Statement

by

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On
Agenda Item 24 sub items (a) and (b):
“Operational Activities for Development”
At the Second Committee of the 68th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly

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New York, 14 October 2013
Mr. Chairman,

I align myself with the statement made by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Ethiopia on behalf of the African group.

I thank the Secretary-General for the valuable reports prepared for the discussions under this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

We hold the view that the contribution of the UN development system is crucial in addressing poverty eradication, capacity-building and development, South-south cooperation and the development of national capacities, transitions from relief to development as well as gender equality and women’s empowerment and the achievement of MDGs.

The successful conclusion of Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of operational activities process and the establishment of key system-wide policy orientations for development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations system, last year is timely as we accelerate efforts to achieve the MDGs.

The increased effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations development system would therefore lead to successful delivery of assistance to developing countries, especially in achieving the Millennium Development agenda and in the preparations of the post-2015 development agenda.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Special Event of this September provides a solid foundation to step up achievement of the MDGs in the next two years. While the main responsibilities lie on each Member State, the
United Nations development system has an important role to play in advancing partnerships through the United Nations’ operational activities.

We are convinced that each country must take primary responsibility for its own development but we are recognizing that national efforts should be complemented by supportive global programmes, measures and policies aimed at expanding the development opportunities of developing countries, while taking into account national conditions and ensuring respect for national ownership, strategies and sovereign decisions.

The strength of the United Nations operational system lies in its legitimacy, at the country level, as a neutral, objective and trusted partner for both program countries and donor countries. Important steps have been taken to reinforce the operational activities, mainly through the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).

The follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review will be crucial to ensuring that developmental benefits are accrued by the communities who are most in need around the world. In this regard we are taking note of the policy document prepared by the Interim Coordination Mechanism which contained proposals for the pilot independent system-wide evaluations, and looks forward to working with Members during this session to agree on the themes for the pilot evaluations to be implemented.

Mr. Chairman,

Funding is a fundamental component of operational activities for development. We are concerned by the analysis in the Secretary-General’s report that the level of contributions to operational activities for development of the United Nations system for 2011 same as in 2010 in nominal terms and 6.9 per cent less
in real terms and that this included a 3% decline in core funding for development-related activities. We are also concerned about the existing imbalance between core and non-core funding for development-related activities, with only 28% of the finance going to core resources. Rebalancing of core and none-core resources by easing earmarking to at least a broader sector-specific level and harmonizing the requirements is critical for the predictability, reliability and stability of funding as well as for ensuring ownership of programs and strategies by programme countries.

We urge donors, in line with the QCPR and other relevant resolution, to prioritize core funding in recognition that it is the bedrock of the UN’s operational activities for development, and crucial for efficient implementation of the QCPR.

We share the concern expressed in resolution 67/226 over the lack of progress by the governing bodies in the development and operationalization of the concept of the “critical mass” of core resources which has since also been mentioned in the recent Secretary-General’s report A/68/97 – E/2013/87.

Mr. Chairman,

We firmly believe that South-South cooperation is an invaluable complement to North-South cooperation. It is a significant basis for partnership among developing countries. We underscore that South-South cooperation can supplement North-South Cooperation but can in no way substitute North-South aid flows.

We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the current state of South-South cooperation and the growing support by a large number of UN organizations, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, as well as regional commissions.
We welcome and support the proposed recommendations contained in the Secretary-General’s report and reiterate our position on the related actions to further strengthen the UN Office for South-South Cooperation as contained in document SSC/17/L.5 of 12 May 2012 and the Declaration adopted by the Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 held at UN Headquarters on 26 September 2013.

The UN system must enhance its efforts by taking concrete measures to mainstream support for South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation.

South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation it has proven to be an effective strategy to sustain the development efforts of developing countries. It provides effective means of enhancing the participation of developing countries in a global economy, by benefiting from best practices of strategies and policies implemented in countries which have gone through similar experiences. In this context, we would encourage the UN development system to utilize the databases and knowledge of the Office of South-South cooperation, which has a system-wide coordination role in this regard, to facilitate linkages for South-South and triangular cooperation. The Office of South-South Cooperation requires enhancement, including through the provision of additional resources for its coordinating activities.

We reiterate, in this regard, the request made therein to the Secretary-General to present, in consultation with Member States and as part of his comprehensive report to the 18th Session of the High Level Committee on South-South Cooperation, concrete recommendations for strengthening the Office, including its responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency to enable it to support the mainstreaming of South-South cooperation across the United Nations development system.