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President: Ms. Azucena (Vice-President). (Philippines)

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In the absence of Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Ms. Azucena (Philippines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation *(continued)*

(a) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council *(continued)*
[\(A/74/73-E/2019/14, A/74/73/Add.1-E/2019/14/Add.1, A/74/73/Add.2-E/2019/14/Add.2 and A/74/73/Add.3-E/2019/14/Add.3; E/2019/62\)](#)

Panel discussion: "Multi-country office review"

1. **The Deputy Secretary-General**, presenting the outcome of the multi-country review, said that the outcome was a critical component of efforts to reposition the United Nations development system and was a clear mandate of the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review and General Assembly resolution [72/279](#). Multi-country offices, which had emerged over the years in an ad hoc manner, had been conceived as a solution to maintain a physical presence in places where country teams would otherwise not be able to operate. Despite its great potential, the multi-country office model had not yielded the expected results. Currently, 38 of the 41 countries covered by multi-country offices were small island developing States. Addressing that reality and strengthening the offices were both urgent and important and would deliver on the collective promise to leave no one behind.

2. In the time available, the Secretary-General had spared no effort to gather evidence and consult broadly to identify ways to strengthen the multi-country offices, drawing on the transformative potential of the new resident coordinator system. He had conducted the most consultative, thorough and in-depth review ever undertaken on United Nations multi-country offices; all Governments covered by those offices had been consulted. The review team had visited 15 countries and had spoken with over 500 individuals, including Heads of State and Government, other government officials, United Nations leaders, country teams and development partners across all sectors. At the same time, regular consultations had been held in New York with a steering committee of Member States to ensure that the review would proceed in line with the expectations of the countries concerned. The exercise had been guided by the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and General Assembly resolution [72/279](#), with a focus on the commitments set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway).

3. The current review was long overdue. Based on the interviews conducted, it was clear that the support provided by the development system through multi-country offices was not commensurate with the challenges and expectations that countries faced. The 2030 Agenda required the United Nations to step up support everywhere, particularly for small island developing States and other countries covered by multi-country offices.

4. The Secretary-General had put forward a set of concrete, realistic proposals that could begin to make a noticeable difference. First, he had proposed measures to ensure that multi-country offices provided more specific, tailored support to each country. There must be specific United Nations country plans that addressed the unique needs of each country covered, in line with national development plans and complementing United Nations regional strategies. United Nations coordination capacity, programmatic response and commitments must be clear.

5. Second, steps would be taken to strengthen United Nations leadership in multi-country offices. While the overall reform of the resident coordinator system was a step in that direction, multi-country offices required resident coordinators with a specific profile, skill set and training to respond to the expectations of multiple countries. The recruitment and induction of resident coordinators operating in multi-country office settings would therefore be crucial. Distinct accountabilities and roles would also be made clear in their job descriptions.

6. Third, the Secretary-General was proposing steps to increase resources allocated to multi-country offices to ensure that the United Nations system could reach out and effectively cover all countries under its purview. That included a proposal to leverage more funds through existing mechanisms, such as the Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. An office in the North Pacific would be established in response to the remoteness of the region. The Secretary-General would also pinpoint possible additional presence and capacities in the Caribbean, according to the region's specific needs, and would consider further adjustments in other settings. The focus would be on extrabudgetary resources, without impacting the regular budget of the United Nations.

7. Fourth, the Secretary-General would be working with development system entities to jointly rethink organizational arrangements across multi-country offices to maximize impact. Particular attention would be dedicated to identifying relevant policy capacity across the system and at the regional level that could be easily accessed and quickly deployed to countries

covered by those offices. The new Development Coordination Office would act as a connector and facilitator. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States also had an important role to play with regard to the policy and advocacy support expected by small island developing States. The Secretary-General had instructed both entities to report back to him and to Member States with respect to strengthening their roles.

8. Lastly, the Secretary-General had asked the Chief Economist to engage with regional commissions and international financial institutions to find concrete ways to expand access to development finance and other means of implementation for small island developing States and other countries covered by multi-country offices. The international community had already seen concrete efforts at the regional level with the responses of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean to the recent disasters in the Caribbean. The 2030 Agenda was multidimensional and should guide development funding across the globe. The graduation trap must be overcome; while most countries covered by multi-country offices were middle-income countries, they faced high vulnerabilities on the forefront of the battle against climate change. The international community could not afford to see countries reverse hard-won gains as it undertook the boldest development agenda in history.

