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Chair: Mr. Carillo Gómez (Paraguay)

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In the absence of Mr. Logar (Slovenia), Mr. Carrillo Gómez (Paraguay), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

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

Agenda item 25: Operational activities for development (*continued*) (A/69/737 and A/69/737/Add.1)

(a) Operational activities for development of the United Nations system (*continued*) (A/70/62-E/2015/4)

(b) South-South cooperation for development (*continued*) (A/70/344)

1. **Mr. M. Osman Sid Ahmed Mohammed Ali** (Sudan) said that the report of the Secretary-General regarding implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/70/62-E/2015/4) was the first report to present the results of the single coherent monitoring and reporting framework. Once the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals had been completed, the United Nations development system would be in a better position to respond to particular national needs with greater coordination, comprehensiveness and flexibility. His delegation encouraged the shift of more operations to regional hubs, and a greater emphasis on national ownership. The Economic and Social Council dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system would provide an opportunity to correct the imbalance between core and non-core resources, which was a matter of particular concern to developing countries.

2. While foreign direct investment had declined in 2014, South-South cooperation had increased. That had in turn increased the demands for financing, which was particularly important for least developed countries, and he called on the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation to respond accordingly. However, South-South cooperation was no substitute for the fulfilment of North-South cooperation commitments on technology transfer, reform of the global trading system and official development assistance (ODA), complemented by triangular cooperation, with a view to creating an international system conducive to the growth of developing economies.

3. **Ms. Sloane** (United States of America) said that effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would require the United Nations agencies engaging in operational activities for development to adjust and refocus their work. They would be challenged to do more to prevent conflict, reduce violence and combat impunity in order to help people lift themselves and their families out of poverty. They would also be called upon to increase their efforts to help countries promote peace, justice and good governance so that national sustainable development efforts could take root and succeed.

4. Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals was critical to the entire 2030 Agenda and would, to a large extent, determine its success. The international community and United Nations agencies must make it a priority to assist Governments in implementing targets on accountability, transparency and good governance. They should work with countries emerging from conflict to rebuild institutions, promote accountability and create an enabling environment for inclusive economic growth that would underpin stable, peaceful and prosperous communities.

5. Welcoming the significant progress already achieved in strengthening the management structures of operational agencies and improving programme delivery to ensure that the United Nations development system was “fit for purpose”, she stressed that such efforts must be stepped up and adapted to the new 2030 Agenda. It was more important than ever for the entire United Nations development system to be better coordinated and to act and deliver as one while respecting the unique mandates, capabilities and comparative advantages of individual agencies. The Executive Boards of such agencies were the most effective bodies by which to translate General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions into operational guidance for the funds and programmes. Accordingly, the Committee should strive to enhance their effectiveness in making management and programmatic decisions for the agencies.

6. The ongoing Economic and Social Council dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system was a valuable opportunity to take a fresh and critical look at its structure in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The United States would continue to participate constructively in those dialogues during the critical period leading up to the 2016 quadrennial

comprehensive policy review, so that the United Nations development system would deliver results and meet expectations.

7. South-South and triangular cooperation, of which the United States was a strong supporter, had indispensable roles to play in improving the lives of millions of the world's neediest and most marginalized people. The knowledge and experience of countries of the South were invaluable in helping other countries facing similar challenges. In order to meet the lofty goals ahead, all Member States must work together for the benefit of all, preserving the spirit of consensus and cooperation that had led to the historic Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the third International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda.

8. **Mr. Achergui** (Morocco) said that while substantial progress had been made in terms of human and socioeconomic development, the work of the MDGs remained unfinished as inequalities and disparities persisted and had in some cases even worsened in developing countries. The 2030 Agenda had begun a new era in operational activities for development in which, more than ever, the United Nations system must strengthen its effectiveness and system-wide coherence in order to help those countries. While the various agencies, funds and programmes had made commendable efforts to achieve cost-effectiveness, there was a growing imbalance between core resources and non-core, mostly earmarked, resources. The pressure on core resources had been exacerbated by rising tensions and natural disasters, which had all increased the demands on United Nations agencies.

9. Morocco, which had boosted its activities and initiatives in the area of South-South and triangular cooperation, welcomed the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (A/70/344) regarding the integration of such cooperation into the activities of United Nations agencies, in particular within the framework of implementing the 2030 Agenda. South-South cooperation was now enshrined in the Constitution of Morocco and visits by King Mohammed VI to various West African countries had led to a number of projects, including the establishment of a fertilizer factory to promote food security in Africa.

