



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY JANIL GREENAWAY, MINISTER COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, AT THE UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING (New York, 21 January 2008)

Mr. President;
Mr. Administrator;
Madam Executive Secretary;
Distinguished Delegates;

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Mr. President we congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Executive Board of UNDP and of UNFPA, and the Group of 77 and China pledges its support to you and the other members of the Bureau throughout the year.
2. The Group of 77 and China thanks the UNDP Administrator for his comprehensive, thorough and analytical Statement. We greatly value the work of UNDP and the leadership provided to the organization with a view to improving development effectiveness.

Core development mandate

3. At the outset the Group of 77 and China reiterates the high level of importance it accords to the core development mandate of the UNDP, in advancing efforts towards the achievement of the MDGs, particularly in supporting national efforts at poverty eradication. But for the organization to continue to effectively deliver on its mandate and produce the desired positive impacts on economic growth, sustainable development and poverty eradication, it is vitally important to ensure that the UNDP and UNIFEM are provided the necessary financial support through the biennial support budgets. In this regard, we again emphasize the importance and necessity of core resources for the UNDP to deliver on its mandate.

UNDP Strategic Plan revision process

4. The Group of 77 and China thanks the UNDP for the revised strategic plan which was made available via the web on Thursday, January 17, 2008. We recognize that, in accordance with decision 2007/32 of the Board, a substantive, formal discussion on the strategic plan will take place at the annual session in June.
5. Nonetheless, the Group of 77 and China would like to make clear its expectations that the UNDP Strategic Plan for 2008-2011 will be revised and augmented as per decision 2007/32 - taking into full consideration the views and concerns of developing countries expressed in previous consultations and at the September Board Meeting in 2007.
6. Further, Mr. President, the G77 and China anticipates full engagement with UNDP in the ensuing weeks and months on the Strategic Plan, and also on the "submission of implications of the 2007 TCPR for the strategic plan," as well as on the submission of "updated development results and institutional results", in accordance with the Board's decision.
7. Mr. President, we must however, register our disappointment and dissatisfaction at not having any informal discussion on the Plan and the current state of revision and augmentation. We are of

the view that there is nothing in decision 2007/32 that precluded an informal discussion of the Strategic Plan, either in a pre-session informal consultation or an informal meeting held during this week's session of the Board.

8. Additionally, we must express also our disappointment that the text was posted on the website only a day and a half before the formal meeting of the Board. As such, Board members were unable to give even a preliminary consideration of the Plan in conjunction with the BSB during Friday's informals. We find this surprising given the sensitivity of the issue and the well-known concerns of developing countries regarding the UNDP's Draft Strategic Plan 2008-2011. We are unhappy with the procedure and very short time frame, given that the BSBs are closely linked to the Strategic Plan.

9. We would have greatly valued such informal discussions since the UNDP 2008-2009 biennial support budget that we are expected to approve this week covers structural requirements of the organization during the first half of the strategic plan period, and lacking of consensus on the Strategic Plan, its revision and augmentation, is likely to make for a more difficult discussion, and may also make it extremely difficult for us to come to agreement on the decisions, and in particular on approving the BSB.

10. We would therefore like UNDP to give us some sort of information regarding options for considering the current state of the plan in conjunction with the BSB, before final decision is taken on the budget.

11. Additionally, Mr. President, we would like to highlight the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation on results-based management (RBM) and the evaluation on UNDP's contribution to South-South Cooperation. The Group of 77 and China is of the view that the findings of the evaluations have implications for the Strategic Plan, and in particular for the annexes, i.e. the institutional results framework and the development results framework. We believe that the evaluations' findings underscore certain critical weaknesses that need to be addressed urgently, particularly regarding the limited effect of RBM on development effectiveness at the country level. The opportunity now exists for this to be done through a revision of the Strategic Plan. We urge the UNDP to give full consideration to the findings and subsequent recommendations in revising the plan and its annexes in time for the formal consideration before the Board in June.

UNDP, UNIFEM BSBs

12. It is important that the UNDP and UNIFEM biennial support budgets provide adequate resources to support operational activities at the country level in order to provide greater support to programme countries in their efforts to achieve the MDGs and other IADGs.

13. Additionally, Mr. President, the Group of 77 and China welcomes the increased attention to security in the BSB estimates before us, and the subsequent reassessment of security needs. We urge UNDP to continue to pay particular attention to this issue ensuring the safety and security of personnel in the field, by absorbing as far as possible the attendant costs within existing resources, and with extensive consultations with Member States.

14. The Group of 77 and China again emphasizes the need for keeping the BSB low in proportionality to the overall programme budget, and that UNDP should strive to reduce the burden that the BSB places on the overall budget. This can be done by limiting the upgrading of posts to situations where it is absolutely necessary; or by making such proposals budget neutral, reducing travel expenses and enhanced use of information and communication technologies.

15. The Group is also of the view that the BSBs should rely more on non-core resources than core resources, and we reiterate our position that funding for development activities should be untied and allocated in accordance with national priorities and plans of programme countries.

16. Mr. President, the Group of 77 and China welcomes the positive trend with regards to the ratio of the BSBs to the programmatic budgets, as we consider this a valid indicator of better efficiency and effectiveness of the UN development system.

Follow-up to the ACABQ recommendations

17. Mr. President the Group of 77 and China considers the recommendations of the ACABQ very significant for overall performance, and would like to hear UNDP's response to the recommendations of the Committee, particularly explanations on the criteria of the reclassification of posts at the D-1 and D-2 levels.

18. We are also particularly keen on implementing the Committee's recommendations on the 2006-2007 budget estimates in the coming biennium, specifically that need for the UNDP to continue to accord priority to fundraising activities to increase resources available for programmes; channeling more funds to programmes in other resources; and undertaking greater efforts to reduce expenditure on programme support, administration and management from regular resources, so as to allocate more resources for programmes. In this regard, the Group is of the view that there needs to be more strenuous efforts and incentives towards raising core resources.

UNDP budget and South-South Cooperation

19. The G-77 and China considers it extremely important that UNDP has been able to sustain the commitment made during the First Cooperation Framework on South-South Cooperation (1997), to allocate 0.5 % of its programme resources annually to the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation.

20. The Group urges UNDP to ensure that predictable and adequate resources are made available to both UNDP and the Special Unit to fulfill the mandate on South-South cooperation, and on follow-up to the recommendations of the evaluation, especially as outlined in paragraphs 58 (b) of document DP/2008/8, regarding evaluation of UNDP's contribution to South-South Cooperation.

Thank you Mr. President.