9. Implementing those proposals would require a custom-made approach to each multi-country office, which must be shaped according to country development needs and vulnerabilities in order to allow resident coordinators and country teams to remain a reliable and effective partner to all countries. On the basis of feedback from Member States, the Secretary-General stood ready to launch an operationalization process in full consultation with the relevant Governments and development system entities. It would take approximately 12 to 18 months, but a number of key measures could begin to be implemented before the end of 2019. Since taking office, she and the Secretary-General had visited a number of countries covered by multi-country offices, and their visits and personal engagement had provided them with a first-hand understanding of the potential and shortcomings of the multi-country office set-up. The current review was an opportunity that could not be missed. It was founded on comprehensive, systematic and scrupulous analysis. The recommendations that had emerged were concrete and pragmatic, yet also potentially transformational.

10. **Ms. Moldoisaeva** (Permanent Representative of Kyrgyzstan to the United Nations), moderator, said that

the current panel discussion provided an opportunity to review the configuration, capacity, resource needs, role and development services of multi-country offices in order to enable them to deliver more effectively for the countries they served.

11. **Ms. Hussain** (Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations, and Bureau member of the Alliance of Small Island States), panellist, said that the multi-country offices were a key component in achieving sustainable development for many countries, especially small island developing States. Those offices must be fit for purpose and ensure that countries were not left behind. There was also a need to improve support, communication, advocacy and access to countries with multi-country offices at the United Nations. The multi-country office review report had made it clear that multi-country planning and implementation should be mindful of unique country needs and the specific support and engagement required.

12. A lack of programme funding impeded the ability of United Nations agencies to fully support countries in delivering on the 2030 Agenda and the Samoa Pathway. Identifying concrete solutions to development finance challenges was especially important to small island developing States, and tailored financing that would address their specific challenges would be critical going forward. Maldives and many small island developing States prioritized the need to improve capacity-building with respect to sustainable development.

13. In terms of next steps, the countries served by multi-country offices were encouraged to make their voices heard in discussions concerning the report's findings and recommendations. In that connection, it would be useful to develop a measurable time frame with concrete targets and milestones. The Alliance of Small Island States also urged continued support for small island developing States.

14. **Mr. Tevi** (Permanent Representative of Vanuatu to the United Nations), panellist, said that Vanuatu was one of the small island developing States in dire need of better support. To address the impact of climate change, the Government had worked to increase resilience and adaptation, but it could not do so alone. During a recent visit, the Secretary-General had opened a new Joint Presence Office in Vanuatu, which was currently fully funded by the Government of Vanuatu.

15. His delegation was pleased with the Secretary-General's recommendation to pay particular attention to the profile and skill sets of resident coordinators in multi-country offices; to examine the organization of arrangements, funds and programmes so as to ensure coherent, effective and efficient support; and to translate

regional strategies into country-specific agreements to capture country needs and clarify the United Nations response. It was also pleased to see that the development system would be making better use of regional assets, both within and outside the United Nations, which would help to leverage specific regional expertise and build capacity. Access to United Nations policy expertise was also critical. While countries served by multi-country offices must take full ownership of the development process, they counted on resident coordinators to build synergies with all relevant players and on country teams to support national development efforts.

16. Opening a multi-country office in the North Pacific would improve the management focus and increase development resources for North Pacific countries, while allowing the Resident Coordinator Office in the South Pacific to focus on those countries' needs. As multi-country offices underwent changes on the ground, it was necessary to ensure that resources and capacities at the global level were strengthened to better align with the issues facing small island developing States. His delegation was pleased with the Secretary-General's proposal to increase resources for both programmes and coordination.

17. **Ms. 'Utoikamanu** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), panellist, said that the multi-country office review was particularly critical for small island developing States, which faced complex, unique challenges and were highly vulnerable to climate change. The multi-country offices must be able to enhance and tailor support to all countries served.

18. The Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General had been relentless in their efforts to ensure that the review was guided by Member States. A senior-level steering committee, which she had co-chaired, had provided overall strategic guidance over the course of the review. It had ensured that the approach and methodology were robust and impartial and that the framing and content were relevant to and addressed the inputs and interests of key stakeholders. There must be full consultation with all Governments involved.

19. The small island developing States needed a stronger advocate in the international arena to advance their needs and priorities. In that connection, she would present a clear and detailed road map to increase her Office's capacities to support those States at the high-level review of the Samoa Pathway, with a view to advancing their results on the ground, working closely with Governments. She would also give due

consideration to where resource gaps must be bridged to ensure coherence in addressing their needs. She called on Member States to engage in constructive dialogue and make an effort to improve multi-country offices. The international community must ensure that the issues facing small island developing States were not lost among the many priorities of the system.

20. **Ms. Whyte** (Observer for Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that, regrettably, the CARICOM member States were still reviewing the findings and recommendations of the multi-country office review, as they had received the report just a few days prior. Only 7 of the 22 Caribbean countries served by multi-country offices had been visited during the review; the rest had participated via remote consultations and surveys. In order to fully comprehend the numerous challenges facing the region, more countries should have been visited, particularly those that did not host a multi-country office.