10. **Ms. Loe** (Norway) said that while the United Nations development system could not — and should

not — do everything, it was uniquely positioned to assist Governments in formulating national policies and plans for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, including the provision of coherent and human rights-based advice.

11. Norway wished to see stronger efforts by the United Nations development system in politically fragile countries and regions, with the aim of contributing to sustainable and inclusive States and reducing tensions and conflicts. In conflict situations in particular, the United Nations should deliver as one across all of its three pillars: development, peace and security, and human rights. In protracted crises, there was still room to strengthen the linkage between humanitarian response and long-term development.

12. At the global level, the United Nations had an important role to play in addressing challenges through collective action, such as under the Sustainable Energy for All initiative and the Every Woman, Every Child initiative.

13. Recalling the efficiency advantages of adopting the “Delivering as one” approach, she urged all country teams to use the standard operating procedures, welcomed the emphasis placed on operating as one within that context and noted with appreciation the substantial cost savings documented in the midterm evaluation of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Business Operations Strategy pilot programme.

14. In the context of the Human Rights Up Front initiative, important steps had been taken to broaden and clarify the leadership role of resident coordinators, whose offices must be sufficiently staffed and have the relevant competencies. To that end, all entities, including the Secretariat, must pay their full share of the UNDG cost-sharing arrangement for 2016-2017.

15. The 2030 Agenda provided an opportunity to change the funding architecture of United Nations operational activities, in line with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and subsequent Economic and Social Council resolutions. Member States needed to follow their words with deeds that enhanced the volume and predictability of core funding and soft-earmarked thematic funding to individual organizations.

16. Norway welcomed the increased support for, and mainstreaming of, South-South cooperation and agreed

with the Secretary-General that the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation was best served by remaining in its current institutional home, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

17. The Norwegian delegation recommended discipline and restraint in introducing new proposals into the Committee's resolution on operational activities during the current session. The Committee should await the next report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and continue informal discussions in the Economic and Social Council dialogue in order to agree on the subsequent quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2016.

18. **Mr. Higuchi** (Japan) stressed the importance of harnessing the comparative advantages of the United Nations, such as its legitimacy, neutrality, global reach and convening power, in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Since the United Nations could not achieve all of the Sustainable Development Goals alone, its development system must promote national ownership and should be tailored to national strategies and needs. Bridging the gap between humanitarian and development assistance was also crucial, especially in the context of leaving no one behind.

19. There had been strong calls for predictable, flexible and sufficient funding in order for the United Nations development system to implement the 2030 Agenda. To that end, non-core resources should be used in a more flexible and efficient manner, while the donor base for core resources should be broadened and private funds leveraged into development.

20. Creating a whole new system to meet demands to strengthen system-wide governance was unnecessary; the Committee should continue to work toward improving the existing system while avoiding duplication. As governance was closely related to funding, an improved governance structure could provide incentives to Member States to increase their contributions.

21. Welcoming the expansion of South-South and triangular cooperation and stressing the importance of transparency and accountability, he welcomed the intention of the Director of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation to conduct a full review of the Office's business practices.

22. Lastly, he noted that the "Total Quality Management" approach, developed in the Japanese manufacturing industry to improve its standards, had been applied to a triangular cooperation programme for better hospital services in Sri Lanka. The approach, which was a fitting example of Japan's commitment to triangular cooperation, had subsequently been successfully applied in 15 countries in Africa to improve their medical services.

23. **Mr. Crilchuk** (Argentina) said that his delegation believed that operational activities for development should play a significantly greater role in helping developing countries meet their development goals by continuously improving effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact, combined with a significant increase in core resources.

24. Operational activities must address long-term development challenges, taking into account the promotion of capacity-building in developing countries. The United Nations system should make optimal use of available national expertise by enabling and facilitating the access of recipient countries to the full range of services throughout the development system, an area where the regional commissions also had a major role to play.

25. The core budget of the United Nations must be increased, as the financing through it helped to align the system with the priorities established by Member States, in accordance with principles of national ownership and neutrality. Although results-based management and accountability were essential, they should not lead donor countries to base their financing decisions on political visibility and short-term results. The 2030 Agenda must strategically and effectively include short-, medium- and long-term actions.

