



STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR BYRON BLAKE, DELEGATION OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES SEGMENT - ECOSOC SUBSTANTIVE SESSION 2008 (New York, 11 July 2008)

Mr. President,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Group welcomes this opportunity to present the views of developing countries on issues that are fundamental to strengthening the development pillar of the United Nations. We are of the view that enhancing the UN system's capacity to improve its response to the development needs of countries is vital, and speaks to the relevance of the Organization, in light of the many pressing development challenges we currently face.

2. The outcome of the Operational Segment of ECOSOC should therefore serve that purpose, i.e. it should improve the effectiveness of the UN System's response to the development needs and priorities of developing countries. The Council should therefore provide clear and direct guidance to the system, including its funds, programmes and specialized agencies, for the full implementation of GA resolution 62/208 on operational activities for development.

3. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China underscores the importance of GA Resolution 62/208 and the need for its comprehensive, effective and full implementation, as it provides a sound overarching framework for operational activities of the UN system. The resolution is a manifestation of the vision of a stronger role for the United Nations in advancing the development agenda and fully realizing all Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the MDGs. The process of implementing this resolution must therefore honour that vision.

Mr. President,

4. It is also essential that the implementation of resolution 62/208 includes a broader and more expeditious realization of the global partnership for development, as set out in the outcomes of major UN summits and conferences in the economic, social and related fields, such as the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

5. While recognizing that in order to be effective, implementation should favour system-wide actions that are coherent and coordinated, the Group of 77 and China stresses that it is a condition that such initiatives avoid "one size fits all" approaches. In providing guidance for implementation the Council should bear in mind that resolution 62/208 also underscores that operational activities must respond to the development needs of programme countries in a flexible manner and be carried out for the benefit of programme countries, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their own policies and priorities for development.

Mr. President,

6. It would be remiss of us to not emphatically underscore the importance for the UN System to enhance its implementation efforts while ensuring the realization of national ownership and

leadership of development processes. It is crucial to set into motion actions for enhancing coordination with national governments, as well as for favoring greater participation of national authorities in the preparation and development of all planning and programming documents of the UN system, including the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

7. Further, Mr. President, it cannot be overemphasized that success in implementing resolution 62/208 depends on addressing fundamental issues related to the funding of operational activities for development. The quantity, quality and predictability of development assistance from the UN system constitute a central priority for developing countries, and is a prerequisite for development effectiveness. Additionally, the growing imbalance between core and non-core resources for operational activities must be addressed as a matter of urgency in the context of implementation. The increasing shift from core to non-core funding leads to fragmentation and can impair the effectiveness and efficiency of operational activities, as non-core resources are unpredictable, increase transaction costs, causing competition among organizations, inefficiency, incoherence and fragmentation of the UN system, including at the country level. It is therefore essential to restore the balance between core and non-core funding resources as well as to ensure an expanding and adequate base of resources for development.

8. The Group of 77 and China also calls on the UN system to undertake implementation of the 2007 TCPR strictly within the limits of the intergovernmental mandates contained therein. It would not be appropriate or advisable to exceed those limits by projecting measures that are being considered in the context of ongoing inter-governmental processes.

Mr. President,

9. Having stated the views of the Group on some general issues related to the implementation of the 2007 TCPR, allow me to thank the Secretary-General for the report contained in document (E/2008/49) entitled "Management process for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system". The Group of 77 and China commends the comprehensive nature of the report, which includes guidelines, targets, benchmarks and time frames for the full implementation of resolution 62/208. However, the Group would like to make some comments specific to the matrix contained in its annex. Needless to say that these comments, attached to this statement being distributed, do not exhaust the views and/or position of the Group with regards to the management process for implementation, on the understanding that it is an evolving and continuous process.

10. The Group also wishes to thank the Secretary-General for the reports on "Comprehensive statistical analysis of the financing of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for 2006" (A/63/71-E/2008/4), and on "The functioning of the resident coordinator system, including costs and benefits" (E/2008/60).

11. The Group of 77 and China looks forward for continuous opportunities to convey its views on the on-going implementation of the General Assembly's policy guidance on operational activities. We also would like to request the UN system to duly take into account the views expressed by the Group on this issue today during the implementation process.

12. Finally, Mr. President, the Group of 77 and China reiterates its view that the advancement of the UN's development agenda rests with the full implementation of this TCPR resolution, including through the enhancement of the UN system's operational capacity to respond more broadly,

effectively and efficiently to the needs and priorities of developing countries in support of their efforts to achieve the IADGs, including the MDGs.

Thank you Mr. President.

Comments of the G77 and China on the annex contained in the Secretary-General's report entitled "Management process for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system" (E/2008/49).

(a) The Group of 77 and China believes that it is necessary to reflect more accurately the TCPR language in the matrix. In particular, we have identified some directions which quote TCPR language partially, overlooking elements of vital importance for a balanced and comprehensive projection of actions and targets.

(b) For example, the annex suggests that UNDG and UNCTs are directly responsible for the creation of an enabling environments to strengthen the links and cooperation between national Governments, the United Nations development system, civil society, non governmental organizations and the private sector, whereas the TCPR states that the role of the UN system is to assist national Governments in this regard, with their agreement and consent (Direction I-2).

(c) On the issue of South-South Cooperation, the Group notes the UNDG's intention to encourage UNCTs to promote South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation in implementing UNDAFs, and welcomes the leadership of the Chair of the UNDG in this system-wide effort. In this context, the Group is pleased that "an enhanced role is envisioned for the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation". However, the Group was not able to identify concrete actions and targets related to the support that the UN development system as a whole should provide to the Special Unit, in order to enable it to fulfil its mandate as the global and UN-wide coordinator for South-South and triangular cooperation, in accordance with paragraph 53 of the TCPR (Direction III.B-2). Therefore, the Group wishes to reiterate the request which our Heads of State and Government at the Second South Summit made for the Secretary-General "to take concrete measures to further strengthen the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation as a separate entity and a focal point for South-South cooperation within the United Nations system as reaffirmed by General Assembly resolution 58/220 of 23 December 2003, so as to enable it to carry out its full responsibilities, in particular through mobilization of resources for the advancement of South-South cooperation including triangular cooperation."

(d) On the issue of transition from relief to development more emphasis should be placed on the importance of enhancing coordination with national governments, in accordance with the general thrust of Chapter III (D) of the TCPR (Direction III.D-I).

(e) In relation to the strengthening of interdepartmental and inter-agency coordination in the context of transition from relief to development, it is vital that projected actions refer to the need for coordination approaches to take into account the complexity of challenges that countries in those circumstances face and the country-specific character of those challenges, in accordance to paragraph 71 of the TCPR (Direction III.D-2).

(f) More clarity should be provided in relation to the independent evaluation of the "Delivering as One" country programmes pilots. The annex states that further guidance will be sought from Member States on the decision to conduct that evaluation, which, nevertheless, constitutes a clear mandate deriving from paragraph 139 of the TCPR. We further note that no actions, targets or

benchmarks where included in this regard (Direction IV.E-4).

(g) The annex foresees the revision of the role of United Nations development system in middle-income countries. However, according to paragraph 27 of the TCPR, it is clear that the UN system has a role to play in supporting the efforts of those countries in order to address the significant challenges that they face in the area of poverty eradication, including through support to the effective development of comprehensive cooperation policies. The Group believes that more ambitious and concrete actions should be included in the annex, in accordance to the TCPR orientation (Direction II-3).

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