21. While the 13 primary recommendations were noteworthy and contained important elements, some areas were unclear and required further consultations. She asked for more information about the implications of the recommendation to increase outposted capacities in the Caribbean and wondered whether it went far enough to address concerns regarding the development system's coordination and delivery of programmatic work in the region. According to the report, the Caribbean warranted a stand-alone analysis to determine how best to reconfigure or increase capacities. CARICOM therefore felt that the recommendations were perhaps premature. The findings also indicated that United Nations funds and agencies in the Caribbean had an average of less than five people. She wondered whether outposted capacities would address the fact that the Caribbean was woefully underserved. While the report recognized that strengthening the capacities of multi-country offices required additional personnel and financial resources, the offices serving small island developing States accounted for only 0.65 per cent of the global United Nations expenditure. The additional allocation of \$25,000 per country to assist resident coordinators, as contained in the recommendations, was a step in the right direction, and CARICOM countries welcomed further exploration to increase funding to the region and its countries. They also encouraged the Secretariat to deliberate further with them on the way forward so as to ensure that the implementation of those recommendations was in their best interest.

22. **Mr. Abdelhamid** (Observer for the State of Palestine), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group supported an inclusive review

that took into account the priorities and needs of all countries serviced by multi-country offices, including non-small island developing States. In addition, consultations with national Governments could be improved. He enquired whether more information was available on the budgetary and administrative arrangements for the proposed multi-country office in the North Pacific.

23. **Ms. Norman-Chalet** (United States of America) asked how improvements in the availability of and accessibility to expertise and capacities would be measured. Given that both the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the regional economic commissions provided data analysis, she wished to know how the data were complementary, whether there was duplication and how that would be rationalized.

24. **Mr. Budhu** (Observer for Trinidad and Tobago) said that multi-country offices must build national ownership and leadership in addressing development challenges in accordance with national and regional priorities. As a result, country-specific agreements must complement national development strategies and the programmatic activities of the agencies, funds and programmes in order to achieve coherence across the United Nations system. His delegation would therefore welcome more information on country-specific agreements and how they would work in synergy with other strategies and plans without further complicating Member States' engagement and cooperation with the system. While the report's proposals included an additional allocation to assist resident coordinators, there was a need to explore how best to increase funding to multi-country offices, particularly in the Caribbean region. His delegation would also appreciate further information on the proposal to have dedicated funding rounds under the Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda to address issues impacting small island developing States. He asked for further clarification about the three-track allocation approach, particularly the programming cycle bonus, the formulation of Track C and how it would be used to fund the resident coordinator offices in an adequate and predictable manner. He wished to know more about the proposed outposted capacities, including the need for a stand-alone analysis of the Caribbean.

25. In future operational activities for development segments of the Council, particularly sessions concerning the multi-country office review, it would benefit Member States to interact with representatives from a multi-country office and hear their experiences on the ground. The review was an ongoing consultative process with Member States and should continue in a transparent and accountable manner, in the interest of all countries covered by multi-country offices.

26. **Mr. Thomas** (Observer for Antigua and Barbuda) said that the multi-country office in Barbados must be improved and outfitted with the resources and capabilities to fully meet all his country's needs. In the early stages of the recovery process following the 2017 hurricane season, it had been obvious to his Government that the United Nations system had been highly fragmented, and precious time had been wasted in resolving coordination issues. Furthermore, his delegation had represented the Caribbean small island developing States on the steering committee and had felt that its input had been pushed aside at times in favour of a predetermined course of action.

27. The resources used to conduct the review should have been better allocated to allow visits to more countries, especially to countries that did not host a multi-country office. There had also been a rush to conclude the review and produce the report. Greater independence should have been given to consultants, who should have been able to conduct visits unaccompanied by the transition team. While his delegation did not wish to affect the implementation of the new multi-country office in the North Pacific, it expressed reservations on the implementation of some recommendations. More information about how to fund those recommendations would be welcome, particularly whether there would be a cost to small island developing States and whether funds would be diverted from other areas. Greater clarity was also needed in terms of the function and effectiveness of a possible outpost office for the Caribbean. Lastly, he wished to know when the coverage of multi-country offices would be realigned and what mechanism would be established to guarantee efficiency and the delivery of services.

28. **Mr. Xu Zhongsheng** (China) said that there should be further discussions with Member States on the report's recommendations in order to clarify how to proceed with the relevant work. Given that each region was different, he asked how to make use of the Chief Economist's abilities and background with a view to providing adequate policy support and recommendations to each region. Concerning the new office in the North Pacific, he asked what the division of labour would be, what concrete impact it would have on budgeting and how the new set-up would help countries in the Pacific to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and the Samoa Pathway.

