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## Statement by Alessandro Motter Senior Advisor, Economic and Social Affairs

### Operational Activities for Development Segment Economic and Social Council

United Nations  
22 February 2016

Mr. Vice President,

This debate is about finding ways to adapt the UN Development System (UNDS) to the new 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 2030 Agenda contains some important references to the role of parliaments in strengthening country ownership and facilitating the implementation of the new commitments. It follows from this that any reform of the UNDS at the country level needs to extend to the relationship with the parliaments.

A new mindset is needed in the way UN Country Teams (UNCTs) operate so that they come to regard the national parliament as a distinct partner alongside the executive branch. It is odd that again this morning only civil society and the private sector are mentioned as partners the UNDS needs to work with, and not national parliaments.

Resolution 68/272 of May 2014 very clearly points to this. In paragraph 12, the General Assembly *“calls upon UN Country Teams to develop a more structured an integrated manner of working with national parliaments, inter alia, by involving parliaments in consultations on national development strategies and on development aid effectiveness.”*

As you proceed to strengthen the UNDS, particularly through this year's resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR), you have an opportunity to provide a clear mandate to Country Teams to work with the parliament in each country. This might include:

- *first*, that each country team designate a focal point to manage relations with the parliament;
- *second*, that each country team adopt a work plan vis-à-vis the parliament which also abides by the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments that IPU and UNDP have endorsed;
- *third*, that resources be earmarked for UN Country Teams to work with the parliament and provide coordinated assistance as needed.

In many countries, the parliament is under-resourced and unable to carry out effectively key functions of representation and accountability. The parliament is often not included in relevant national development processes.

The UNDS can help mainstream the SDGs in parliaments in a number of ways, including by:

- Supporting reviews of parliaments' internal capacities to mainstream the SDGs, alongside the IPU;
- Providing independent data, analysis and information to parliaments. For example, this may help parliaments analyse the key budget document that the government must present each year and that will need to be aligned with the SDGs;
- Supporting parliaments in drafting legislation consistent with the SDGs;
- Facilitating parliaments' engagement in the process for the national sustainable development plan so that it is truly participatory and representative of all concerns;
- Helping provide constituents' feedback to parliamentarians on SDGs implementation on the ground (much as UNDP's My World survey has been doing).

Finally, it will be important for the UNDS in each country to keep the parliament informed of its own activities and plans.

Thank you.