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Chair: Mr. Yohanna (Nigeria)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 24: Operational activities for development (*continued*)

(a) Operational activities for development of the United Nations system (*continued*) (A/66/79-E/2011/107)

(b) South-South cooperation for development (*continued*) (A/66/229)

1. **Mr. Torsella** (United States of America) said that as his country was often the largest donor and main partner to United Nations agencies in providing humanitarian assistance to the world's most vulnerable people, it wished to offer several constructive proposals to enhance confidence in and support for their operational activities.

2. Transparency and accountability were top priorities for his Government, which had been the principal sponsor of the provision in General Assembly resolution 59/272 that made internal reports of the United Nations Office for Internal Oversight Services available to Member States upon request. Many operational agencies had yet to achieve full public disclosure of audit, oversight and programme information. Every effort should be made to achieve that goal as expeditiously as possible. Many United Nations operational agencies were making important contributions, but they continued to experience difficulties in communicating their accomplishments to the broader public. They must put in place systems to report meaningful results, and the relevant information should be used as the basis for budgeting and resource allocation.

3. At a time of resource scarcity, the United Nations system could no longer afford to conduct business as usual. Some agencies that were funded by voluntary contributions had already begun streamlining their budgets. Agencies that continued to subscribe to the status quo should understand that they did not enjoy an automatic claim on taxpayer resources. They needed to demonstrate their ability to use resources efficiently, including by eliminating the wasteful practice of business- and first-class travel.

4. A modernized and streamlined United Nations development system needed to embrace the new realities of the global partnership for development, which included new State and non-State participants.

An additional key component of the inter-agency coordination necessary to maximize the impact of their work in the field was the resident coordinator system. The "Delivering as One" pilot programmes had demonstrated concrete ways to work together more efficiently, but systematic evaluations of their effectiveness were needed for consideration under the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

5. Funding of the resident coordinator system should involve burden-sharing, and should not rely exclusively on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Enhanced coordination was also required between UNDP, as the manager of the resident coordinator system, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the selection of resident coordinators for countries requiring significant humanitarian response operations.

6. **Mr. Srivali** (Thailand) said that his country recognized the necessity of engaging with the international community in advancing South-South and triangular cooperation, and had placed the promotion of technical cooperation with developing countries high on its policy agenda. In 2010, it had contributed \$50 million in official development assistance (ODA), most of which was directed to least developed countries (LDCs).

7. As a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand had been promoting regional cooperation and intensifying poverty eradication efforts among fellow ASEAN countries in an effort to improve the lives of the region's 700 million people. In that regard it also supported the system-wide coherence approach to improving the effectiveness of United Nations operational activities. The United Nations Partnership Framework was a good model of cooperation, entailing close collaboration between the United Nations and national agencies to design and implement partnership programmes in accordance with national development agendas.

8. The roles of United Nations resident coordinators and country teams should also be strengthened in response to growing challenges, while the role of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation deserved appreciation for facilitating the sharing of knowledge and experience among developing countries.

9. The Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency was working in partnership with a number of United Nations agencies to strengthen

South-South and triangular cooperation in the region, and further collaboration was envisioned under the United Nations-Thailand Partnership Framework 2012-2016. Expanded partnerships were likewise foreseen under regional and subregional frameworks, such as the Greater Mekong Subregion framework and the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle.

10. Lastly, the potential of public-private partnerships and the contributions of civil society in the South to development at all levels needed to be recognized. However, South-South cooperation had to complement North-South cooperation without replacing it. Developed economies needed to maintain and where possible expand their levels of support for developing countries.

11. **Ms. Luna** (Mexico) said that the growing volume of South-South exchange had considerably transformed international relations. The report of the Secretary-General (A/66/229) noted that such connections had led to stronger demand for multilateral support to South-South and triangular cooperation, which required further coordination as well as deeper and more specifically targeted financial resources. Mexico had always been committed to those forms of cooperation and supported the catalytic role of the United Nations system in that connection. UNDP funds and programmes should continuously adapt to new challenges, redefining tasks and benchmarks according to the scope and impact of South-South and triangular cooperation. The Fourth High-Level Intergovernmental Conference on Delivering as One, to be held in Montevideo from 8 to 10 November, would provide a valuable opportunity to do so.

12. The Administrator of UNDP had recently visited Mexico to celebrate the 50th anniversary of her organization's presence in the country. On that occasion, UNDP and Mexico had signed a collaboration framework agreement recognizing the country's dual role as a recipient and provider of cooperation and setting forth new bases for the coordination of UNDP activities in Mexico and across the region. The agreement focused on sustainable human development, institutional capacity-building, designation of regional centres of excellence, consolidation of existing collaboration mechanisms and development of new forms of cooperation with the private sector.