29. **Ms. Barker-Manase** (Observer for the Marshall Islands) said that her delegation welcomed the establishment of a multi-country office in the North Pacific, as well as the broader consideration of United Nations system presence, including how to improve the function of joint presence offices. While her delegation

was sensitive to the call for consultations made by countries in other regions, the Pacific countries could not continue under the present system and did not wish to stall actual progress that could deliver positive changes on the ground.

30. In her country's experience, multi-country offices could best deliver technical support and build capacity through a more sustained presence; short visits did not provide the time needed for stronger connections and better coordination with other aid and development efforts. The international community must also work quickly to better coordinate assistance provided by countries, regional entities and the United Nations. Missed opportunities and disconnects, which were a barrier to implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Samoa Pathway, could best be remedied by restructuring the multi-country offices.

31. **Mr. Hawke** (Observer for New Zealand) said that the review would provide an evidence base to discuss how the United Nations could more effectively and efficiently support small island developing States, which made up 20 per cent of the membership. While acknowledging the review team and its work, he shared the concerns about the way in which the review had been conducted. His delegation welcomed the country-specific plans and the proposed increase in funding for multi-country offices. It hoped that implementation could begin for those issues on which there was agreement.

32. On the subject of the new office in the North Pacific, his delegation wished to know more about the organization of the region; who would be responsible for determining the United Nations Pacific strategy and engaging with regional organizations; and how the funds, programmes and agencies with only one office in the region would interact with the various multi-country offices. It was important for countries and their development partners to understand the ecosystem that was being established. Lastly, his delegation encouraged efficiency and simplicity in order to avoid additional transaction costs.

33. **Ms. Olsson** (Head of the United Nations development system transition team) said that funding for development and other programmes would not be diverted to increase the capacities of multi-country offices. It would be secured through voluntary funding, the special purpose trust fund and, as needed, additional voluntary resources provided by donors. The operationalization phase of the multi-country office review would commence after the Council's current segment. It would intersect with the operationalization of many other reform efforts, which included repositioning at the regional level, improving the technical track and

focusing on staffing and expertise in the resident coordinator system. Resident coordinator offices would be incorporated into multi-country offices, thereby strengthening the capabilities of the latter. The reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the new position of Chief Economist and the repositioning within the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States would also serve to better support multi-country offices. It would take 12 to 18 months to implement the recommendations, and she encouraged Member States to engage fully in the rollout and the continuing dialogue to find solutions to some of the issues that had not been resolved in the review.

34. **Ms. 'Utoikamanu** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that there was room for further consultations concerning arrangements in the Caribbean region. However, the number of Caribbean countries visited during the review had been increased as a result of the inception report provided by the consultants. She appreciated the commitment made by steering committee members to attend the meetings, which had sometimes been called on short notice.

35. The North Pacific office had been proposed to address the prohibitive cost of traveling the distance between the five North Pacific countries and the office in Fiji. There were also recommendations to address the number of countries covered by the multi-country offices as well as their geographical distribution.

36. Most small island developing States were middle-income countries and had difficulty accessing financing to implement development programmes and respond to natural disasters. As a result, the Secretary-General had recommended that the Chief Economist work with financial institutions to support those States.

37. As to country-specific agreements, it had become clear during the review that some small island developing States only had a regional strategy. Member States had therefore requested a direct link between the regional strategy and the countries. That recommendation would guarantee ownership at the country level and accountability in implementing programmes and projects on the part of funds and programmes.

38. **Mr. Tevi** (Permanent Representative of Vanuatu to the United Nations) said that his Government would like to see the multi-country offices play an enhanced regional role and deliver more in terms of policy expertise and programming activities at the country level, bearing in mind the specificities of each country. Those actions should be translated into development

results on the ground. The report provided a platform for conversation, and all Member States should continue to engage in the process.

39. **Ms. Hussain** (Permanent Representative of Maldives to the United Nations, and Bureau member of the Alliance of Small Island States) said that multi-country offices must operate with a clear country focus. There must also be greater clarity on the source of funding and the allocation and use of funds among offices. Measurable targets and milestones were needed to monitor progress on the proposed changes, given the tight deadlines for implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Samoa Pathway.

40. The review should be viewed as an ongoing process that required continued engagement and dialogue, as well as timelines to assess the implementation of recommendations. The process should continue to employ a bottom-up approach with a country focus, keeping vulnerable groups at the centre of repositioning. The current dialogue was a positive step forward, particularly in identifying the gaps and challenges to be addressed. She hoped that the Secretary-General's next report would indicate some measurable progress towards achieving the repositioning.

