



**STATEMENT DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE
UNITED NATIONS, AT THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNDP, UNFPA AND
UNOPS ANNUAL SESSION (New York, 9 June 2015)**

Mr President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset, the Group of 77 and China would like to compliment you for your able leadership and stewardship as President of the Executive Board in efficiently steering this Annual Session. We value your continued support in allowing different delegations to articulate their positions in a fair and transparent manner.

Mr President,

The Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate a number of points before your esteemed self could bring down the curtain on this current Session. We have raised concerns with regard to our Group's proposals that were not incorporated by the UNDP in the draft Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF). The Group would like to reaffirm the Executive Board Decision 2013/12, when it took note of the structure and approach of the draft IRRF of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. Failure to address this issue would render the IRRF Document irrelevant and obsolete as it will have no standing. The opportunity is not lost to address this matter once and for all. The Group is readily available to engage further with the UNDP to ensure that the IRRF document becomes an effective and inclusive framework.

The Group is concerned about protecting the national policy space and sovereignty of Member States. The United Nations Development System's assistance should be carried out for the benefit of programme countries, at their request and in accordance with their own priorities. In situations where the United Nations Development System imposes its own priorities on programme countries, this will not enhance the kind of partnership envisaged in the post-2015 development agenda. The usual business attitude is not encouraging at all.

Mr President,

The Group of 77 and China would also like to reiterate itself on the revised UNDP evaluation policy. With regards to this process, the Group has raised the following issues:

- We have consistently underscored the importance of Evaluation Reports as a useful tool for course-correction, and therefore would recommend that the new Evaluation Policy must ensure that recommendations of Evaluation Reports are complied with in a time-bound manner and their compliance be reported to the members of the Executive Board.
- With regard to the operational independence of the Evaluation Office and the process of the appointment of its Director, we have in that regard consistently emphasized the importance of ensuring the operational independence of the Office as being critical to its credibility. In this regard, we support the recommendations of the Evaluation Policy Review, as contained in Para-25 of DP/2015/5 and would request for its incorporation in the new draft Evaluation Policy. The recommendation clearly specifies the lead role of the Executive Board in the recruitment procedure

for the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), and that its duration, renewal and reporting be brought under the purview of the Executive Board, with the President of the Executive Board having a final say in the approval concerning the appointment of the afore-said Director position.

Mr President,

We have also emphasized that expenditure being incurred on evaluation processes should be capped under a reasonable percentage of the overall programme cost, so as to bring it in line with existing international practices of around five to seven percent (5-7 %) of the total programme/project cost. In no case, should expenditure incurred on evaluation alone be more than the total project/programme expenditure. A prudent analysis of this issue in this regard would assist the United Nations Development System in channeling funds in developmental programmes and projects in host countries, in line with its mandate

The Group of 77 and China has listened carefully to different and dissenting views from our development partners with greater interest. We do not seem to be seeing these issues through the same lens and we therefore request a decision on the evaluation policy to be deferred until the next session of the Executive Board, when there is an agreement amongst Member States on the contents of the new policy.

We thus call upon the Executive Board to only make recommendations on this issue during this current Annual Session, and thus a decision on this subject may be made in the second period of Sessions considering the agreement amongst Member States on the contents of the new Evaluation Policy.

Mr President,

Furthermore, the Group of 77 and China would like to state a few things about the organizational matters concerning this Annual Sessions of the Executive Board. This focuses entirely on the venue of these Sessions. It should be stated clearly that this issue has nothing to do with the frequency and timing of these regular sessions. The Group would like to reiterate its position that the UNDP's Annual Sessions should take place in New York, instead of Geneva, so as to broaden participation of developing countries in the decision-making processes of these deliberations.

The Group would like to urge Member States not to link the issue on the venue with the governance and functioning modalities of the Executive Board, in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR), as this has a potential to clutter these important processes.

Moreover, in these times of resource constraints being faced by the UNDP, when it had to resort to structural restructuring to save costs, the holding of UNDP Executive Board Sessions in New York would also result in a huge amount of cost savings for the UNDP's resources, which could then be further meaningfully utilised in programming functions of the UNDP.

If this decision needs to be indeed endorsed by a United Nations General Assembly Resolution, then the Group of 77 and China is willing to move that draft resolution for consideration by the General Assembly.

The Group is furthermore cognizant of the work that is being carried out by the Executive Board on this matter, regarding finding a solution. We are however, of the view that this must be done amicably and speedily rather than it being an after-thought. It is our principled view that this needs to be prioritised as a matter of urgency. This is pertinent and timely as we prepare for the next

Mr President,

The Group requests that Member States be allowed to provide inputs to the upcoming Report of the Secretary-General on the Inter-sessional Meeting of the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation, to take place in the next September. As requested, the Report of the Secretary-General must provide details of concrete measures that must be taken to further strengthen the Office of South-South Cooperation with additional financial, budgetary and human resources.

Mr President,

Once again, the Group of 77 and China would like to thank you for ably chairing this current Session and would like to re-commit our support to yourself and wishing you a great success in your Presidency of the Executive Board. Following the dedicated and meticulous approach you demonstrated while conducting business of this current Session, the Group is of the view that by virtue of this, the Executive Board will grow from strength to strength.

I thank you.

