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Chair: Mr. Niang (Senegal)
later: Ms. Beshkova (Acting Vice-Chair) (Bulgaria)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 23: Operational activities for development

(a) Operational activities for development of the United Nations system ([A/74/71](#), [A/74/71/Add.1](#), [A/74/73-E/2019/14](#), [A/74/73-E/2019/14/Add.1](#), [A/74/73-E/2019/14/Add.2](#), [A/74/73-E/2019/14/Add.3](#), [A/74/306](#) and [A/74/306/Add.1](#))

(b) South-South cooperation for development ([A/74/336](#))

1. **Ms. Barthelemy** (Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [71/243](#) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for 2019 ([A/74/73-E/2019/14](#)), said that total contributions for operational activities for development had amounted to \$33.6 billion in 2017, an increase of almost 13 per cent compared with 2016. Core contributions had increased for the second consecutive year, by 3.4 per cent, although the share of core contributions had dropped to an all-time low due to a robust increase in non-core funding. The funding compact proposed by the Secretary-General had stressed the need for balance between core and non-core funding. Unusually, funding for inter-agency pooled funds with a development focus had increased more rapidly than funding for inter-agency pooled funds with a humanitarian focus.

2. Broadening the donor base remained a key objective of the funding compact. In 2017, just three donors – the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Germany – had accounted for half of all funding from Governments, and five donors – Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, Norway and the Netherlands – had accounted for over half of all core funding. That heavy reliance on a limited number of donors made the United Nations development system vulnerable to potential policy changes in any of its top contributing countries.

3. Spending on operational activities had totalled just over \$34 billion in 2017. That broke down to \$25 billion at the country level and \$3.3 billion at the regional level, with the remaining 17 per cent going to global and management activities. The 11 largest programme countries accounted for half of all country-level expenses, while the 77 smallest programme countries accounted for just 6 per cent. Almost half of country-

level expenditures were disbursed in least developed countries, a notable increase of 17 per cent over 2016.

4. The new set of data standards approved through the High-level Committee on Management and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group would improve the reliability and comparability of system-wide funding data starting with the 2020 report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review.

5. **Mr. Kramer** (Inspector of the Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the note by the Secretary-General ([A/74/71](#)) transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled “Opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation” ([JIU/REP/2018/5](#)), said that the report examined progress in pursuing cost-efficient support services through the consolidation of support services at the country level based on visits to seven countries. According to 2016 data, such services cost \$4.3 billion annually and employed some 30,000 personnel. About half the spending and two thirds of the personnel were at the country level. Despite mandates for unified administrative services, the trend was towards separate support frameworks and operations for organizations that had the scale to maintain them. Horizontal integration at the country level had not received adequate support from headquarters, and the distribution of functions between the country and global levels remained suboptimal.

6. Increasing shared service delivery had the potential to save up to 15 per cent annually. The joint office in Cabo Verde was a good model for country-level integration. Success depended very much on the political willingness of organizations to forgo direct representation. Unfortunately, mutual recognition by United Nations system entities of each other’s rules and processes had not had the anticipated impact.

7. The report contained several recommendations for overcoming bureaucratic barriers. The profile of operational efficiency as an organizational priority needed to be raised. Business operations consolidation should be accelerated at the country level by tasking smaller entities to design integrated service delivery, and at the global level by designing arrangements to drive shared services. Back-office functions represented a small share of spending, and focus on a broader set of operational services would yield greater savings. Inter-agency mechanisms would benefit from a fresh look and common business operations at the regional level required special focus.

8. **Ms. Petrova** (Director of the secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for

Coordination), introducing the addendum by the Secretary-General ([A/74/71/Add.1](#)) to the note transmitting his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) on the aforementioned report of the Joint Inspection Unit ([JIU/REP/2018/5](#)), said that the report provided timely guidance on ongoing system-wide reforms. Organizations within the system particularly welcomed the emphasis on maintaining quality while improving efficiency and the recognition of the different needs of different agencies and countries, but they would have liked a deeper analysis of the risk of operational fragmentation arising from the engagement of multiple service providers. They appreciated the focus on possible efficiency gains, although they noted the gap in investment requirements. Organizations underscored the importance of aligning time frames with those contained in the Secretary-General's report on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review in order to avoid duplication. It should always be remembered that administrative services were not an end in themselves, and that it was the results that mattered.

