



**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR NASSIR ABDULAZIZ AL-NASSER, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE OF QATAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, ON AGENDA ITEM 3: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (New York, 9 July 2004)**

Madam President,

Thank you for giving me the floor to present the preliminary view of the Group of 77 and China on the report of the Secretary-General on this item. We intend to come with additional comments in the context of the debate in the General Assembly on the operational activities for development and the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities (TCPOR).

Madam President,

The 2004 triennial comprehensive policy review (TCPOR) is an important instrument for the monitoring and the assessment of the UN operational activities. The information provided by the Secretary-General in his report has to be seen in the context of the MDGs, including the review of the internationally agreed development goals, contained in the Millennium Declaration and other UN Conferences and Summits, at the country-level. The TCPOR provides an opportunity to consider the role of the UN development assistance from an integrated and long-term perspective.

### **Evaluation**

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for providing us with an excellent and comprehensive evaluation of the UN system operational activities for development. The report provides a balanced and objective assessment of the capacity of the UN system organizations at the country level. The Group believes that the process of evaluation should be conducted by those parts of the system that have a global perspective on development issues and are not directly involved in operational work. The Group would like to emphasize that the task of evaluation and assessment should always remain within the UN system and undertaken by those parts that have and can provide an objective analysis of the activities of the funds and programmes.

### **Country-level implementation and impact**

The Group of 77 appreciates the increasing search for more cohesiveness, cooperation and coordination in the UN development assistance by the UN Country Teams and the Resident Coordinators. While we support the report's indications that more remains to be done in this regard, there is an encouraging trend with respect to having a forum representing the UN system as a whole and ensuring the dialogue with the host country. How to strengthen the effectiveness and the system-wide participation of all UN system entities should form the basis of our deliberations on improving UN country level programme delivery. From the host government point of view, there can be only one development strategy encompassing the country's assistance needs, which responds to the national objectives and priorities, and this strategy has to be balanced and holistic.

The main goal at the country level should be to ensure that the assistance provided by the UN system as a whole matches and effectively supports the national strategies. It is important to emphasize that instruments such as the national monitoring of the MDGs, the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) are designed to provide the necessary coherence among the operations undertaken by the different U.N. entities.

The links between the CCA/UNDAF processes of the PRSPs, where they exist, should be more clearly articulated and implemented in a systematic way, according to the national needs and priorities. These are pivotal issues that bear wide consequences on the overall effectiveness of the UN country operations.

The Bretton Woods institutions are part of the UN system, and their instruments should not be seen as separated from the UN coordinated operations. Paragraph 143 of the report states that the Bretton Woods institutions "are not formally integrated in the resident coordinator system but entertain a special collaborative relationship with it". The practical implications of this ambiguous link from the point of view of the impact on development processes, including funding operational activities, should be assessed.

It is important to ensure closer interfaces and complementarities between the PRSPs, only in countries where

PRSP's are accepted, and the CCA/UNDAF. This is an issue that needs to be clarified in the broader context of the cooperation between the Bretton Woods institutions and all other UN entities. The example of the Integrated Framework (mentioned in paragraph 94 of the report) that ensures the provision of a coordinated trade-related assistance provided by six agencies (the World Bank, the IMF, the UNDP, UNCTAD, ITC and the WTO), can be seen in this context.

The Group of 77 appreciates the illustration of the measures introduced by UNDG to enhance efficiency and coherence of operational activities at the country level and the determination shown by the funds and programmes to make further progress in that direction. Nevertheless, we are concerned that many of those measures, particularly some of the new tools introduced in the context of the simplification and harmonization programmes, may actually increase the transaction costs of operational activities instead of simplifying processes. That might also make the participation of national governments in the design and implementation of these operational activities even more difficult. We are concerned that the simplification and harmonization programme has really neglected the "simplification" part of the endeavour.

Finally, the report refers to the need to enhance the national ownership of country processes, including the PRSPs where they exist. Indeed, one of the most effective contributions that the UN system can provide to development is the enhancement of local capacities to formulate and to implement home-grown policies. The important recognition that capacity development is an evolving process, remains relevant.

### **The Features of UN Operational Activities**

The UN system's development cooperation activities should be based on the basic values of equity, people-centered development, participatory processes, reduction of disparities and respect for diversity.

