

STATEMENT BY MRS. RUCHI GHANASHYAM, MINISTER, ON INFORMAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON UN SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE AND THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON ITS RECOMMENDATIONS ON FEBRUARY 07, 2008

Mr. Co-Chairs,

India welcomes you in your role as Co-Chairs for continuing the consultations of the Report of the High Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence. We look forward to working with you in a constructive and positive manner in an open and transparent process. We would like to thank the two Co-Chairs who guided the process during the 61<sup>st</sup> UNGA. We recognize the diligent effort that went into the preparation of their report.

We associate ourselves with the views expressed by the distinguished Ambassador of Cuba on behalf of the Joint Coordinating Committee of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement. India's approach on process issues is guided by the decision of the JCC of G-77 and NAM. The Chair of NAM has already expressed the JCC position in this regard. As stated by him, an evolution in this position would depend on our consultations.

Mr. Co-Chairs,

India has stated on numerous occasions, including in our statement with Sweden in the Joint Board of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP held recently, that the objective of the reform process cannot just be the improvement of coordination or the achievement of coherence. Better coordination or coherence is only the means to an end. Our destination is a better performing UN development system that is able to respond to the needs of developing countries in their endeavours to achieve their development goals, with the UN incurring lower transaction costs and reporting burdens. It is presumed that improved coherence or coordination should lead to a better delivery of development assistance. This presumption needs to be constantly measured against reality so that the results of improved coordination and coherence are measured against better performance while taking into account the costs incurred for achieving the improved coordination and coherence.

This reality check, Mr. Co-Chairs, cannot be done without an independent evaluation of ongoing reforms. New ways of improving the delivery of UN development assistance at the country level are being tried out in the eight pilot countries. We have periodically been briefed about the results of the pilots. It appears from the feedback provided so far that the results have been positive and that the process has been rather smooth. We welcome this. However, an independent evaluation can go into the various aspects and implications of the reforms being tried out. We look forward to the results of such an evaluation promised by the Secretary General.

At this stage, while we are still awaiting the evaluation, we are not very clear about the expectations for furthering the reform proposals at the country level. The logical way forward would be for us to receive the evaluation report, study the lessons learned and take those lessons on board before implementation of the reforms further, while leaving the choice to each member state to choose their preferred model. We need to discuss this question and need some clarity on this issue.

The Chair of NAM, in his statement on behalf of the JCC, has identified funding as one of the issues important for the NAM and G-77. Indeed, without adequate funding, the UN development system cannot be expected to play a meaningful role in development. The reports that we have been receiving over the last few years have identified the problems being caused by inadequate core funding. The imbalance between core and non-core funding has been growing to the disadvantage of core resources. Even as we recognize the contribution of non-core resources, we must also recognize the implications of a smaller base of core resources having to bear the additional burden of the growing contributions to non-core resources. One of the solutions being cited is the need for new modalities of funding, even as existing analysis has shown that a multiplicity of funding modalities adds to the transaction costs. Predictably of funding has been cited as a challenge in our discussion today by one of the pilot countries. This issue needs to be faced squarely and while discussing the way forward.

The functioning of the UN development system at the country level is not the only area of reform that the Report of the High Level Panel touched upon. One of the questions that we need to address is that in the absence of an evaluation of the pilots what kind of governance reforms should be implemented at this stage. The report recommends the setting up of a Development Policy and Operations Group chaired by the UNDP Administrator. We would need a briefing from UNDP on how they see this particular proposal while the evaluation of the pilots is awaited. We also need to look at the other proposals on governance issues in the light of the ECOSOC reforms already agreed to by the General Assembly. The implications of the recently adopted TCPHR resolution also need to be taken into account.

Mr. Co-Chairs,

We recognize that you have before you the complex task of analysing the High Level Panel Report in the context of the developments that have taken place separately in the UN system. We note your view that, perhaps, at this stage it would be necessary to look at the report and identify specific areas on which movement is feasible. We look forward to the analysis that would suggest the best way for us to deal with the recommendations of the High Level Panel Report. In this analysis the issues of interest to developing countries have already been identified in our statements today, especially the statement made on behalf of the JCC of G77 and NAM. Once again, Mr. Co-Chairs, we would like to assure of our intention of working with you in a constructive and positive manner.

Thank you, Mr. Co-Chairs.

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