9. **Ms. Cronin** (Inspector of the Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the note by the Secretary-General ([A/74/306](#)) transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" ([JIU/REP/2019/2](#)), said that the first phase of the review, from 2012–2017, had focused on reporting entities. Its overall conclusion was that the Action Plan had proven to be an effective framework for tracking system-wide gender mainstreaming. The report highlighted measures to strengthen the commitment of the leadership and executive management of the reporting entities. Governing bodies had an important oversight role to play. The report recommended circulating the annual letter from the Executive-Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality (UN-Women) addressed to reporting entities. The framework would benefit from disaggregated reporting by individual entities to the Economic and Social Council. Since the review depended on self-reporting, it was crucial for entities to undertake quality assurance measures to ensure accuracy and credibility. Independent assessments were also needed.

10. Assessment by the reporting entities of the role of UN-Women had been positive. The member organizations of CEB had welcomed the report and supported many of its conclusions. The report's recommendations addressed to CEB, the reporting entities and UN-Women were aimed at enhancing

credibility, increasing ownership and reinforcing accountability, while remaining mindful of constraints. The report concluded with an invitation to the General Assembly to endorse the recommendations contained therein.

11. **Ms. Petrova** (Director of the secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the addendum to the note by the Secretary-General ([A/74/306/Add.1](#)) transmitting his comments and those of CEB on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women" ([JIU/REP/2019/2](#)), said that organizations within the United Nations system had commended the methodology, scope and participatory approach of the report, which had accurately captured experiences with implementing the Action Plan. They supported most of the report's conclusions, which were aimed at greater engagement of leadership and better implementation and reporting.

12. **Mr. Iziraren** (Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Partnerships of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the state of South-South cooperation ([A/74/336](#)), said that second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, held in Buenos Aires in March 2019, had provided an opportunity to ensure that South-South cooperation would remain responsive to the realities of global development and the changing needs of developing countries. The Conference outcome document, which the General Assembly had endorsed in its resolution [73/291](#), had reaffirmed the importance of the development of a United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South cooperation, which was being led by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

13. The United Nations system continued to strengthen its institutional support for South-South cooperation. South-South cooperation had expanded in areas such as migration, volunteerism, intellectual property, development and use of information and communications technology, and counter-terrorism. There had been a surge in new partnerships and knowledge products for South-South cooperation during the reporting period. The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation promoted the exchange of best practices on South-South and triangular cooperation through regional forums, and had recently launched a knowledge-sharing Internet platform called South-South Galaxy. It also supported the effective mobilization of financial and in-kind resources for the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation. The Partnerships for Sustainable Development initiative of

the Department of Economic and Social Affairs followed up over 4,000 partnerships focusing on results and knowledge exchange. The United Nations Office for Project Services had launched a public procurement capacity assessment tool for infrastructure that had already been used in several countries.

14. The report concluded with a number of recommendations to the General Assembly. Strategic and inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships and innovative financing models should be promoted to accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. United Nations entities should continue to bolster their efforts for South-South and triangular cooperation at the headquarters, country and regional levels. Countries that had partnered with United Nations entities to finance facilities and trust funds to advance South-South and triangular cooperation should maintain and scale up their efforts.

15. **Ms. Nasser** (Observer for the State of Palestine), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that as the quadrennial cycle approached its conclusion, the Group wished to reiterate some key principles. The United Nations system should remain focused on development and poverty eradication. National ownership should be respected, and geographic balance should be adhered to in selecting resident coordinators, who should work in close cooperation with host States using the reporting mechanisms agreed to in General Assembly resolution [72/279](#). The Secretary-General should provide Member States with regular briefings to guide decisions about the new cycle about to begin in 2020.

16. The Group remained concerned about the sustainability and predictability of development funding, and urged traditional donors to step up their commitments. In view of the Group's varied development needs, the Secretary-General should urgently provide details of the options for reorganization on a regional basis and conduct further inclusive consultations with all countries engaged in the multi-country office review, as requested in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#).

17. The Group welcomed the outcome of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation held in Buenos Aires in March 2019. South-South cooperation was a complement to, not a substitute for, North-South cooperation, and should be guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit. The Group reaffirmed the need for an international development

cooperation system that recognized the multidimensional character of development.

18. **Mr. Ybarra Fernández** (Paraguay), speaking on behalf of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, said that the repositioned United Nations development system should better support development in countries in special situations. In the case of landlocked developing countries, the priorities of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, which was an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, would be integrated into their operational activities for development and should be reflected in each country's United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which was to be developed in full consultation with the national Government. The system should adapt to the development needs and priorities of each country and respond on the ground in coordination and full consultation with national Governments, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [71/243](#) and [72/279](#). The current financing architecture of the system did not sufficiently incentivize joint efforts or collective results and the predictability and sustainability of funding was a source of concern.

