



General Assembly

Seventy-second session

30th plenary meeting
Thursday, 12 October 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Lajčák (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Andrianarivelo-Razafy (Madagascar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 14 and 117 (continued), 123 and 124

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Notes by the Secretary-General (A/72/267 and A/72/271)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Note by the Secretary-General (A/72/271)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

United Nations reform: measures and proposals

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In connection with document A/72/271, members will recall a letter from the President of the General Assembly dated 25 September 2017 informing them of the commencement of the informal consultations process on a zero draft of the modalities resolution for the intergovernmental conference to adopt a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, which is currently under way. Once the draft resolution has been finalized, it will be submitted for consideration by the Assembly.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank the President for the reports that have been presented and for enabling us to have a dialogue on the follow-up to the international development summits. The interdependent and symbiotic relationship between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development is becoming increasingly clear, thanks to the new generation of universal and transformational agreements resulting from the various summits and conferences, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the New Urban Agenda and the recent Ocean Conference. We are entering the third year of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and many questions and challenges remain regarding their means of implementation, follow-up and review, which are ultimately our responsibility as Member States.

We also consider the restructuring of the United Nations development system to be as timely as it is essential for supporting Member States on their path to achieving their development goals. For the same reason, we believe that the initiatives for administrative reform and reform of the peace and security architecture that the Secretary-General has presented to members are the right thing to do and will make the work of the Organization more flexible and efficient generally. Reforming the system will be complex, because it involves normative, organic and operational changes at every level of the departments of the Secretariat and of the funds, programmes, specialized agencies and regional commissions, as well as in the functioning of the

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United Nations country teams. The system of resident coordinators will also be part of the adjustment of the Secretariat's functions and budgets. Rejuvenating the United Nations will require a more agile and effective Organization, and in particular it will require cohesion and unity of purpose in the tasks for each area and how they all relate to one another.

We are grateful for the Secretary-General's report (A/72/124) on reforms based on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, and we look forward to his next report, which will further examine the resident coordinator role and other aspects of the system with a view to making progress with reforms that will result in greater efficiency, transparency and accountability.

From a broader perspective, the collective awareness of States of the interdependence of the Organization's three pillars — peace and security, development and human rights — is clear. That is why Guatemala supports the Secretary-General's vision for prevention, because we firmly believe that investing more in prevention will prevent and mitigate social clashes and armed conflicts where they originate. In that regard, we share the Secretary-General's prevention-oriented vision and approach, which in our view can be summed up as more and better development, in which the concept of sustainable peace is the driving force behind policies and action for development. We therefore affirm the three pillars and the synergy between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sustainable peace, as well as the link between humanitarian activities, development and peacebuilding, which constitute a solid and comprehensive basis for achieving the Organization's founding promise and the common goal we all share of saving future generations from the scourge of war.

Mr. Ilichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We have been closely studying the information being presented on the Secretary-General's proposals for reform of the United Nations in the areas of the Organization's peace and security architecture, development system and management. We understand the importance of adapting the Organization to the changing conditions and new realities of our time. Reforming a global organization is a continuing process. We believe firmly that the main goal of reforms should be to improve their practical effectiveness. We must avoid weakening the identity and specialties of the various entities of the United Nations. It is essential to avoid situations where the United Nations

bodies that specialize in peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and development assistance invade one another's areas of responsibility. We must respect and observe the principle of the division of labour or we will be unable to avoid duplication of effort, which reduces effectiveness.

We understand the Secretary-General's desire to emphasize conflict prevention in his peace and security reforms. That is indeed an important principle. We believe that such efforts in the United Nations should be conducted only in strict recognition of the Charter of the United Nations, the principle of State sovereignty and the leading role of the Security Council. The fundamental principles of the international system in that area are affirmed in Security Council resolution 2171 (2014). However, the chief responsibility for preventing conflicts and dealing with their consequences rests with the States themselves.

In reforming the peace and security architecture, it is also important to take into account the fact that issues related to peacebuilding and sustaining peace are regulated by the landmark Security Council resolutions 1645 (2005) and 2282 (2016) and by related General Assembly decisions. They formulate a single definition of the term "sustaining peace" that is firmly tied to peacebuilding efforts and is the shared duty and responsibility of both Governments and the other stakeholders in national processes. There must be no expansive interpretation of the concept of sustaining peace that treats it as a new direction for the work of the United Nations. The Member States have never discussed, let alone agreed on, any plan of action or agenda in the area of sustaining peace.

The United Nations development system is a key element in its support to countries that need support in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It is important to ensure that the process of adapting it to new conditions is conducted within the framework of intergovernmental agreements as outlined in resolution 71/243, on the quadrennial comprehensive operational activities policy review. The review provides a clear and updated view of the principles on which the United Nations should base its activities in the foreseeable future. We believe that, as before, the area where the operational programmes and funds should apply their efforts should, as before, continue to be development itself. Their humanitarian assistance activities are regulated by the relevant decisions of Member States, including related participation in

humanitarian clusters under the auspices of the Office for the United Nations Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. We are concerned about attempts to mandate the United Nations development system with the obligatory, if not almost predominant task of conflict prevention. That area is the responsibility of other United Nations Charter entities.

We also believe that it is unreasonable to directly link the implementation of resolution 71/243 with the transformation of the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). While we do not deny that the Economic and Social Council and DESA play an important role in coordinating and supporting the activities of operational programmes and funds, our delegation nevertheless recalls that those are independent processes. We call for the adoption of coordinated decisions on these issues in the framework of the upcoming review of resolution 68/1, which is to take place at the current session.

We are also aware of the initiatives of the Secretary-General on the reform of the Organization's management system. Before proceeding to consider those initiatives, it is necessary to understand what has been accomplished to date. Without assessing the status of the implementation of previous projects in the field of management reform, it will be impossible to understand whether the Organization is heading in the right direction. We believe that strategic efforts should be aimed at defining the common goals and orientation of these reforms. Relevant proposals should contain clear indicators of achievements and detailed plans for the realization of benefits. It is obvious that any increase in expenditures is unacceptable for Member States, especially in the light of the current optimization of the United Nations budget. Any initiative should be based on clear mandates from the General Assembly.

We consistently advocate for transparency, efficiency and accountability in the work of the Secretariat. In that regard, we propose seeking opportunities for innovation in planning, budget formulation and staffing within the framework of the existing powers of the Secretary-General. It is necessary to observe all existing mandates in the transformation process, to provide Member States with full control over possible changes in the Organization, and to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the advantages and disadvantages and the benefits and costs of any innovation.

We are studying the report of the Secretary-General containing proposals for the transformation of the United Nations management system (A/72/492). We express our readiness to participate constructively in further discussions on the topic during the substantive part of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly.

The quality of interaction between States and the Secretariat, which is built on trust, determines the effectiveness of the work of the Organization. In that connection, we expect the Secretariat's reassessment of ongoing reforms to take into account the existing recommendations and criticisms voiced by many Member States, which are the consumers of the services of the Secretariat. It is on their support that the success of any initiative depends.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 14, 117, 123 and 124.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.