Agenda item 7: Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation (*continued*)

(a) **Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and the Council** (*continued*)
(A/74/73-E/2019/14, A/74/73/Add.1-E/2019/14/Add.1, A/74/73/Add.2-E/2019/14/Add.2 and A/74/73/Add.3-E/2019/14/Add.3; E/2019/62)

(b) **Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund/United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the World Food Programme** (*continued*)
(E/2018/34/Rev.1, E/2018/35 and E/2019/36; UNW/2018/1, UNW/2018/5 and UNW/2018/7)

General discussion (continued)

41. **Mr. Hawke** (Observer for New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of Australia and Canada, said that, in order to have a meaningful impact on country-level delivery, the United Nations agency representatives responsible for country-level activities needed to establish a strong relationship with the new resident coordinators. The operationalization of the recently

finalized management and accountability framework was fundamental to the success of the reform agenda, and the Secretary-General should be bold in leading the next critical phase. Given that predictable and sustainable funding was also necessary for the success of the new resident coordinator system, Australia, Canada and New Zealand had each provided multi-year financial contributions and encouraged all States, both donor and programme countries, to do the same.

42. The three countries had participated in developing the funding compact and had been encouraged by the conversation on quality non-core funding. The international community must reassess the way in which the system was funded, which included broadening the donor base, encouraging non-traditional donors to increase their contributions, increasing multi-year funding and providing programmatic funding that incentivized collaboration. Agencies must also honour their commitments in the funding compact, with more effective programme implementation, better monitoring of results and more transparent reporting. They should increase partnerships, joint programming and collaboration, as competition among agencies was wasting precious development resources.

43. The multi-country office review had acknowledged the need to provide better support to all countries covered by those offices, to develop country-specific development plans and to provide increased resources for coordination. Australia, Canada and New Zealand welcomed and supported the Secretary-General's decisions to execute his reform mandate in the Caribbean and the Pacific and looked forward to further discussions on how his recommendations could best be implemented. Those States also supported the deployment of human rights advisors to United Nations country teams and commended the development of a new system-wide disability inclusion strategy. However, greater clarity was needed on the proposals for reform at the regional level and in relation to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Furthermore, the system-wide strategic document should deliver a clear vision for the role of the United Nations development system in supporting the 2030 Agenda. Australia, Canada and New Zealand would also welcome a stronger focus on the development system's comparative advantage and core mandates anchored in leaving no one behind, with better integration of critical principles such as human rights and gender equality.

44. **Ms. Young** (Observer for Belize), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that the outputs of repositioning the development system were critically important to the States members of the Alliance and affected their ability to secure their

development. The Secretary-General must respond to the mandates for repositioning in a timely, comprehensive and transparent manner. As was customary, progress should continue under the leadership and guidance of Member States.

45. The work of country and regional offices was essential to synchronizing global mandates and national priorities. It was also indispensable for small island and low-lying coastal developing States that had capacity and resource constraints. The analysis provided by regional and multi-country office reviews must enable those offices to be fit for purpose and respond to the needs of Member States.

46. While the Alliance welcomed the establishment of a multi-country office in the North Pacific, it was unclear how the proposed recommendations would be operationalized in the Caribbean region. Nevertheless, it looked forward to engaging and deliberating further on the specifics of those recommendations and advancing the process, as it would not be possible to wait another year to begin implementation.

47. **Mr. Necula** (Romania), speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, said that all United Nations development system entities must take ownership of and support the implementation of the reforms, which included financing the new system. In order to align the country programme documents to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, information on the progress made and challenges faced in all reform tracks should be shared in a transparent manner. While the Secretary-General's report was robust overall, more clarity was needed with regard to efficiency gains, particularly in identifying overlaps and duplications. Concrete figures and detailed information on progress should be delivered as soon as possible, as was promised during the discussions concerning the funding compact. The Joint Inspection Unit had recommended a combination of programmatic decentralization and service delivery centralization, which could be useful ideas moving forward.

48. The European Union welcomed the funding compact but recalled its reservations on commitment 6, to facilitate and support the implementation of efficiency measures. The costs necessary to achieve that target were to be found within existing resources, supplemented by in-kind contributions if necessary, rather than additional financial resources. The European Union would also welcome additional information on the new mechanisms and resource needs listed in the multi-country office section of the report. The Secretary-General was encouraged to be as ambitious at the regional level as he had been at the country level.

However, a clearer, evidence-based picture was needed on the full implications of his five recommendations. As requested in General Assembly resolution [72/279](#), options should be presented on a region by region basis as soon as possible in order to have an informed discussion. Given that the General Assembly had mandated the reform of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs three years prior, the European Union had expected more details on the measures envisaged. Increasing transparency around the reform process must also be a priority. Furthermore, the lack of progress on the system-wide strategic document gave cause for concern. It would need to be much more operational, specific and concrete than the outline provided in order to address gaps and overlaps in development system operations. In order for the reforms to succeed, the links between the three reform strands must be factored in, and resident coordinators must be able to effectively drive joint analysis, planning and collective outcomes across all United Nations entities.

