was founded to create an environment where all states, and all peoples may thrive. Development and the recognition of human rights are at the heart of this history. Any reform to the UN system must be based on a fundamental respect for the sanctity of human life and a recognition of the importance of giving each person the opportunities and capacities to make that life their own.

This is why last mile programming is so important, why a gender equality focus is important, why disability inclusion is important, why remembering small island developing states, least developed countries and landlocked countries is important – so our agenda reaches everyone.

Third: in undertaking reform we must always remember the ambition in our shared goals.

The 2030 Agenda and its message of eradicating poverty, achieving sustainable development and leaving no one behind is about changing the world in which we currently live. It cannot be achieved by using an aid mentality, or an MDG mentality. It is about transforming economies, providing social safety nets, harnessing finance, innovation and technology, and partnerships. It is about looking beyond borders and beyond conversations within the UN and thinking about how to provide solutions in the world in which our citizens live – linking prosperity to sustainability and resilience to peace.

Finally: in reform we must be ruthless in maximizing the contribution the UN plays in our shared agenda.

The UN and the UN development and humanitarian systems have a unique comparative and collaborative advantage. The UN is a globally trusted partner, global convenor and global actor in thought leadership, strategic policy development, normative development and results on the ground.

However, the UN cannot deliver on its mandates alone. It needs partners to deliver on the ambitious intergovernmental agendas its members have agreed at scale. In reforming its systems and operations, we therefore need to ensure that the UN harnesses the

huge capacity of governments, the private sector, international and national development banks, philanthropics, civil society, parliamentarians, and citizens to deliver on a shared, global agenda.

Reforms must be based on strongly and collaboratively led organisations that are premised on sophisticated financing and learning systems which are built on empowered leadership and empowered people.

We have a shared dream of a world whose time has come.

Australia, New Zealand and Canada look forward to playing our part in supporting this time of reform to make this shared dream possible.

Thank you.