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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: FOLLOW-UP  
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-President of the Council,  
Mr. Percy Metsing Mangoaella (Lesotho), on the basis of  
informal consultations

Operational activities for development: progress in the  
implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/192

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998 on the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General 1/ and of the consolidated list of issues related to the coordination of operational activities; 2/

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1/ E/1999/55 and Add.1 and 2.

2/ E/1999/CRP.1.

2. Reiterates that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities of the United Nations system should be, inter alia, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality, impartiality and multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the development needs of developing countries in a flexible manner, and that all operational activities must be country-driven, in response to and in accordance with the national development plans, policies and priorities of the recipient Governments concerned;

3. Stresses the primary responsibility of national Governments for their country's development and recognizes the importance of national ownership of development programmes;

4. Reaffirms that untied core resources are the bedrock of the operational activities of the United Nations system, and, in this context, calls on Governments to take steps to address the urgent and immediate need for a substantial increase in their funding on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, reflecting the increasing needs of developing countries, taking into account the development of multi-year funding frameworks;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare documentation for the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council for the year 2000 on the subject of resources and funding, highlighting, inter alia, the following:

(a) Voluntary contributions by Governments to resources for operational activities for development of the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, including the relationship to official development assistance, over the past decade, and the relationship between core and non-core resources;

(b) Reasons for the decline in core resources to the operational activities of the United Nations system;

(c) An evaluation of the effects of such decline, including, as appropriate, on the effectiveness and impact of the operational activities of the United Nations system on the level of economic growth and sustainable development in developing and other recipient countries;

(d) Linkages between structural and managerial changes within the United Nations funds and programmes and resource mobilization, including the introduction of the multi-year funding frameworks that integrate programme objectives, resources, budgets and outcomes, with the objective of improving effectiveness and increasing core resources;

6. Takes note of the progress made in the introduction of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the common country assessment in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/192, paragraphs 17-22, and calls for further progress on the harmonization of programming cycles as well as steps to simplify and harmonize relevant programming procedures of the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, bearing in mind their mandates, within specified target dates for the accomplishment of these prescribed actions;

7. Takes note of the progress and challenges with the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as highlighted in the reports of the funds and programmes, and encourages the funds and programmes to try to achieve a United Nations Development Assistance Framework that promotes a country-driven, collaborative and coherent response by the United Nations system to achieve greater impact at the country level fully consistent with and in support of national priorities;

8. Calls upon the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, and the resident coordinator system in particular, to ensure continued sharing of the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework experiences and to give special attention to the involvement, in the preparation of the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework of United Nations agencies without representation at the country level, as well as of the regional commissions, and to take account of the regional development dimension;

9. Welcomes the progress made to strengthen the resident coordinator system, to broaden the base for the recruitment of resident coordinators, and to continue to increase the number of women resident coordinators;

10. Takes note of the efforts already made to strengthen field-level coordination and the role of the resident coordinator system, and encourages further steps towards greater collaboration, at the field level, by ensuring well-functioning, highly participatory and active country teams, and full consultation with the Governments concerned, while respecting the specific identities and mandates of United Nations operational activities;

11. Calls for rapid progress to improve the self-assessment process of the resident coordinator system and to measure the performance against the work plans established;

12. Requests the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system to examine ways to further simplify their programming procedures and instruments, and, in this context, to accord the issue of simplification and harmonization high priority and to take concrete steps to reduce, simplify and harmonize their programming, operational and administrative procedures and the reporting requirements placed on recipient countries, particularly in regard to programme development, approval and implementation, while ensuring appropriate accountability, and to report on the progress made to the Economic and Social Council in 2000, and urges further progress towards the full harmonization of programme cycles in all countries;

13. Notes the progress made by the United Nations system to support a coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences, and encourages the system to continue efforts to ensure a more integrated approach;

14. Re-emphasizes the central importance of thematic or theme groups within the resident coordinator system as a tool to address the cross-cutting issues identified in the follow-up to global conferences, and the need to include in the annual report of the resident coordinator feedback on United Nations operational activities relating to conference follow-up;