49. **Mr. Bai** (Observer for Fiji), speaking on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States, said that the Pacific region was unique, and States required a tailored approach to achieve their development aspirations. The Pacific small island developing States welcomed the decision to establish a dedicated multi-country office in the North Pacific as an effective and efficient way to cater to the priorities and needs of those countries. The States also supported the reassessment of the joint presence offices in the Pacific, which should be country-led. There must be greater coherence and coordination among the various United Nations entities within the Pacific region as well as with regional and subregional development bodies in order to provide more targeted assistance. The Pacific small island developing States also welcomed the proposals to increase resourcing to multi-country offices. The recruitment and staffing of United Nations offices should include international experts who understood the contexts of the countries in which they served and were able to help build the capacity of local staff and national institutions.

50. **Ms. Juul** (Norway) said that the reform of the resident coordinator system was complex and challenging, and Member States should be open to adjustments based on countries' experiences during implementation. Her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's emphasis on strengthening collaboration through multi-country offices and took note of the need for further consultations with the Member States concerned. The reform process should be covered by the existing funding envelope for the resident coordinator system. In addition, transparency was crucial for Member States to have confidence in the

process and engage actively in the implementation phase.

51. The United Nations should act on its comparative advantages when supporting the development plans of host Governments. Furthermore, the development system should improve gender mainstreaming, and the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women should be fully implemented. Increasing efficiencies and cost savings would increase the availability of resources for programme activities, and her delegation looked forward to receiving updated information on the proposal for common back offices and common premises. Norway also welcomed the funding compact and encouraged all Member States to consider ways to improve the flexibility and predictability of funding.

52. **Mr. Kadiri** (Morocco) said that it was important to respect the development model and the specificity of each country during the ongoing implementation of development system reforms. Funding was essential for the successful transition of the development system. Respect for official development assistance commitments should be maintained and strengthened, in addition to public-private partnerships, innovative financing and effective cooperation among all stakeholders. The new resident coordinators should provide policy guidance and coordination for development in close and regular collaboration with host countries. Given the increasing humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters accelerated by climate change, it was important to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus through the reform, placing a greater focus on prevention and sustainable development and strengthening the resilience of the most vulnerable countries. Lastly, his delegation looked forward to the forthcoming discussions on repositioning the development system at the regional level.

53. **Ms. Kadare** (Observer for Albania) said that delinking the resident coordinator from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should not be considered the main goal of the reform, but rather an initial phase to lay the foundation for a more efficient United Nations system. All United Nations entities should adjust their way of doing business to support the role of an impartial resident coordinator so that the country teams functioned in a more integrated manner.

54. Implementation of the development system reform was going smoothly in Albania, which had been a “Delivering as one” country since 2007. To support and ensure progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the Government would make an immediate contribution of \$500,000 to its Sustainable

Development Goal acceleration fund. It would also contribute \$2 million per year for the remaining years of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Her delegation supported the Secretary-General’s recommendations to finalize a system-wide strategic document, improve multi-country offices, reorganize regional assets and promote the principles in the funding compact. It was also interested in the new guidance for the Framework and particularly supported the emphasis on regional and cross-border approaches.

55. **Mr. Denктаş** (Turkey) said that his delegation firmly supported the Secretary-General’s efforts to make the development system more efficient, transparent and accountable. National ownership and consent should be the overarching principles of the reform. Given that the regional desks of the Development Coordination Office would not be part of the country teams, a separate host country agreement would be needed for the Office in Istanbul. With regard to the guidelines for the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework, his delegation did not support the inclusion of regional issues in the mandate of the resident coordinator, which should not be involved in transboundary issues without the consent of all relevant countries. Furthermore, the deployment of human rights advisors to country teams should be subject to the host country’s consent. The different priorities of regions and all relevant Member States should be taken into account in the reviews, and regional entities should not be given the authority to overrule host countries’ views. His delegation welcomed the Secretary-General’s efforts to improve the sustainability and predictability of funding for the development system through the funding compact, which should consider each donor’s unique features and abilities. Nevertheless, the current hybrid funding mechanism and the funding compact might not be sufficient to fully finance development system activities. A long-term and sustainable solution to financing was therefore needed to ensure the success of the resident coordinator system.

