

**STATEMENT BY HERIJANTO SOEPRAPTO ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BEFORE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ON AGENDA ITEM 3(B): OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: FOLLOW-UP TO POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**New York, 13 July 1998**

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Mr. President,

I have the distinct honour to address this session of the Economic and Social Council on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 3 (b) Follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly, an item of particular importance to the developing countries. Let me begin by expressing our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on this item and also to Mr. Nitin Desai for his insightful introductory remarks to the Report. Let me add that we do acknowledge the interim nature of the report which will be further elaborated in preparation for its General Assembly discussion. Thus, this session of ECOSOC should provide the Secretary-General with guidance for the finalization of his report pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/120.

The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to operational activities for development. As the source of principal activities of the United Nations system for promoting development and for enabling the developing countries to take the lead role in advancing and managing their own development processes, operational activities are of critical importance. But, in today's world of pervasive globalization and the liberalization of trade and investment, operational activities with their unique characteristics, particularly their universality and neutrality among others are more urgent than ever for the promotion of development and eradication of poverty. It is well recognized that with the advent of globalization multilateralism has been eroded and the complexities facing developing countries have significantly increased with negative effects on a majority of developing countries. Indeed, given these new realities, many developing countries unable to take advantage of the opportunities, have become marginalized and other who integrated most into the world economy became victims to the enormous risks that accompany globalization. Therefore for most of the developing countries, operational activities for the development of the UN system has become a critically important tool for furthering their development effort.

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China would like to express its agreement with the Secretary-General that the United Nations system has an important comparative advantage in this field, and we therefore attach great importance to the process of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. Such a process provides ample opportunities for the Member States to evaluate and monitor as well as to take stock of the lesson learned and best practices on the implementation of mandates that we adopted over the last three years to further improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the operational activities for development. In this context, we would like to stress that the fundamental characteristics of operational activities that is universality, voluntary, of a grant nature, and their multilateral orientation in responding to the needs of the developing countries should continue to be the guiding principle in our work. It is also important to always bear in our mind that operational activities are for the benefit of developing countries and therefore should be conducted at their request and in accordance with their own policy priorities for development.

As noted by the Secretary-General over the past 3 years there have been significant changes in the volume, composition, and content of operational activities, thereby demonstrating its ability to respond to a broad

range of demands of development and change. Indeed, the changing contexts and emerging needs of the developing countries requires the United Nations development system to constantly evolve, innovate and employ new techniques and new ways of doing business so as to provide more efficiency and effectiveness in its services and inputs. These changes and reforms in operational activities have significant implications for development activities at field levels which will also determine the relevance of operational activities for the whole framework of development of the developing countries. Therefore, the Group of 77 and China would like to stress the importance it attaches to increase the sense of national ownership of the developing countries in such changes and reform. The national government of the recipient countries should be closely consulted so as to ensure the optimum impact of operational activities at the field level. For the entire operational activities should be country driven rather than a donor driven activity, which would contradict the basic principles of the United Nations operational activities and, more importantly would not serve the development objectives of the developing countries.

Another important point that we would like to stress for the Triennial Policy Review process is the central dilemma facing the entire development cooperation process of the United Nations system and particularly its operational activities arm. I am referring to the tragic shortfall between the demands on the United Nations system for operational activities for development and the diminishing level of available resources. The growing range and complexities of the demands on the United Nations system for operational activities go far beyond what the system can provide due to declining financial resources. Instead of moving towards the globally agreed target of 0.7 per cent, the United Nations concessionaire flows have declined. The stagnation and decline in core resources for operational activities reflect these overall reductions. More ominously these declining trends can have a damaging impact on the significant advantages sought through the new development paradigm and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences. What should now be done is to seriously build upon the efforts of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Funds and Programmes in their proposals for arresting and reversing the decline in core resources. If we fail to turn this bleak situation around, there can be no option but drastically reduce the goals and objectives of the United Nations system's development programmes. It is therefore important that these discussions in the Funds and Programmes reach a successful conclusion, so as to enable the Member States to be in a position to provide the necessary guidance for the full implementation of resolution 50/120.

Before concluding Mr. President, we should like to underline also that since the operational activities of the United Nations system have three interlinked dimensions, at the global, regional and country levels, we therefore agree with the Secretary-General that United Nations system has an important advantage which should be more fully utilized. For the optimal result of the operational activities, we agreed that there is a need for more coordinated approach.

At the global level, it is important to ensure the more coordinated work and division of labor between General Assembly, ECOSOC and Funds and Programmes. The ECOSOC should be able to exercise its role in providing guidance to the various funds and programmes and within operational activities in general. At regional level, the Group strongly believes that there is also a growing need to strengthen coordination in the work of the United Nations system for the benefit of the member countries. In this context, the Regional Commissions are endowed with all the comparative advantages cited in the Secretary-General's report in undertaking operational activities at the regional level. This advantage has been repeatedly recognized and has been mandated in General Assembly resolution 32/197 and other subsequent resolutions. Therefore, it is important that the Regional Commissions should be more closely linked with the work of the other agencies of the United Nations operational activities for development. The Group would therefore like to stress the importance it attaches that the Secretary-General in his final report on TCPR for the 53rd session of the General Assembly provides ample focus on the regional dimension of the operational activities so as to enable Member States to provide the necessary guidance in this regard.

Finally, in this era of globalization and retreating multilateralism, it is difficult to deny that mobilizing

ECDC/TCDC for the purpose of advancing international cooperation for development and for effectively integrating the developing countries into the global economy are becoming more urgent than ever. In this context, operational activities for development has also proven to be a useful tool for the promotion of ECDC/TCDC. Capacity building which has been promoted inter-alia through national execution and has serve as a back bone of operational activities is also the main objective for ECDC/TCDC. Therefore, it is important that ECDC/TCDC be given ample focus in the recommendation of the final report of the Secretary-General on TCPR to be submitted to the next 53rd General Assembly.

Thank You.