



28 December 2018

Dear Colleagues,

As the year comes to an end, the Vice-Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) and myself wish to express our gratitude for your work and support to the reform of the United Nations development system.

On 1 January 2019, the United Nations development system embarks on a journey of transformation that will bring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to the country level in an unprecedented manner.

I want to thank each member of the UNSDG for its support and engagement so far. Together, we have come a long way in charting the path to reform. We have engaged tirelessly, exchanging ideas, assessing implications, and determining a roadmap for implementation that has informed the vision of the Secretary-General and the leadership of Member States. Honest dialogue, inclusivity and, at times, a push by some to bring along others, have been essential in this journey. Your engagement was a testimony to the fact that the reform of the United Nations development system can only succeed through a good balance of collective ownership, ambition and, to some degree, a leap of faith into the future.

We all know, however, that this is only the beginning of this transformative journey. Expectations are high. 2030 is around the corner and, at the current pace, the world will not meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), nor will it avoid the tragic consequences of climate change. This is no time for an incremental approach. Current challenges demand that we scale up with the urgency it demands.

A number of workstreams are underway, from the finalization of the Management and Accountability Framework, through the development of a system-wide strategic document and a redesigned United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), to the review of multi-country offices and the regional review that will ensure that our regional assets can better synchronize with the needs on the ground. Each and everyone's active leadership is essential. I count on you to continue to offer your entities' support and full collaboration to these and all other reform efforts.

Principals of United Nations Sustainable Development Group

It is also critical that every entity plays its part in support of an adequately resourced Resident Coordinator system, including by making full and timely contributions to the cost-sharing arrangement. In this regard, I urge entities that have not yet done so, to sign and deposit 2019 contributions to the UNSDG cost-sharing convenience at the earliest.

Lastly, we need to be alert and engaged in the Funding Compact discussions. In that regard, I deeply appreciate the engagement and support given to the Transition Team in resolving many issues on the technical work. Although ultimate decision-making rests with the Member States, they can benefit from the advice that our respective entities can provide through transparent, open and inclusive dialogue, and we must keep the sense of urgency on all fronts.

It is our shared responsibility to take all necessary measures to enable change on the ground and to maximize the opportunities offered by this reform. Ultimately, we will be judged by the results we deliver in each country, and our job is to ensure that our teams in the front line have all the tools and support required to succeed.

Success will rest first and foremost on a shift in our organizational culture and our mindsets at all levels. I count on Principals to continue to foster a culture that goes beyond single entity mandates and embraces the integrated approach required by the 2030 Agenda. No entity alone can deliver on the ambition of the SDGs and the United Nations development system must finally become more than the sum of our parts.

I expect Principals to work closely together in the UNSDG and to infuse the same spirit across all levels in their own organizations. At the country level, we count on United Nations country teams to work cohesively and in tandem with Resident Coordinators and embrace the transformation ushered in by General Assembly resolution 72/279. United Nations country teams are at the heart of our ability to realize the promise of the 2030 Agenda, and the success of the new coordination system also means the success of each individual member of our United Nations family.

As called for by the General Assembly, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will also be rolling out its integrator function, which will allow United Nations country teams to boost joint support to governments in cross-cutting areas, drawing on the assets of the entire United Nations system, including non-resident agencies. This will be critical in operationalizing a new generation of United Nations country teams, with Resident Coordinators fully focused on coordination and relying on UNDP's operational and programmatic capacities to pull together the expertise available across the system in response to country priorities.

I am aware that the repositioning of the United Nations development system comes with great effort by all agencies, funds and programmes. Real transformation is never easy. The next twelve to eighteen months will take us out of our comfort zone, but at the end of the journey lies a truly transformed United Nations development system – one that can deliver better results, at scale, in a way strengthens the prospect of achieving the 2030 Agenda for everyone, everywhere. As Chair of the UNSDG, I am confident that each and every one of your entities will continue to embrace the vision of the Secretary-General and honour the trust placed on us by Member States.

The world is counting on the United Nations to deliver. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is a promise we cannot break. Together, we will do it. The road ahead is truly exciting, and I look forward to continuing this journey with you.

Wishing you all a prosperous New Year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'A. J. Mohammed', written in a cursive style.

Amina J. Mohammed