

Statement by Indian Delegation at Operational Activities of Development Segment,
ECOSOC

14th July 2011, Geneva

Mr. President,

At the outset, we thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important discussion on the UN operational activities for development.

Operational activities of development undoubtedly represent the most visible face of the United Nations' engagement in most countries, particularly developing countries.

India aligns itself with the Statement delivered by Argentina on behalf of the G-77 and China.

Mr. President,

As member-states gear up for the 2012 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, we once again have an opportunity to collectively take stock of the functioning of the operational activities of development of the UN system, reflect on the achievements and challenges, and find ways to plug the gaps and address the most pressing problems.

The QCPR process and the upcoming review next year assumes added significance given that not only will we be three years shy of the deadline for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but we would also need to meaningfully reflect on the post-2015 development landscape.

We are well aware that these are not easy times. The global financial crisis has exposed vulnerable communities and populations to greater pressures with implications on global poverty levels and on the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. It has also put collateral pressure on the availability of much needed financing for development. The reversals in hard-fought development gains as a result of the multiple crises are a source of concern.

It is therefore more pertinent than ever to discuss ways and means to strengthen these capabilities of the United Nations and to ensure that the MDG process continues to gain momentum.

Mr. President,

In this context, my delegation would like to highlight the following points that we believe are relevant to our deliberations:

- i. First and foremost, we wish to emphasize the universal, multilateral and impartial nature of UN Development Operations. The neutrality and impartiality of these activities is a sine qua non for the credibility and effectiveness of UN development operations and what sets it apart from other development actors.
- ii. Second, financing of the UN Development System, which has a direct bearing on the system's ability to deliver effectively, is under pressure. In order to ensure viable and robust development operations, there is a need to constantly monitor and ensure that financing for development fits the requirements for the fulfillment of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals. The requirement of enhanced ODA is all the more critical now when developing countries are faced with curtailed capital flows and increased programming needs.
- iii. Third, my delegation notes with concern the growing imbalance between core and non-core funding as well as the highly fragmented nature of non-core resources that impairs the effectiveness, coherence and relevance of UN development efforts. It also, needless to add, raises transaction costs. Predictable core funding is indispensable for a well-functioning development system.
- iv. Fourth, the fundamental principles of national ownership and leadership, and deference to national development priorities must be the pivots around which UN development activities are modeled and implemented. They must not be merely empty slogans but genuinely implemented on the ground in programme countries. Only then can we ensure sustainability of development results, while building capacity at the same time. Programme activities need to be harmonized with the budgetary and planning cycles of recipient Governments.
- v. Fifth, we welcome the priority attached to the use of national expertise and institutions. It is a good sign that the practice of national execution is becoming widespread. The demand-driven nature of UN development operations is highly valued by developing countries. This country-based approach, rooted in national priorities, has been strongly emphasized in the earlier reviews of the TCPR/QCPR process and remains of the greatest importance to my delegation.

- vi. Finally, member-states have time and again underscored through various GA and ECOSOC resolutions the role of capacity building in development and the role of the UN development system in this regard. In the current context, the UN development system must address the capacity building needs of countries with very diverse profiles, needs and capacities.

Mr. President,

While the UN development system has embraced South-South cooperation at the conceptual level, much remains to be done to mainstream it in the work of the Funds, Programmes and Agencies. My delegation is of the view that South-South cooperation is an important and practical mode of cooperation that can meaningfully supplement other streams of cooperation. If the United Nations development system genuinely wants to invest in such cooperation, it not only needs to give it sustained attention at the highest levels, but also devote real resources to nurturing it and shore up its efforts in this direction. Moreover, the focus of such efforts should be to bring together the expertise and technical capacities of the South with UN resources in joint partnerships.

The expectations from the United Nations development system are enormous. While appreciating the complex nexus of issues that inform the development agenda, we would like to see a greater sense of urgency in addressing the core challenges of poverty eradication, food security and energy access that constitute the most pressing development issues facing programme countries. Only then do we have a real chance at delivering durable solutions and genuine progress.

Thank you, Mr. President.