19. Deliberations on the resolution on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review to be adopted in 2020 should be based entirely on data and evidence. To that end, it would be necessary to evaluate the implementation of the quadrennial review of 2016, as well as the mandates on the repositioning of the system. In that connection, the next report of the Secretary-General on the quadrennial review was awaited with interest.

20. South-South cooperation was a valuable complement to North-South cooperation and an important development tool for the countries of the global South. Although the landlocked developing countries had made considerable efforts to mobilize internal resources, they faced significant financial gaps. The international community was called upon to provide greater support in the form of official development assistance (ODA), South-South cooperation, triangular cooperation and foreign direct investment.

21. In the light of the role played by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States in supporting the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action, serious consideration should be given to strengthening the Office with a view to meeting the commitment to overcome the obstacles to sustainable development in the landlocked developing countries, in order to leave no one behind.

22. **Mr. Srivihok** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the Association welcomed the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, and in particular the Secretary-General's focus on greater gender parity and geographical balance among resident coordinators. More local nationals should be hired to better align the work of country teams with national priorities. ASEAN looked forward to consultations on the multi-country office review and the revamping of the regional architecture. It had worked with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to identify complementarities between the 2030 Agenda and the ASEAN Vision 2025 and would present its "complementarities road map" at the ASEAN-United Nations Summit in November 2019.

23. As an organization that itself embodied successful South-South cooperation, ASEAN believed that such cooperation, as a complement to North-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, had an important role to play in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It welcomed the outcome of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. In August 2019, his country's capital had hosted the very first ASEAN directors-general forum on development cooperation to share best practices on South-South and triangular cooperation.

24. **Mr. Prasad** (Fiji), speaking on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States, said that the steps already taken to reinvigorate the resident coordinator system would give real meaning to the reform process. Resident coordinator offices must be well resourced so that they could perform the effective coordination role envisaged. In that context, the staffing of country offices should include seasoned international experts with backgrounds tailored to local priorities.

25. The Secretary-General's decision to establish a dedicated multi-country office in the North Pacific was welcome, and the countries involved had agreed that it would be hosted in the Federated States of Micronesia. The multi-country office review should continue its consultative approach and its engagement with national Governments and other stakeholders.

26. Lastly, whatever the ultimate reconfiguration of the United Nations development system, adequate and predictable funding would be critical to the success of reforms.

27. **Mr. Webson** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that universality, neutrality, and transparency should continue to guide the repositioning of the United Nations development system. The new quadrennial

cycle beginning in 2020 should continue the focus on development. The process was especially important to small island developing States and critical to the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway).

28. Sustainable financing streams were needed to restore confidence in the development system and better align it with the 2030 Agenda. Unfortunately, the disproportion between core and non-core funding continued to promote conditionalities. CARICOM members were among the States most affected by funding shortfalls and would continue to be in the forefront of discussions as the reform process moved from review to implementation. CARICOM States were particularly concerned by the multi-country office review and the revamping of the regional commissions. Coordinated efforts for the completion of those two processes should be stepped up, with Member States being given enough time to consider all the options.

29. The potential of South-South cooperation as a multiplier for the 2030 Agenda had been demonstrated by the outcome of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. The CARICOM region could benefit from South-South cooperation, particularly in the area of technology transfer and capacity-building, provided that it operated as a complement to and not a replacement for North-South and triangular cooperation.

30. *Ms. Beshkova (Bulgaria), Acting Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

31. **Ms. Lindo** (Belize), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that the United Nations was moving in the right direction as it repositioned the United Nations development system to better assist countries with implementation of the 2030 Agenda. However, the Secretary-General should provide, as a matter of urgency, the options for the revamping of the regional level. Consultations on the restructuring of the multi-country offices should also continue with the countries concerned.

32. It was not enough just to recognize the special challenges facing small island developing States. Those challenges needed to be documented and analysed if progress was to be made on the 2030 Agenda and the Samoa Pathway. Developed partners needed to meet their ODA commitments and voluntary funding needed to be stepped up.

33. All Member States must fulfil their commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, particularly as that phenomenon had an adverse impact on small island States. They therefore

commended the Secretary-General for his initiative to convene Climate Action Summit 2019.

