

STATEMENT BY MR. ARINDAM BAGCHI, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT
MISSION OF INDIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, ON OPERATIONAL
ACTIVITIES SEGMENT, SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL 2007, GENEVA ON JULY 12, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome this opportunity to participate in the discussions on the UN operational activities for development. We thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive and analytical report, prepared on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the UN System. The report presents a useful review and follow-up to General Assembly resolution 59/250 on TCPR and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document. We associate ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the Group 77.

The discussions during the deliberations of the operational activities segment in this year's ECOSOC are a useful curtain raiser to the forthcoming discussions of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for development of the UN system during the 62nd General Assembly. We look forward to a meaningful process aimed at strengthening the UN operational activities for development.

As the report states, the UN development system provides a diversity of resources through about 40 funds, programmes and agencies. This rich reservoir of resources is valued not just for its technical, scientific and developmental inputs, but for the distinctive characteristics of objectivity, neutrality and impartiality that underpin its work.

Mr. Chairman,

The report of the Secretary-General provides useful analysis of the overall trends in funding for the UN development system and the predictability and dependability of funding. The report's analysis points to some disturbing facts. These deserve to be seriously looked at during discussions of the forthcoming TCPR. The imbalance between the core and non-core resources due to the

increasing non-core resources is only one of the areas of concern. The report states that the increase in resources has not kept pace with the systems' new intergovernmental mandates. There is also need to distinguish humanitarian funding from funding that comes for long-term development cooperation. This is necessary in view of the report's comment that a significant amount of funding for operational activities includes the financing of humanitarian assistance. The report of the Secretary-General does not provide us much comfort on the issue of reduction of transaction costs and cost recovery either. These and other observations and analysis provide useful inputs for the examination of the recommendations of the High Level Panel report on System-wide Coherence. We believe that all these issues need to be taken up during the broader intergovernmental discussions on the UN's activities for development.

The report gives a useful overview of the efforts of the UN development system for capacity development, which was emphasized by GA resolution 59/250 on TCPR. The UN system can make an important contribution to capacity building in developing countries by bringing forth its rich resource of technical expertise and reservoir of best practices. We note that there has been progress in this area. We note with satisfaction that there is greater awareness within the UN entities of the need to engage national staff and use national expertise and institution. While we appreciate that the practice of national execution is currently widespread, we are not clear about the report's observation that this is no longer systematically monitored as a separate modality. We would request clarification on this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

India is a staunch supporter of South-South Cooperation. We support the increasing cooperation amongst the countries of the South, while integrating the inputs of the developed countries through triangular partnerships as a useful means of furthering the development objectives. We would emphasize, however, that South-South Cooperation is a way to enhance exchange of best practices among developing countries and helps in further developing their respective capacities. It is not a substitute for, nor a supplement, to North-South cooperation.

On the issue of gender mainstreaming, we notice that considerable effort has been made. Such effort must continue. However, while advocating gender mainstreaming in its work, including at the country level, the UN needs to be mindful of maintaining a gender balance in its own work force. The record on this account has not been very satisfactory up till now, particularly when it comes to the senior level appointments. We are also unhappy that detailed data has not been provided on this issue, nor does the report contain any analysis on representation of women from developing countries in the UN system. We would

request information on this issue and are interested in details of women from developing countries at all levels.

The report's focus on transition from relief to development is somewhat limited. We would have preferred more information on UN's contribution to post-natural disaster transition.

The report contains a detailed analysis on the effort to achieve coherence in the work of the UN development system. These inputs would be useful in our discussions and negotiations for the forthcoming TCPR, as well as in the intergovernmental discussions on the report of the High Level Panel.

We note that there has been consistent effort to improve the evaluation function in the UN development system. We support regular and systematic evaluation of the UN's delivery of development assistance including an assessment of the impact of reforms on transaction costs and reporting burdens of the field offices, as well as the programme countries. We believe that while examining the proposals for new structures for evaluation, there would be need to avoid duplication of existing structures.

Mr. Chairman,

The forthcoming TCPR process would enable Member States to take stock of the functioning of the operational activities of the UN development system. It would also make recommendations for future direction, based on current context and conditions, for the design and delivery of UN operational activities for development in the long-term perspective. The deliberations of the ECOSOC on this important subject will, we hope, provide useful inputs and clarifications on the important issues highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General, thereby contributing to a deeper discussion of these issues in the General Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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