

30 October 2018

Tom Tugendhat MP  
Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
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Secretary of State

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your letter of 10th October 2018 about the UN Secretary-General's plans for reforms to the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) system. My colleague Lord Bates, the Minister of State for International Development, whose Department leads on UN Development System (UNDS) Reform, has seen and approved this letter.

The RC is a vital part of the UN's infrastructure on the ground; they are responsible for coordinating UN activity and representing the UN at the highest level. The Secretary-General's (SG) reforms to the RC system seek to enhance this capability, making the RC independent of any UN agency and empowering them to make strategic decisions on UN operations in the field.

I understand your concern that these changes could potentially lead to unwanted political interference in the appointment and work of the RC. We shared these concerns initially, but I can reassure you that the changes being made to the RC system will not affect the way the RC is appointed. Whilst the SG's Implementation Plan for UNDS reform refers to the role of host governments, it does not extend their role in the appointment process any further than already exists. RC appointments have always required the agreement of host governments, as has the overall framework for the UN's operations in country (the UN Development Assistance Framework); the SG's reforms will not change that. The current reforms to the RC selection process rather seek to improve (and widen) the talent pool and ensure that candidates are even more well qualified to offer the independent leadership required for this crucial role.

We support the SG's reforms, and have played an active role both in the development of proposals and in the negotiation process where they were agreed (UN resolution 72/279). We believe that, implemented fully, the changes to the RC will result in a genuine improvement in the way the UN works on the ground, increasing collaboration and taking a more holistic approach to each country's development needs. It is only through a more coherent approach that we will be able to meet the challenges of the Global Goals, and we will continue to support the SG in his efforts to implement these changes.

**THE RT HON JEREMY HUNT MP**