Equally important is to ensure that the UN country assistance is shaped and based on a comprehensive approach. As the report says, "development is a multidimensional phenomenon", embracing "economic, social, environmental and humanitarian dimensions" (para.17). The main strength of the UN system lies in its capacity to encompass all these facets in a coherent set of actions, mirroring the complexities of many a national society and developing economy, and addressing short and long-term needs in an articulated framework. Their effectiveness should be evaluated against the need for a comprehensive vision of development. In spite of the specificities raised by each national case, a multidimensional approach is required in all the forms of U.N. assistance, ranging from post-conflict situations, assistance to LDCs, as well as in other developing countries, and transition economies.

It is important to ensure that all the dimensions of development and all the assistance needs are equally treated when assigning tasks to the various UN entities. The resident coordinators system should ensure that each agency, is providing the most effective and efficient assistance. A specific concern needs to be addressed in this context: as mentioned in paragraph 34, the UN system should provide a "bridge" between the national development efforts and the international global processes. This was the main theme of the recent UNCTAD XI, which highlighted how important it is to have a comprehensive approach to development, encompassing national and international dimensions, and taking into account the social and environmental agendas that are linked to trade and development policies. Equally the MDGs offer such a framework that can mobilize the competencies and strengths of the UN systems as a whole.

### **The role of the UN entities that do not have country presence**

As rightly pointed out in the report their contribution at national level is important and meaningful. Their mandates and expertise covers areas of great interest and concern to developing countries such as trade and development, investment, technology, trade facilitation, intellectual property, ICT for development, human settlements and environment, among others. Their role at national level should be maximized and the best modalities should be identified for this purpose. We would appreciate if the next report of the Secretary-General will come up with concrete proposals in this regard. In coming up with such proposal due cognizance has to be taken of the fact that historically, the operational activities of the UN system at the country level had always been narrowly defined to only focus on the work of agencies with country level operations like UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA etc. Likewise, the main objective and parameters of work of these agencies. Whereas we commend the role they have played in delivering vital services to developing countries, their focus of work does not cover the multi-dimensional and multi-faceted challenge of development and summits. If, as is clear in the report of the Secretary-General, we want this TCPR to add real value to the operational activities of the UN system at the country level, we have to reflect very carefully on what kind of surgery we need to undertake on the design of the mechanisms we have utilized thus far used to deliver operational activities at both the country and global levels. Are there design faults in the RC system that need to be rectified? Do

we need a more neutral oversight body at the global level? Do the entities of the UN system, several years after their establishment reflect today's realities and challenges?

## **Development of national capacities, South-South cooperation and the role of the United Nations system**

### **a - Capacity Building**

We recognize the many efforts undertaken by the UN system in strengthening the development of national capacities at the country level with appropriate initiatives (para 114-123). Nevertheless, we are not convinced that the country experience shows a systematic approach to the development of national capacities yet.

In this context, we attach great importance to the transfer of knowledge and technology to developing countries. We therefore call for a systematic approach to enhance means and ways of strengthening capacity in this respect.

### **b- South - South Cooperation**

Notwithstanding what the report mentions under para 124, the G-77 and China wishes to emphasise that the stronger interaction of South-South Cooperation with the UN system, beyond the efforts made in the context of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, has not materialized yet at a large scale, as we would have expected. South-South Cooperation, as an important part of international development cooperation for development, offers viable opportunities for developing countries in the pursuit of sustainable development and poverty eradication. However, the potential of the UN system to support South-South Cooperation has not been fully realized, mainly due to the inadequacy of financial and human resources in existing organizational mechanisms within the UN system. It is thus essential to address the need to revitalize and consolidate the South-South platform, build stronger South institutions at the global level and mobilize global support for South-South cooperation.

### **Resources mobilisation**

This issue entails two sets of considerations: first, as mentioned in the report, the need to match the objectives of the reforms and the expectations they raise with the volume of resources made available to the UN operational activities. But equally important is the quality of these resources, in terms of untied aid, in terms of priority needs, in terms of predictability and sustainability of funding.

The MDGs require an enormous international effort. The reforms undertaken regarding the UN operations have to deliver tangible results in order to maintain the credibility of the multilateral system. What serious proposal and option do we have in this critical area?

We look forward to discuss the effectiveness of the existing UN funding mechanisms for the operational activities and to devise new alternatives that meet the test of adequacy, neutrality, predictability and sustainability and that respond to the actual needs of developing countries.

The disparity between the resources that are available for the Bretton Woods institutions as compared to the resources of the UN agencies and entities is an important element that has to be considered in this regard.

### **Expenses**

Another issue the G-77 and China wishes to raise is that the need to ensure that the development funds are used most efficiently and are devoted to the core function of supporting development activities cannot be overemphasized. All efforts should be made to ensure that non-development expenditures are minimized.

Thank you.