

STATEMENT BY MR. DEREK O' BRIEN MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE UNDER AGENDA ITEM 25 ON OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT COVERING QCPR AND SOUTH SOUTH COOPERATION IN THE 2ND COMMITTEE OF THE 67th SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 15, 2012

Mr. President, allow me to first complement the Secretary General on extremely insightful reports on the funding of operational activities of the UN development system along with Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) and the state of South South Cooperation.



India aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Algeria, on behalf of the G-77.

While we welcome the significant strides made by UN Development system and its agencies in recent years, we must also acknowledge that we are meeting at a time of an ongoing economic crisis and political ferment in the world. The Rio+20 Summit on Sustainable Development had just a few months ago, given us "the future we want" and suggested us the means to realize it. As we plan the roadmap on 'how' we go about achieving that and imparting 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 focus area, which has primarily to be development related ONLY. Poverty eradication still remains the over-riding priority for developing countries and the greatest global challenge. 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. In Bengal, the region of India I come from, we call this humanistic philosophy one of '*Ma, Maati and Manush*' - signifying an equilibrium of the universally caring Mother, the Earth

that nurtures us and the Human Beings who must be central to our developmental endeavors.

It is therefore important that within the process of the QCPR, which aims to set out the overall policy direction for the operational activities of the UN Development System for the next four years, we acknowledge upfront the enormity of this greatest global challenge, that stills ails several developing countries, and subsequently, lay emphasis on achieving poverty eradication, while planning for future development projects, as its underlying 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 development operational activities of the UN system must therefore have the ability to respond and adapt to the evolving environment and expectations of individual countries, and the programming activities therefore, needs to be harmonised with the budgetary and planning cycles of recipient Governments.

Third, financing for development is increasingly coming under 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 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 that is pro-development, and by facilitating transfer of and access to advanced technologies by developing countries, and by expanded and innovative financing of development activities, such as donors putting in place five year plans to scale up disbursements by increasing programme based aid flows.

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 and steer clear of conditionality. The fundamental principles of national ownership and leadership, and deference to national development priorities must be the pivots around which UN development activities are modeled and implemented.

Fifth, even though 'South South Cooperation' continues to be the buzzword in the narrative of the developmental discourse, much more remains to be done to give it the 'muscle' it needs from the UN system. The paradigm construct of South-South cooperation requires that developing countries have the policy space for their own development. It is distinct from that of North-South development cooperation, with the clear understanding that South-South cooperation can complement North-South Cooperation but cannot substitute or dilute the obligation and quantum of North-South cooperation.

Given the vast difference in development levels between countries of the North and those from the South, it is important that development projects under South-South Cooperation are not strait-jacketed in terms of rigid rules and regulations or policy prescriptions. Flexibility and adaptability is the key to the success of South-South Cooperation. These must not be compromised.

India has a unique experience in nation-building given our large, diverse and complex reality. Our approach to South-South Cooperation has been therefore to share this experience and knowledge in a spirit of solidarity with countries from the South treading similar paths of socio-economic development.

A key facet of our joint initiative with countries of the South, has been along with Brazil and South Africa, our IBSA initiative and we are extremely pleased that our partners in this are the now renamed, UN office for South South Cooperation. We therefore welcome efforts to upgrade and strengthen the UN Office for South-South Cooperation..

Sixth, strengthening institutional capacity building in developing countries has to be a key focus area of any operational activity for the development agenda. 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. Unfortunately, there is little evidence of support from the industrialised countries in these areas.

My delegation believes that for the operational activities of the UN development system to be a real ‘force multiplier’, it 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.

Seventh, while we plan for the post 2015 development agenda and impart substance to the ongoing discussions on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) process, we should look at forging synergies within the overall policy framework of the UN System. There are some basic paradigm differences in the contours of the development approach, which the QCPR must identify and attempt to address based on the principle of “No one size fits all”.

And finally, economic development, social inclusion of all stakeholders and environmental sustainability are all equally critical as components of sustainable development architecture. The task before us is to give practical shape and content to this architecture in a manner that allows each country to develop according to its own national priorities and circumstances.

Thank you.

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