Check Against Delivery

Statement

by

Ambassador Tekeda Alemu

Permanent Representative of the

Permanent Mission of the Federal Democratic Republic

of Ethiopia to the United Nations

On behalf of Africa

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Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Africa Group. Our Group, as always, associates itself with the statement by our Chair of the Group of 77 and China, Ambassador Thomson.

The Africa Group would like also to thank the Secretary-General for the very useful reports presented.

Mr. Chair,

The Africa Group believes that we are at a very critical period — and in a turning point — in international development cooperation. The Millennium Declaration that led to the MDGs began a period of more intensive activities to ensure a more effective international development cooperation in the social area. We have two years to decide in a definitive way how much successful the project has been. The result so far has been mixed, as was made clear a few weeks ago by the High-level Special Event. With the outcome of Rio+20, we have entered a new phase, to be built on the results of the MDGs, but designed to take us much further towards ushering in a new framework of sustainable development and a universally
applicable development cooperation process, now generally described as the post-2015 development agenda, meant to cater to the interest of both the present and future generations. In short, our group believes that we are involved at present in the process of defining the very nature of international development cooperation for years to come. One can see therefore how much the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals is really daunting and how much the work of the High-Level Political Forum is awaited with great anticipation.

The United Nations development system is at the center of this transformative process for which operational activity for development of the United Nations is indeed the flag ship. That is why we attach extremely great importance to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and to the implementation of GA Resolution 67/226.

This specific resolution has laid out the fundamental principles that should govern the operational activities of the United Nations System and sets out guidelines for how development cooperation should be handled within a multilateral framework. The resolution spells out in detail how all those involved – the United Nations development system, programme countries and donors and those responsible for non-core resources – should carry out their respective responsibilities in order to achieve optimal results from multilateral development cooperation.
Mr. Chairman,

The Future We Want, the outcome document of Rio+20 proclaims in its very second paragraph that "poverty eradication is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. In this regard, we are committed to freeing humanity from poverty and hunger as a matter of urgency." The QCPR whose implementation we are considering today is fully in consonance with what is prescribed in the Future We Want, which is our present guide for crafting the post 2015 development agenda. The QCPR has accorded a special section for poverty eradication in which it says, among other things, it "Reaffirms that eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development in developing countries, particularly in Africa, and underlines the importance of accelerating sustainable, broad-based, inclusive and equitable economic growth for the benefit of all people and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals".

Permit me, Mr. Chairman, to underline one simple point here and that is the QCPR does not say eradicating poverty is a great global challenge, but rather it says "eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge". It is also in that context that the situation of Africa is referred to.
Here it is very critical to also underline the fact that the eradication of poverty is, in the first instance, the responsibility of those directly affected, but the complimentary role that partners, most of all, the United Nations Development System plays is indeed critical. In so far as the role that the directly affected play is decisive in eradicating poverty, it follows that their ownership of their national development programme; and that the United Nations development system is guided by their priority, and operational activities are well integrated and coherent with those national priorities, is indispensable. That is precisely why it is so important that the growing imbalance between core and non-core resources and the issues surrounding cost recovery are addressed as a matter of high priority. It is not the case that non-core resources are not needed; or that they don’t address real needs. They do. But their downside — in terms of their potential to distort programme priorities, contribute to fragmentation and to lack of United Nations System-wide focus, and higher transaction costs — is well expounded in the Secretary-Generals report in document A/68/97(P.14), that it might only be necessary to add one further crucial element, that is, non-core resources may not also enhance ownership of development strategies by programme countries.
Mr. Chairman,

I wish now to turn to highlighting one or two additional points that in our view would help enhance the role of the United Nations development system in assisting those in special situation like Africa to eradicate poverty, achieve the MDGs and sustainable development. With respect to enhancing ownership of programme countries, though tested only as a pilot initiative, the modality of “One United Nations” is an approach which deserves to be encouraged. It is because of the potential usefulness of the approach that on top of the original eight pilot countries, and other self-starters, there are many that are considering to be part of the initiative. It is hoped that the planned detailed guidance which is said would be ready in the fourth quarter of 2013 would throw light on how the principle of Operating as One with One Programme, Common Budgetary Framework and One Fund would be put to work. No doubt, one major issue that needs to be addressed relates to how to overcome the challenge posed by the specific mandates of participating entities and thus the imperatives of vertical accountability. But the benefits of “Delivering-as-one” in terms of enhancing the responsiveness of United Nations development system to programme countries appears more or less self-evident.
Another point that the Africa group wants to stress is in relations to south-south and triangular cooperation and the potential that is to be found in that area for enhancing the capacity of programme countries to achieve national goals and ensure ownership to their strategies, including through developing their human resources. Last but not least, the Africa group considers the emphasis placed in the QCPR on gender equality and the call upon the United Nations development system to ensure that gender dimensions are systematically addressed in programme planning, critical for addressing the challenge of eradicating poverty.

As I conclude, I wish to reiterate that for the Africa group, there is no greater challenge for the international community than the challenge of eradicating poverty. This is also, in the view of the Africa group, the thrust of the QCPR.

I Thank You.