26. At the current session, the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes must provide all Member States with detailed information about the specific steps taken to eradicate poverty over the period 2012 to 2016. That would help to identify and fill in the gaps with a view to strengthening the United Nations development system. Given the broad scope of the 2030 Agenda and the need for adaptation, the more specialized United Nations agencies should be included in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review on operational activities, to avoid duplication and increase cooperation between different stakeholders. The recommendations of the Economic

and Social Council dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system would also help to increase the scope and effectiveness of the next quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

27. It was necessary to develop cooperation schemes that allowed for mutual reinforcement and eliminated dependency on North-South cooperation, without, however, overlooking the historical commitment that developed countries had made to the social and economic development of developing countries. South-South and traditional cooperation were not mutually exclusive but complementary. The ultimate goal of South-South cooperation was to strengthen the countries' capacities to meet their own development needs, in accordance with their national values, aspirations, specific needs and development strategies. His delegation therefore emphasized the key leadership role that States must have in the design and execution of South-South cooperation policies; that role must be respected when including new actors, such as the private sector and civil society.

28. **Mr. Wang Min** (China) said that, with the advent of the 2030 Agenda, the international community should work together to enhance the development capacity of all countries and to improve the environment for international development, including by optimizing partnerships and strengthening coordination mechanisms. Since the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals would require the provision of sufficient and appropriate resources, all development partners must fully implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and increase the quantity and quality of core and non-core contributions. Developed countries should bear the primary responsibility for development financing, honour their ODA commitments and increase assistance to developing countries in special situations.

29. The dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system, convened by the Economic and Social Council, was welcome and had helped his delegation to fully understand the actual needs of developing countries. The dialogue was also conducive to improving the management and operation of the United Nations development system, enhancing targeted and effective programme implementation and effectively supporting the development of programme countries. Based on the outcome of that dialogue, the United Nations system and its agencies should step up targeted assistance to different countries, in accordance

with their respective situations and development needs, rather than imposing uniformity or a fixed model.

30. In the context of the 2012-2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review, he said that the United Nations development system and its agencies should maintain their universal, voluntary and grant nature, as well as their neutrality and multilateralism; that the ownership and leadership of programme countries regarding their own development should be respected; and that the 2030 Agenda should be incorporated in such a way as to assist developing countries, especially countries in special situations, to achieve sustainable development.

31. North-South cooperation was still the mainstay of development cooperation and had a status and role that should not be weakened or diluted. South-South cooperation was a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, North-South cooperation. The United Nations development system should provide necessary policy and funding support for South-South cooperation through new thinking and methods, as well as further support to the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation in carrying out its mandate.

32. China was an important participant in and contributor to global cooperation for development. While attending recent summits at the United Nations, President Xi Jinping had announced a series of important initiatives, including establishing the China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund and the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund; increasing investment in least developed countries; forgiving the debt of the outstanding intergovernmental interest-free loans due at the end of 2015 by the relevant least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States; and providing programme support, through the "Six 100s" initiative, to developing countries over the next five years in the areas of poverty eradication, agricultural cooperation, trade promotion, environmental protection and climate change, medical facilities, and education and training.

33. **Mr. Alikhani** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that as the future of the sustainable development agenda relied on the smooth functioning and coordination of the entire United Nations development system, it was important to ensure that the following quadrennial comprehensive policy review was more aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

34. The United Nations development system must continue to provide coherent and integrated support, tailored to the changing needs and priorities of developing countries, and respecting the principles of national ownership and leadership. The existing imbalance between core and non-core resources was a matter of serious concern for achieving development objectives.

35. Middle-income countries still faced significant challenges towards achieving sustainable development, with reductions in programme activities and staff in country offices impairing development projects and related joint activities in the field. The quality of programme implementation at the country level should take precedence over any administrative considerations, and programme countries should be fully consulted about all decisions or policies affecting them in that regard.

36. South-South and triangular cooperation should play an important role within the context of operational activities for development and must not be considered as a substitute for, but rather as a complement to, North-South cooperation. It was unfortunate that valuable time and resources had been spent on discussing the independence and autonomy of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, and the strengthening of its human and financial resources, without actually producing any concrete results. While South-South cooperation, which had recently been flourishing, had its own distinct and unique governance body, it had only rarely been able to provide timely guidelines for certain policy and operational aspects of South-South cooperation. Issues pertaining to the status of that Office should be settled once and for all, paving the way for it to promote and coordinate South-South cooperation within all development areas, including the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that context, the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation must be further empowered to monitor and set norms within the overall framework of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, the Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic and social fields.

