



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. MOHAMED MOUSSA, FIRST SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF EGYPT TO THE UNITED NATIONS: QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS ON REVAMPED REGIONAL APPROACH, AT THE BRIEFING ON THE REPOSITIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IN PREPARATION FOR THE OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT SEGMENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (New York, 22 February 2018)

The Group of G77 and China would like to note that the comments expressed today reflect the preliminary thoughts of the group on the issue of revamped regional approach.

First, the Group would like to make the following general remarks:

The Group stresses the crucial role of the regional approach in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the broader action for development. RECs have been advocating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level by laying out the roadmap of achieving the SDGs and also promoting regional connectivity and integration. The main task of the RECs should be to promote the economic and social development of the countries in the region in accordance with its mandate. While we share the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report for the need to review regional functions and capacities, we highlight however, that unlike the proposals on the global and national levels, the regional approach lacks sufficient detail.

We take note of the Secretary-General's intention to present proposals for longer-term restructuring of regional assets in 2019. We recall, however, that the ongoing process to reposition the UNDS aims at achieving a comprehensive reform, based on improved coherence and integration. In our view, this will not be achieved if the proposals at the regional level are not discussed in the same package as the proposals on the global and national levels.

We reiterate the need to avoid a "one-size-fits-all" model for the regional approach, as in all the other areas of the reform. The proposals should be based on a flexible approach, building upon the specificities of each region and the strengths of each Regional Commission.

The diverse functions of the Regional Economic Commissions need to be acknowledged. Their key role in the implementation of Agenda 2030, and in supporting development priorities of countries needs to be preserved and strengthened. RECs provide meaningful direct assistance, integrated policy advice, normative support and technical capacity to member-states. They can also serve as crucial platforms for intergovernmental cooperation and regional integration. Their functions therefore go well beyond both the role of "think tanks" and the support they provide to Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams.

Non-residence Agencies (NRAs) have decades of experience in responding to the specific needs of member states at all levels of development. It is necessary that we strengthen the role of NRCs at the regional level to contribute to the development process and enhance the capacities of member-states.

Finally, we note that the UNDS reform process at the regional level should be guided by the principles of poverty eradication, full respect of state sovereignty, as well as national ownership and

leadership over development pathways. The role of DESA, which is the leading UN entity in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, needs to be strengthened and its role of policy guidance should be enhanced at the regional level. The alignment of work both of the headquarter and regional bodies will further strengthen the UNDS as a whole.

Second, with regards to Section A, the Group would like to make the following remarks:

On paragraph 89, the Group agrees that the Regional Commissions have been significantly shaped by their respective regional contexts, and have developed differing strengths and focuses. We consider this to be the basis for any reform at the regional level, in order to build on and enhance the crucial functions already performed by the Commissions in each region.

With regards to paragraph 94, We agree that there is a need to address the areas of overlap and duplication at the regional level. We note however that such duplication may sometimes denote the prioritization of a particular policy area at the regional level. Any proposed reform in this regard should be based on a region-by-region approach.

On paragraph 96, we seek further clarity on the timeline proposed by the Secretary General to fully align the regional level with the 2030 Agenda.

Third, on Section B, The Group would like to make the following remarks:

Regarding paragraph 97, we welcome the initiative to clarify the division of labor at the regional level in order to avoid duplication.

On paragraph 98, we would like to have more details on the proposal to develop and implement a "protocol for country engagement by Secretariat entities and other non-resident agencies." What will be the role of national governments in this process? Does this imply that the direct channels of communication that exist between Member States, the UNDS and its entities would somehow be restricted?

On paragraph 99, we would like to seek further clarity on the proposal to include in the UNDAFs a "more thorough analysis of regional and transboundary issues." Will the inclusion of these issues be mandatory in the UNDAFs? Moreover, we seek more clarity on the proposal for "the inclusion by the RECs of all their country-level activities in the UNDAFs." Does this mean that the assistance provided directly by the RECs to Member States would somehow be undermined and can only be channeled through the RCs.

The Group would also seek further clarity on the proposal to establish a "common secretariat" for the regional coordination mechanisms and the regional teams of the undg, as outlined in paragraph 100. How will this new secretariat enhance coordination between them?

Finally, on Section C, the Group would like to make the following remarks:

On paragraph 101 (b): we welcome the reprofiling of the Regional Economic Commissions in light of the 2030 Agenda. However, we note that the role of regional bodies should not be limited to the sustainable development agenda but should also incorporate other instruments like the Addis Ababa Agenda. Also, it is critical that the role and identity of RECs is not limited to think-tanks and intellectual support agencies but should also be seen as "providers of policy advice, normative support and technical capacity."

On paragraph 101 (c), we would like to ask for further clarification regarding the possible

implications (human and budgetary resources) of the proposed "redeployment of staff of the regional RECs away from HQ to enhance capacities of UNCT and fill substantive gaps in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda". We believe that this proposal is not in line with the key role of the Regional Commissions at the regional and national levels and their value-added within the UNDS. The Commissions cannot be solely viewed as serving the Resident Coordinators and the UN country Teams, nor be their work reduced to a support role in this regard.

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