56. **Mr. Amin** (Observer for Afghanistan) said that the work of the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration would support country teams on the ground and accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in countries experiencing humanitarian crises or conflicts. A revamped regional approach should be one of the main outcomes of the development system reform. The United Nations must step up its capabilities to align its activities at the regional level with countries’ priorities and needs. Repositioning the regional economic commissions and increasing coordination with other regional platforms would also accelerate and support the

achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level. Separating the functions of resident coordinators from those of the UNDP Resident Representative should enable the latter to implement reforms on the ground and support efforts to reduce poverty. The reinvigorated resident coordinator system required sustainable funding to fulfil its responsibility and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

57. **Mr. Ma Zhaoxu** (China) said that his Government supported the reasonable and necessary reforms to the development system, which had yielded some results but remained an uphill battle. In strictly implementing the mandates contained in General Assembly resolutions [71/243](#) and [72/279](#), efforts should be centred around development and prioritize poverty eradication to enhance development capacity. Member States' leadership and accountability should be stressed. The views of programme countries should be fully heeded, and their development strategies and needs should be served in staffing country teams and formulating Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be adhered to in addressing the lack of resources for development and the unbalanced resource structure. Developing countries must have better representation in the development system, particularly in the resident coordinator system and the Development Coordination Office. In addition, candidates from developing countries competing for relevant posts should not face unreasonable obstacles or conditions. The role of regional economic commissions should be strengthened, and the multi-country office review should not result in unreasonable financial burdens. The international community should encourage cooperation for win-win results; uphold multilateralism; safeguard the multilateral trading system; and oppose unilateralism, protectionism and trade bullying.

58. **Mr. Penaranda** (Philippines) said that the development system's operational activities must align with national plans, priorities and the changing needs of Member States to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The new partnership framework for sustainable development between the Philippines and the United Nations had redefined the Organization's engagement to focus on strategic partnership rather than development assistance. His delegation noted the ongoing preparations for the new management and accountability framework and would appreciate more detailed information in that regard.

59. Transparency and accountability must be ensured throughout the implementation of the reforms. Resident coordinators should be fully accountable to national Governments and be guided by clear reporting lines to

the host Government. A tailored approach was necessary to ensure that the development system repositioning was effective and inclusive. His delegation welcomed the conclusion of the funding compact, as well as the Secretary-General's emphasis on strengthening the regional architecture and maximizing the potential of United Nations assets and expertise at the regional level. It also looked forward to frank and interactive discussions concerning progress in repositioning the development system.

60. **Mr. Park Chull-Joo** (Republic of Korea) said that the reform could only succeed if individual agencies fully understood what needed to be done on all fronts. His delegation supported the overall direction of reform efforts at the country level and hoped that the relevant documents, including the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and the new mutual accountability framework, would be shared with Member States in a timely manner. Further clarification was needed on how to quantify efficiency gains moving forward. With respect to the multi-country office and regional reviews, he welcomed the concrete proposals in the Secretary-General's report, including measures to strengthen the role of multi-country offices and make the regional response fit for purpose. Subsequent cost implications and efficiency gains should be presented in due course.

61. The role of the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration was crucial in scaling up the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. Based on the outcome of its work, more concrete measures should be explored, including strengthening the links between Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and humanitarian response plans. The roles of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund in the overall reform should also be further strengthened. Lastly, his delegation looked forward to engaging in future consultations on the draft system-wide strategic document, which should provide clear directions for the development system to identify its comparative advantages and avoid duplications and overlaps.

62. **Ms. Saran** (Observer for South Africa) said that scaling up and significantly strengthening the role of the development system and its capacity to assist developing countries remained crucial to implementing the 2030 Agenda. In the implementation phase of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, it was important to bear in mind the indivisibility of the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure that they were equally prioritized. The mutually reinforcing relationship between peacebuilding, humanitarian

action and development, articulated in the review, should not adversely affect resources for development. The configuration of country teams should be customized to national contexts, which might not require resources in areas outside of development. Furthermore, programme countries were mostly developing countries, which continued to bear the brunt of global economic inequalities. The development system must continue to pay due attention to the policy space in those countries, and the reinvigorated resident coordinator system and country teams should be responsive to national development plans. In addition, host countries should be involved in identifying relevant skills and competencies, where possible, and in ensuring a gender and geographical balance in the appointment of staff at the country level.

63. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan) said that the mandates given to the Secretary-General by Member States in General Assembly resolutions [71/243](#) and [72/279](#) were final and should not be reopened. Debate in the Council on accountability and the review of operational activities should not undermine the mandate of the General Assembly, which must remain central to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and the repositioning of the development system. Furthermore, regional collaborative platforms should not undermine the role of regional commissions. In order to maintain national ownership of Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, the reporting line of the resident coordinator and the country team to the host country should be maintained, and future Cooperation Frameworks should be concluded according to the aspirations and national priorities of host countries. His delegation hoped that the funding compact would end the decades-long imbalance between core and non-core funding for operational activities for development, that the coordination levy to fill the funding gap of \$89 million would soon be operationalized and that traditional donors would increase their voluntary contributions.