37. **Mr. Randin** (Switzerland) said that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda marked a fundamental change for

global development policy and would have a significant impact on the operational activities of the United Nations development system. While it was perhaps too early to identify and understand all of the new challenges facing the development system, the upcoming phase would nonetheless be interesting and marked by analysis, repositioning and adaptation.

38. The United Nations development system must be better prepared to deal with the challenges of the new 2030 Agenda, taking into account new large-scale approaches and opportunities, in particular South-South cooperation and partnerships among Governments, the private sector, civil society, development actors and the United Nations system. A large number of United Nations bodies had examined the 2030 Agenda and had expressed the desire to expand their mandates and increase their budgets accordingly. Heads of State had nonetheless stressed the importance of system-wide strategic planning, implementation and reporting in order to ensure coherent and integrated support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

39. Member States must provide guidance regarding the changes needed during the midterm review of the strategic funds, programmes and specialized agencies; during the Economic and Social Council dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system; at the high-level political forum on sustainable development; and in preparation for the 2016 quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

40. His delegation expected that both resolutions contained under agenda item 25 on operational activities for development would be purely procedural. While discussions were always welcome, they should contribute to the 2016 quadrennial review, which was the main vehicle for Member States to provide guidance on the possible reforms needed. Consequently, his delegation wished to see an evidence-based, well-informed, consensual and constructive process to strengthen the United Nations development system and maximize its positive impact at the national level.

41. **Mr. Pinyowit** (Thailand) said that as the financial resources and technical capacities needed to implement the 2030 Agenda were significant, it was essential to establish a coherent, responsive, effective and efficient United Nations development system that was synergized with regard to both its normative and

operational support functions. More integrated and coordinated planning, financing and implementation were necessary for the 2030 Agenda.

42. The right balance must be struck between core and non-core funding to give the United Nations development system sufficient financial flexibility, independence and neutrality. His delegation was concerned that there had been no significant growth in funding for United Nations operational activities, causing the gap between core and non-core funding to widen further. He stressed that the development system would function better by building a critical mass of core resources, by adopting the “pooled funding” approach and by achieving full cost-recovery.

43. As operational activities for development must first and foremost take into account the development needs, policies and priorities of the host countries, the development framework should be customized for each country, including by improving coordination among country teams, resident coordinators and regional commissions.

44. Convinced of the importance of the ability to effectively follow up and review the progress of the 2030 Agenda in a timely fashion, Thailand would host the fourth International Conference for National Evaluation Capacity in October 2015.

45. Thailand had been very active in South-South and triangular cooperation, as a vital complement to North-South cooperation in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation must take the lead to create greater inter-agency synergy and resource efficiency. Further efforts must also be made to better utilize the expertise of donor countries from the South to bridge the development gap. For example, the Thailand International Cooperation Agency had extended technical and financial assistance to neighbours and other developing countries with a view to intensifying South-South and triangular cooperation. His delegation was ready to share knowledge, experiences and best practices in areas that supported the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including healthcare, education, rural development, sustainable agriculture and tourism.

46. **Mr. Alemu** (Ethiopia) said that while his delegation welcomed the continued increase in funding, especially for non-core resources, the imbalance between core and non-core resources should be corrected. In the context of the quadrennial

comprehensive policy review, it was imperative not only to strengthen policy and procedural harmonization and coordination, but also to intensify dialogue between the United Nations and Governments to improve the alignment, predictability and quality of resources. The United Nations system must further improve its fitness for purpose by fully integrating the three dimensions of development in its programmes.

47. As one of the countries that had volunteered to pilot the “One United Nations” initiative, Ethiopia reaffirmed its support for efforts to improve the coherence, coordination and effectiveness of operational activities, since adequate, consistent and predictable financial resources were crucial to achieve the unfinished business of the MDGs and implement the post-2015 development agenda. ODA commitments must be honoured in line with the national development priorities of developing countries, especially least developed countries.

48. Ethiopia continued to benefit from the United Nations development system, which provided financial and technical assistance and was one of the country’s main development partners. He looked forward to that partnership being further strengthened, as his country began implementing its second five-year development strategy. He also noted that the development system should formalize such partnership activities, including by reporting on the impacts of development activities.

49. The partnership behind South-South cooperation, taking the form of development finance, technical assistance and capacity-building, continued to support the realization of the internationally agreed development goals and to accelerate structural transformation, economic diversification and technology transfer. South-South cooperation was most effective when aligned with national development strategies; in Ethiopia, it had contributed to economic growth, poverty reduction and job creation, and had enhanced productive capacity in the infrastructure and energy sectors.