15. Requests the funds and programmes to submit to the Council through their executive boards information and analyses of the extent to which the cross-cutting themes and goals emerging from global conferences have been integrated into their programme priorities in a coherent manner, as well as on specific steps taken to develop complementary and collaborative approaches with other United Nations organizations in promoting the implementation of global targets;

16. Encourages States Members and the entities and agencies of the United Nations system to contribute to the effective five-year review of conferences, with special attention to promoting the linkages among them and the timely implementation of the outcomes emanating from the reviews;

17. Calls for continued promotion and support for broad-based partnerships at the national level in support of conference outcomes;

18. Encourages States Members and the entities and agencies of the United Nations system to give special attention to providing coherent support for building national capacity in accordance with the priority needs of

developing countries in the area of data collection, indicators, monitoring and evaluation, recognizing that these activities are the basis for all other aspects of development planning;

19. Notes the need for better assessment of national capacity and the development of consistent approaches to strengthening such capacity within the United Nations Development Group and the broader United Nations system in order to significantly strengthen national capacity-building in programme countries;

20. Encourages greater cooperation between the World Bank, the regional development banks and all funds and programmes, with a view to increased complementarity and better division of labour, as well as enhanced coherence in their sectoral activities, building on the existing arrangements and fully in accordance with the priorities of the recipient Government;

21. Welcomes the progress made in pursuing common premises and services, and requests the members of the United Nations Development Group to consult their respective governing bodies, as appropriate, on issues related to their further involvement in the development of common premises and services, bearing in mind that these arrangements should not impose additional burdens on developing countries;

22. Urges the United Nations system to use to the fullest extent possible and practicable available national expertise and indigenous technologies, and to report on the use of the recently agreed guidelines of the Consultative Committee on Programmes and Operational Questions on national execution to the substantive session of 2000 of the Economic and Social Council, with a view to resolving the issues identified in those guidelines;

23. Calls upon the United Nations system to make full use of national capacity in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes and projects, including through the use of national execution as provided by General Assembly resolution 53/192;

24. Takes note of the lessons learned by the funds and programmes in the implementation of their gender-balance policy and calls for further efforts to retain women at mid-career and to promote actively their career advancement;

25. Calls for further efforts, based on lessons learned, to strengthen the adoption of an effective approach to gender mainstreaming for women's empowerment and gender equality, and programming for women and girls;

26. Calls for the involvement of men and the education and sensitization of boys in the creation of an environment conducive to the realization of the rights of women and girls;

27. Requests the United Nations system to take appropriate measures to improve the effective incorporation of technical cooperation among developing countries into their programmes and projects and to intensify efforts towards mainstreaming the modality of technical cooperation among developing countries, including through support to the activities of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, and encourages other relevant international institutions to take similar measures, bearing in mind the catalytic role of technical cooperation among developing countries;

28. Stresses that South-South cooperation, including technical and economic cooperation among developing countries, offers viable opportunities for the development of developing countries, and in this context, requests the executive boards of the funds and programmes to review, with a view to considering an increase, the allocation of resources for activities involving technical cooperation among developing countries;

29. Recommends that the practice of holding joint meetings of the bureau of the Economic and Social Council, and the bureaux of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations International Children's Fund and the World Food Programme be continued, and requests the respective bureaux to report on the meetings to their governing bodies;

30. Invites the governing bodies of the agencies of the United Nations system to encourage greater and more active participation, as appropriate, in the United Nations Development Group initiatives in which they have been invited to take part in keeping with their respective mandates;

31. Requests the United Nations entities, in their future reporting to the Council, to assess whether coordination mechanisms result in improved, timely and effective programmes and increased resource mobilization;

32. Reaffirms the importance of independent, transparent and impartial joint and periodic evaluations of operational activities at the country level, under the leadership of recipient Governments, and with the support of the resident coordinator system to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and

impact, particularly on poverty-eradication programmes, and encourages the funds and programmes to increase collaboration in monitoring and evaluation within the framework of the United Nations Development Group, and in consultation with all relevant partners in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 55 of General Assembly resolution 53/192;

33. Calls upon the United Nations entities to further promote national capacity-building for effective programme, project and financial monitoring, as well as impact evaluations, in their programme activities.

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