64. **Mr. Moraru** (Observer for the Republic of Moldova) said that, although the development system's funding problems would not necessarily be resolved through percentage targets on core funding, the funding compact could broaden the funding base, particularly for the new resident coordinator system. His delegation recognized the merits of the Secretary-General's recommendations for the longer-term restructuring of United Nations regional assets. While the proposal to enhance oversight and evaluation functions for better system-wide results, including the establishment of an independent system-wide evaluation unit, deserved positive consideration, more clarity was needed on how

that new unit would relate to and interact with existing structures, particularly the Joint Inspection Unit. His delegation was in favour of strengthening the oversight role of the Council's operational activities for development segment, which would require unified reporting by the governing bodies of development system entities on the implementation of reform-related decisions. It also encouraged those entities to make their corporate evaluations available on the website of the United Nations Evaluation Group.

65. **Mr. Houth** (Cambodia) said that there was no one-size-fits-all approach to development, as different countries had different priorities, access to resources and capacities. The development system must therefore be positioned to enable greater collaboration among development actors, providing needs-based assistance while supporting national ownership of implementation processes. Revamping the development system at the regional level would optimize the use of resources, strengthen regional collaboration among parties and enable it to be more responsive to the needs of individual Member States. However, those reforms would require satisfactory development financing. His delegation therefore urged all parties to uphold the commitments set out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and other financing instruments. It was also important to avoid fragmentation and working in silos. Constructive engagement based on comprehensive strategic partnerships was the only way forward, and Cambodia stood ready to work with all relevant stakeholders.

66. **Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga** (Ecuador) said that his delegation reiterated its support for repositioning the development system, which made it possible to increase the quality and availability of resources and close the gap between core and non-core resources, allowing for greater predictability in the system's activities at the country level. In coordination with the Government and with the participation of all relevant parties, the Resident Coordinator for Ecuador and the Resident Representative of UNDP in Ecuador would help to implement the national development plan, which aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

67. **Ms. Imene** (Observer for Namibia) said that Member States and other stakeholders had shown strong political will towards the reinvigorated resident coordinator system by making financial contributions for its smooth implementation. With regard to climate change, the President of Namibia had declared a state of emergency, as drought in all regions threatened economic growth. Her delegation therefore reiterated the need to increase the focus on the nexus between

development and security, including food security. The effects of climate change should be urgently addressed.

68. **Mr. Sinha** (India) said that moving forward, the reports of the Development Coordination Office would be helpful in ensuring accountability for resident coordinators. The quality and volume of resources for implementing the new arrangement must lead to improvements in the development system's predictability and impartiality. At the same time, the international community must ensure that resources meant for core development programmes were not diverted to coordination functions or overhead costs, which would have a deleterious effect on the development agenda of developing countries. The funding compact would enhance the quality and quantity of available funding and ensure transparency and accountability for development system entities. Member States should be fully informed and involved until the remaining elements of the reform were completed and the reinvigorated resident coordinator system was fully functional.

69. **Mr. Chumakov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation supported efforts to eliminate duplication in the course of the reforms. In his report, the Secretary-General had suggested that Member States could request governing bodies of the development system to report to the Council on the implementation of reforms. The Council should therefore be the appropriate forum for discussing general aspects of such activities. It was also important to have a multi-year plan for the work of the segment so that discussions could be as fruitful and focused as possible.

70. The Secretariat had a bilateral framework agreement with the European Union on the administration of its voluntary contributions for development projects. Unfortunately, under pressure from the European Union, the Secretariat had recently agreed to amend the agreement so that United Nations development projects could not be carried out by operators who were under European Union sanctions. The imposition of such illegitimate sanctions was an attempt to destroy the Organization and its mechanisms. His delegation therefore asked the Secretary-General to respond by developing a template that would govern voluntary contributions for development.

71. His delegation advocated for increased transparency in the work of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. The principles of transparency and inclusiveness should also be observed when reviewing the cost-sharing formula for the Group. The agencies that had received discounts previously should continue to do so.

72. **Ms. Barandun** (Observer for Switzerland) said that reforms should be swiftly implemented at the country level. Switzerland was contributing over \$9.4 million to fund the transitional phase of the new system and encouraged other Member States to contribute as well. Her delegation welcomed the timely cost-sharing contributions that had been made and called on the political leadership within specialized agencies, funds, programmes and other United Nations entities to guarantee the implementation of the reform. Discussions on structured finance within the funds and programmes should be aligned with the funding compact, and progress should be made in improving the efficiency of working methods so that executive boards could make appropriate decisions in that regard.

73. The international community must find innovative ways to ensure that the reform had a positive impact at the regional level. Her delegation would appreciate more information about the planned changes to governance and their implications for country teams. Lastly, the system-wide strategic document should illustrate the comparative and collaborative advantages of the development system in support of the 2030 Agenda but should also allow for the possibility of involving other actors where they were better positioned to provide support.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.