

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda

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**UNECE and the regional review of the UN Development System:  
Background note on the ongoing reform discussions**

Note by the Secretariat

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**Background**

In resolution A/RES/72/279 on the *Repositioning the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development* (paragraphs 18 and 19), Member States reaffirmed the role and functions of the United Nations development system (UNDS) at the regional level, underlined the need to revamp its regional structures, recognizing the specificities of each region, emphasized the need to address gaps and overlaps at the regional level, and endorsed a phased approach to revamping the UNDS at the regional level.

Member States have requested the Secretary-General, as part of the first phase of the reform, to implement a number of measures to optimize functions and enhance collaboration at the regional and subregional levels (para 19.a). It is acknowledged that this first phase is well advanced in the UNECE region. In particular the existing good collaboration in the regional UN system is commended as a model for other regions.

In a second phase, options should be provided, on a region-by-region basis, for longer-term reprofiling and restructuring of the regional assets of the United Nations, for discussion by the Economic and Social Council at the operational activities for development segment of its 2019 session (para 19.b).

A Task Team, including the five Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions, five representatives (one from each region) from a selected regional office of Agencies, Funds and Programmes (AFPs) and five Resident Coordinators (one from each region), one representative of DESA and one of DOCO, will draft a report, probably with the assistance of a consultant, to support this process. While the terms of reference and organizational details are still under review, it is expected that the report will include

- a comprehensive review of the regional assets of the UNDS, including not only the Regional Commissions, but all Agencies, Funds and Programmes;
- proposals for the reprofiling of regional assets and capabilities of the UNDS at the regional level to support Member States in the implementation of the Agenda 2030, bearing in mind the specificities of each region;
- medium-term implementation plans to ensure better integration of the work of AFPs' regional entities and Regional Commissions and to increase the impact of development results at the country level through substantive support to Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams.

The report on the regional review will feed into the *Secretary-General's report on the longer-term reprofiling and restructuring of the regional assets of the United Nations*, tentatively scheduled to be presented to Member States in the spring of 2019 and formally discussed during the ECOSOC in May 2019.

Further detailed consideration how to proceed with the regional review has been postponed to October by Headquarters, so that the actual review will not start before November 2018.

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In preparation of the discussions at the regional level, the Executive Secretary will provide an update on the latest information from UN Headquarters on next steps envisaged in the reform process. Further, she will position UNECE in the larger UN Development System and highlight opportunities and challenges of the review exercise, bearing in mind the specificities of the UNECE region and UNECE's mandate. To frame the discussions, a preliminary assessment will be offered on

- areas where UNECE provides special value added to the UNDS,
- existing good practices that facilitate effective UNDS collaboration in the region, and
- areas with potential for further strengthening.

Delegations are invited to an exchange of views on the issue as an initial contribution to the review process and in preparation of future discussions during the regional review.

Questions for consideration may include:

1. How does your delegation see UNECE's role in the revamped UNDS? What does your delegation consider to be key assets of UNECE that provide special value added?
2. How can UNECE's policy and technical expertise be harnessed even more effectively and more systematically in support of the new Resident Coordinator System and revamped UNDAFs at the country and subregional levels?

**The agenda item is for information; no decision is expected at this time.**