50. **Mr. González Franco** (Paraguay) said that the United Nations development system should support the efforts of Member States, together with other stakeholders such as the private sector, international organizations, civil society and academia, to eradicate poverty and achieve equality within and between States.

51. In order to better reflect the multidimensional nature of development and poverty, the provisions of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 and the special needs of those countries should be mainstreamed into the midterm reviews and strategic plans of the United Nations development system. Their special needs and challenges should also be taken into consideration when reviewing the composition and functioning of the governing bodies of United Nations funds and programmes.

52. Since the 2030 Agenda required data collection, analysis and dissemination, national capacity-building was required in that area. Accordingly, ODA providers should focus support on helping countries in special situations, in particular landlocked developing countries, to collect, analyse and disseminate data.

53. The 2030 Agenda and the Vienna Programme of Action relied on a strengthened global partnership for sustainable development. Member States should therefore underscore the relevance of South-South cooperation to addressing the needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries.

54. Lastly, while welcoming the achievements made to make the United Nations development system more participative and accountable, he called for additional efforts in that regard.

55. **Mr. Shava** (Zimbabwe) said that South-South cooperation was a dynamic form of economic cooperation with the potential to contribute to economic development and growth, thereby contributing to the realization of the development aspirations set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and promoting capacity-building, technical assistance and the exchange of best practices. Such cooperation should be guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty and ownership, non-conditionality, non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States, equality, solidarity and mutual trust. South-South cooperation should not be considered as a substitute for, but rather as a complement to, North-South cooperation, and developed countries should therefore fulfil their ODA commitments and targets.

56. Calling upon the United Nations development system to scale up human resources, financial and budgetary support to the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, he also looked forward to

the swift establishment of a specialized agency for South-South cooperation that would be headquartered in a developing country.

57. Zimbabwe derived immense benefits from South-South cooperation with, among others, Brazil, China and India, especially in the agricultural and mining sectors. Under its “Look East” policy, his country had cooperation agreements with China in a wide range of economic sectors, and an agriculture mechanization cooperation agreement with Brazil had boosted food security by empowering small farmers, women and young people. A cooperation programme on mechanization and irrigation with India was also working well.

58. **Mr. Rodrigues dos Santos** (Brazil) said that there was a need to muster the political will to propose alternatives to the governance structures and funding arrangements of operational activities for development. Accordingly, agencies, funds and programmes should adapt to the new vision set forth by Heads of State at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, according to which social inclusion, economic growth and environmental sustainability must be inextricably linked. The strategic potential of South-South and triangular cooperation should also be harnessed in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.

59. The United Nations system should complete reforms at the Headquarters level in support of common business operations and results-based management and reporting. As a pilot country in the Business Operations Strategy, Brazil had seen cost savings by eliminating duplication and maximizing economies of scale in the areas of procurement, information and communications technology, and human resources. The resident coordinator system should similarly be strengthened by means of cost-sharing arrangements and a diversified geographical and gender distribution.

60. In implementing policy guidance resulting from the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the relevant Economic and Social Council resolutions and Executive Board decisions should be taken into account, including with regard to independent system-wide evaluations. Executive Board meetings could also be improved by making them more inclusive and transparent.

61. Although progress had been made on system-wide coordination, accountability to Member States remained a challenge. Specialized agencies, funds and programmes accounted for 60 per cent of all United Nations system activities, and ensuring their alignment with the mandates determined by Member States should therefore be a major concern. Member States had a collective responsibility to make contributions that led to greater flexibility, predictability and alignment with national development priorities. No contribution was more useful for the organization than support for core resources, but a balance should nevertheless be maintained between core and non-core resources. The efforts made by UNDP to boost transparency should be used as an example, especially with regard to procurement practices.

62. At the third International Conference on Financing for Development, the international community had committed to strengthening South-South cooperation, which would have a key role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a complement to traditional forms of cooperation. Some entities of the United Nations development system had mainstreamed South-South and triangular cooperation into their policies, activities and budgets. However, it was time to further implement decision 18/1 of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and General Assembly resolution 69/239.

63. Lastly, he said that Brazil had devoted increasing resources to South-South and triangular cooperation, especially in the areas of food security and poverty eradication. Between 2010 and 2015, his country had participated in over 3,000 initiatives with developing countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. The debate on the UNDP corporate strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation was a timely response to operational needs.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.