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Statement

by

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to the United Nations

at the Operational Activities Segment of ECOSOC

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Mr. President,

Allow me to first complement you and all the distinguished panelists for their extremely insightful perspectives on the evolving dynamics of the operational activities of the UN development system and the concerns it must address.

We would also like to thank the Secretary General for the comprehensive documentation prepared for this segment.

While we welcome the significant strides made by UN Development system and its agencies in recent years, we also acknowledge that we are meeting at a time of serious economic crisis and political ferment in the world.

The Rio+20 Summit on Sustainable Development has just a few weeks ago handed to us "the future we want" and laid out the roadmap to realize it. As we set out on this roadmap and deliberate on how to impart substance to the ongoing QCPR process, my delegation would like to submit the following:

First, for UN development system to be successful globally, it needs to be firmly rooted in its core competency. Poverty eradication remains the over-riding priority for developing countries. Those living at the subsistence level cannot bear the costs of adjustment and their livelihood considerations are important in determining how scarce natural resources such as land, water and forests are used. For developing countries, inclusive growth and a rapid increase in per capita income levels are critical development imperatives. It is therefore our considered conviction that poverty eradication should be at the heart of UN's operational activities for development; as its primary objective.

Second, developing countries have their own set of 'needs' and different 'context' based requirements, which the UN development system must find ways to respond to. The operational activities of the UN system must therefore enhance their ability to respond and adapt to the evolving environment and expectations of individual countries, and the programming activities needs to be harmonised with the budgetary and planning cycles of recipient Governments.

Third, financing for development is coming under increasingly acute pressure. The present global economic slowdown has adversely impacted plans of national governments in developing countries to even consider scaling up developmental financing. And the diminishing quantity of finance available for developing countries, remains a central challenge for the attainment of Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the MDGs. The requirement of enhanced ODA is all the more critical now, when developing countries are faced with curtailed capital flows, economic slowdown and increased programming requirements. These needs must be met by efforts to increase ODA, promote investment and trade flows, by facilitating transfer of and access to advanced technologies by developing countries, and by expanded and innovative financing of development activities.

Fourth, there is a 'negative impact of policy conditionality' that is tied into donor driven aid arrangements when planning for development activities. The UN operational activities for development should feed into national development plans. The fundamental principles of national ownership and leadership, and deference to national development priorities must be the pivots around which UN development interventions are modeled and implemented.

Fifth, even though 'South South Cooperation' continues to be the buzzword in the development discourse, much more remains to be done to give it the 'muscle' it needs from the UN system. South-South cooperation is distinct from North-South development cooperation. It supplements but cannot substitute or dilute the obligation and quantum of North-South cooperation.

And finally, while we plan for the post 2015 development agenda, we should look at strengthening institutional capacity building in developing countries as a key focus area of UN operational activity. We believe that the thrust of the international development effort should be directed towards the neediest countries, where the most vulnerable reside. It is a strategic choice and investment that should be made and sustained by all stakeholders.

Many countries could do more if additional finance and technology were available. My delegation believes that to be a real 'force multiplier', the operational activities of the UN development system should foster national and local capacities, strengthen networks for sharing of knowledge and best practices, and promote national ownership by building institutional capacities in developing countries.

Let me once again reassure you of India's strong support and steadfast commitment to continue sharing our development experience and expertise with our fellow developing countries. I thank you.