13. Most of the world's poor lived in medium-income countries of the South. Those countries, which

included virtually all Latin American States, faced a range of challenges such as poverty, social inequality and unequal income distribution, which required the sustained support of the United Nations development mechanisms.

14. Mexico actively promoted the commitments contained in the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, as well as the standards set forth in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action. The Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Busan from 29 November to 1 December 2011 would provide an opportunity to discuss the building of a global partnership towards a new consensus on the topic. Mexico fostered South-South and triangular cooperation, seeking to adapt the principles of the Paris Declaration to the characteristics and limitations of middle-income cooperation providers, in order to complement rather than substitute North-South cooperation.

15. Public-private partnerships could enhance such cooperation by strengthening institutional capacity-building in medium-income countries. Coordination among United Nations agencies should also be encouraged, and cooperation between those agencies and Member States should receive increased funding.

16. **Mr. Adebola** (Nigeria) said that United Nations operational activities for development should be carried out at the request of recipient countries, and in accordance with their interests, policies and priorities. Of equal importance was the need to strengthen global partnerships for development based on recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies, which should be the guiding principle of United Nations operational activities at the country level.

17. South-South cooperation was based on premises, conditions and objectives that were specific to the historic and political context of developing countries. As a collective endeavour of peoples and countries of the South, it deserved its own separate and independent promotion.

18. On the African continent, his country had been pivotal in promoting South-South cooperation at the subregional, regional, international and global levels. It was a tireless champion of African unity and had been a founding member of the African Union and the

Economic Community for West African States. It had also established the Nigeria Trust Fund in 1976, which operated through the African Development Bank (ADB) to finance national and regional projects through low-interest loans and to support the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

19. In 2001 his country had established the Nigeria Technical Cooperation Fund, which accounted for 60 per cent of the donor fund at ADB, and had played a major role in hosting the first African-South American Summit. It was also a pioneer supporter of the Scientific and Technical Exchange Programme, which engaged the services of highly trained African researchers and offered partnerships in the use of research facilities across African countries.

20. The South had showed notable resilience in the wake of the economic crisis in 2008-2009. Nigeria's robust growth in 2010 testified to the adaptability of its economy and to the prudence of its economic policies. Medium-term prospects were equally bright, with real gross domestic product (GDP) growth projected to remain strong and stable at 6.9 per cent in 2011 and 6.7 per cent in 2012. South-South cooperation was a partnership among equals based on solidarity, and should continue to be based on mutual trust, shared responsibility and commitment.

21. **Ms. Vu Thi Bich Dung** (Viet Nam) said that her country attached great importance to the reform of United Nations operational activities, including the Delivering as One initiative. In 2006, the "One United Nations" had been launched by her Government and the United Nations country team to improve cooperation, enhance national ownership and bring the comparative advantages of United Nations organizations into greater play. Currently, the Government and the United Nations agencies in Viet Nam were working closely on the One Plan for 2012-2016 on the basis of priorities identified by the National Strategy for Social and Economic Development for 2011-2020.

22. As pointed out in the Secretary-General's report (A/66/79-E/2011/107), the effectiveness of the United Nations development system continued to be affected by fragmentation and duplication of efforts. The implementation of country programmes, including monitoring, evaluation and reporting, needed to be further strengthened and improved. To that end, greater coordination of development activities was needed; stronger support had to be forthcoming from United

Nations agency headquarters, donors and the international community; and sufficient and predictable resources needed to continue flowing to the United Nations in order to facilitate the success of development cooperation programmes.

23. **Mr. Yamashita** (Japan) said that the ultimate goal of United Nations operational activities was to assist people and communities in need. His country had consistently sought to accommodate the realities on the ground, as well as to pursue bottom-up approaches throughout the system-wide coherence discussions, and it would continue to do so at the quadrennial policy review.

24. His delegation was looking forward to participating actively in the process leading up to that review, including in the intergovernmental conference on Delivering as One, in discussions on critical mass, in assessing lessons learned from the development of common country programme documents and in the comprehensive review of the existing institutional framework for the system-wide evaluation.

25. His country had always been recognized as a frontrunner in the promotion of South-South and triangular cooperation. In 1954 it had decided to participate in the Colombo Plan, joining the ranks of donor countries in a situation not markedly different from what was now called South-South cooperation. The guiding principles of his Government's official development assistance, provided since 1975 through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), were to prioritize each country's own development strategy, to respect the ownership of the host country, and to stress capacity development.

