



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

29 January 2019

Excellency,

I write to thank you for your support and leadership in advancing the reform agenda of the United Nations. The adoption of landmark resolutions last year showed that Member States and the Secretariat are truly united in their desire to strengthen our Organization.

With the start of the new year, four new departments came into being: the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, the Department of Operational Support, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Department of Peace Operations. We also launched a reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system, served by a newly-fortified Development Coordination Office, thus opening a new era in the way we support efforts to advance sustainable development. I am grateful to those Member States that have provided financial resources for the Resident Coordinator system, and encourage all countries to contribute, ideally in the first quarter of this year, to ensure that we can fully deliver on the expectations of the United Nations General Assembly.

We are also taking forward the other mandates contained in General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system. Work has advanced on the multi-country office review; the preparation of proposals on our regional assets; the Funding Compact and the development of a system-wide strategic document. I have asked the Deputy Secretary-General and my Transition Team to continue to work closely with all Member States, ahead of formal consideration of these matters by the Economic and Social Council at its Operational Activities Segment in May.

On 1 January 2019, I issued new, simplified and streamlined delegations of authority to more than 200 heads of entity across the Secretariat – including Heads of Departments, Offices, Regional Commissions, Field Missions and Resident Coordinator offices. This is a major decentralization that cuts through bureaucracy and will achieve of our goal of bringing decision-making closer to the point of delivery. It will empower managers to efficiently manage the resources entrusted to them by the Member States for the implementation of their mandates. The necessary legal instruments, internal controls and enhanced accountability mechanisms were put in place to support the new system.

All Permanent Representatives of
Member States of the United Nations
New York

The review of the Financial Regulations and Rules has now been completed, and the revisions will be submitted to the General Assembly in March. A pilot project for the 360-degree performance evaluation of senior managers was launched, and the new performance management system will be rolled out later this year. The draft policy and guidelines for programme evaluation of the Secretariat will soon become operational. We have also begun working on the new format for the annual programme budget, and regular budget entities are finalizing their submissions for 2020. Dashboards were introduced in some departments to increase transparency and enable senior managers to monitor their financial and programme performance. Those remaining will become operational in the months ahead.

The internal coordination mechanisms for the new management and peace and security architecture are in place. The new Standing Principals' Group, coordinating our efforts across the peace and security pillar, held its first meeting in early January and identified several areas for action. The first assessment mission reflecting this new integrated approach to peace and security matters was deployed earlier this month. The Management-Client Board, which will provide an important feedback loop between client entities and the new management structures, held its inaugural meeting this week.

Together, these and other measures will allow the United Nations to act with greater coherence and clarity of purpose, and to deliver in a more effective and accountable manner. At the same time, this is only the beginning of a transformative process that will unfold for the next 12 to 18 months. More will be done throughout 2019 to fully realize the benefits of reform, including through changes in business processes and working methods. Based on the experience of six pilot projects completed in December, a Benefits Management Framework and Module were developed and are currently being deployed within the three reform tracks. This will enable us to measure the benefits of reform efforts, and will allow us to make course corrections and/or scale up the benefits being realized.

As we move forward, your continued engagement and partnership will be more important than ever. Our direction of travel is clear, and the foundation has been laid. We now have the mandates, the political will and collective responsibility to make the most of this journey. Together, we can make our United Nations a truly responsive and accountable instrument for meeting today's challenges and achieving the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'António Guterres', written over a horizontal line that tapers to the right.

António Guterres