26. Japan likewise promoted the Partnership Programme for South-South Cooperation, which was a comprehensive framework agreed upon with middle-income countries to jointly support target recipients with common linguistic, historical and cultural backgrounds. Partnership programmes were currently operating with 12 countries in Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. One example was the assistance for agricultural development provided in the savannah area of Brazil known as the Cerrado. Following that successful cooperation, the partners had teamed up with Mozambique to create new models for sustainable development in the tropical savannah region of that country.

27. In addition, an annual JICA-ASEAN Regional Meeting promoted South-South cooperation among ASEAN countries, where needs were matched with know-how and the countries of the same region were encouraged to assist one another. While the meaning of South-South cooperation had often been debated, with some emphasizing the aspect of solidarity between developing countries and others highlighting the goal of aid effectiveness, that divergence should not hinder further South-South cooperation. The growing number of cases of South-South and triangular cooperation reflected the changing realities in the world and demonstrated that while South-South cooperation was more costly at the initial stage, it was less costly in the mid- to long-term.

28. **Ms. Barth** (International Labour Organization) said that the Secretary-General's report on the State of South-South Cooperation (A/66/229) provided a useful synopsis on the progress of South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

29. Since 1970, successful ILO partnerships relating to such cooperation had included the implementation of social protection floors and employment programmes, policies to combat child labour, knowledge-sharing platforms for skills development, capacity-building in the port and tourism sectors in Central America and labour migration initiatives.

30. In 2010, ILO had hosted the Global South-South Development Expo, which had provided an important platform to highlight successful best practices and to develop partnerships. During the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries Conference in Istanbul it had launched, together with the UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, a joint project entitled "South-South and Triangular Cooperation for the Implementation of Gender Sensitive Social Protection Floors at Country Level". With a view to systematizing South-South exchanges and encouraging partnerships, an outcome-based strategy had been developed focusing on training staff to detect new opportunities and mobilizing resources for technical cooperation and partnership-building with other international organizations and United Nations agencies.

31. The South had increasingly become home to successful examples of innovative technologies and other sustainable solutions to development challenges, and it had thus become critical for the development

community to continue utilizing South-South and triangular cooperation to support efforts towards poverty eradication, employment creation, sustainable development and integration of the global South into the international economy.

32. **Mr. Rao** (Observer Partners in Population and Development) said that his organization's membership comprised 25 developing countries that together represented 70 per cent of the population of the developing world. It was dedicated to promoting South-South cooperation in population, reproductive health and development through advocacy, policy dialogues, information exchange, capacity-building and training.

33. The year 2011 would be remembered as the year when the world's population reached 7 billion, and the latest United Nations projections estimated that it would increase to 9.3 billion by 2050. Population dynamics had also diverged significantly, with high fertility and rapid population growth in many LDCs, a preponderance of young people in some developing countries and rapidly ageing populations in others, and accelerated migration and urbanization in most of the developing world.

34. Population, reproductive health and development were particularly suitable themes for South-South cooperation. Under his organization's training and capacity-building mandate, a number of developing countries had offered long-term fellowships for graduate education in population and public health, as well as short-term fellowships to train demographers and population and health experts. Experience suggested that first-rate technical capacities in the fields of population and reproductive health existed in many developing countries, and greater efforts should be made to capitalize fully on such capacities through South-South and triangular cooperation.

35. Advocacy and policy dialogues had also been organized to address urgent topics related to population, reproductive health and development in the form of international conferences and workshops. In November 2011, a conference on population dynamics, climate change and sustainable development would be held in Pretoria, South Africa in collaboration with the Government of South Africa and the United Nations Population Fund. Its horizontal partnerships, knowledge-sharing and sensitivity to cultural diversity made South-South cooperation an effective approach to

development. With clearer national policies and institutional frameworks, as well as greater focus on demand-driven initiatives and results-oriented programming, South-South cooperation could play an even larger development role in the future.

36. **Mr. Assaf** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that one of the principal strengths of the United Nations development system was its ability to provide services at the country level as a neutral, objective and trusted development partner. United Nations country teams were particularly effective in bringing knowledge and technical expertise from all parts of the system to bear on specific national development goals.

37. His organization would welcome discussion at the upcoming quadrennial review as to how the United Nations development system could be made more results-oriented, effective and flexible. In terms of proposing effective United Nations coordination mechanisms in different country contexts, the review should avoid being too prescriptive and should encourage flexibility in accordance with specific country settings.

38. As the representative of the United Nations specialized agency mandated to promote sustainable industrial development and international industrial cooperation, he wished to stress the essential role of the productive sectors in achieving legitimate development goals. Likewise, sustainable access to energy and innovations in the field of green technologies would be crucial for developing countries in the years ahead.

39. The United Nations system was broad, but that did not have to mean unwieldy or inefficient. By harnessing the value and comparative advantage of each component part, greater development results could be achieved from a common system.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.