34. Lastly, the Alliance's members were particularly aware of the added value produced by South-South and triangular cooperation and called for strengthening the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

35. **Ms. Hamdouni** (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that while General Assembly resolutions [71/243](#) and [72/279](#) had set out the direction, objectives and road map for the United Nations system to better deliver on development in programme countries, greater efforts and stronger commitments were needed to implement the outstanding mandates. Specific attention should be paid to enhancing the configuration, capacity and role of the multi-country offices, in full consultation with the countries involved, in order to accelerate progress towards fulfilling the 2030 Agenda. The configuration of the new country teams should assist developing countries in realigning national policies with the 2030 Agenda. The role of the regional commissions must be consolidated with a view to improving the coordination of United Nations work programmes in each region. The Group reiterated the request contained in General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) for the Secretary-General to provide options, on a region-by-region basis, for longer-term reprofiling and restructuring of the regional assets of the United Nations.

36. Measures must be taken to ensure adequate, predictable and sustainable funding for the new resident coordinator system, in particular, for the least developing countries, of which the majority were African countries. A United Nations development system that was better funded through the operationalization of the commitments of the funding compact would be better able to support Member States in mobilizing financing for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

37. The Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation provided a road map for South-South and triangular cooperation. There was a need to build on the momentum and consolidate efforts for the full implementation of the outcome document. South-South and triangular cooperation could help to revitalize multilateralism and drive the realization of the global partnership for sustainable development. That conviction had been translated into many South-South cooperation initiatives across the continent that were aimed at accelerating and consolidating efforts for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

38. **Ms. Melvik** (Russian Federation) said that her country was interested in strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the United Nations development system and that the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development was a key mechanism for determining the fundamental parameters and characteristics of operational activities. Her delegation would be actively involved in the forthcoming 2020 review.

39. The Russian Federation supported the Secretary-General's efforts to reform the United Nations development system, a process which should be as transparent and inclusive as possible and aligned with the interests of Member States. Similarly, country teams and programmes should be established solely in accordance with, and on the basis of, the development assistance needs of the host countries concerned.

40. Her delegation attached great importance to the effectiveness of the new resident coordinator system, which would largely depend on engagement between the resident coordinator, all country team members and the host country itself. In that context, it was important to maintain a balance between the coordinating role of resident coordinators at the country level and the monitoring activities of the individual agencies and funds, which should retain the freedom to engage in a direct dialogue with the Government of the host country concerned. While the Russian Federation supported efforts to increase the output of the work of the development system, particularly from the operational funds and programmes, each agency should retain its specific mandate.

41. Her delegation would be particularly interested to receive more information on the parameters for the work of the recently established Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration. She recalled an earlier request for the holding of a separate briefing on that matter.

42. Welcoming the outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, which would help to further incorporate such cooperation models into the work of the United Nations, she noted the efforts of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation to prepare an effective and harmonized system-wide strategy. For its part, the Russian Federation supported the fundamental principles of South-South cooperation, including respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. It was also engaged in triangular cooperation, for example, through projects involving the United Nations Development Programme and the World Food Programme.

43. **Mr. Mackay** (Belarus) said that his delegation hoped that the reform of the United Nations development system under way would lead to tangible improvements in the work of the operational agencies and funds on the ground for the benefit of Member States. It looked forward to increased transparency and accountability of the development system, which should now be better able to meet the needs and priorities of the countries receiving technical assistance. While that would be the main criteria for judging the success of the reform process, the following practical issues would also be crucial.

44. First, the work of the resident coordinators and their offices required detailed discussions with host countries to devise mutually acceptable conditions that took into account the specific needs of each State. For its part, Belarus would shortly be discussing with the United Nations Secretariat a draft agreement on the status and conditions for presence of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Belarus.

45. Second, further attention should be paid to the new approach to planned technical assistance provided by the United Nations at the country level. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework must provide a comprehensive strategy for joint work between countries and the United Nations. The development priorities of the host country must be incorporated within that new Framework on the basis of broad consultations and agreements with the national Government. Ideally, international partners should be directly engaged in the process and the donor community should be involved in the provision of technical assistance to countries in priority areas. Belarus and the United Nations had begun the preparations for a new Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and national consultations would take place in the coming week to identify priority issues.

46. Third, Belarus supported maintaining the role and place of the regional commissions in the architecture for regional cooperation. The Economic Commission for Europe, for example, had shown its effectiveness in coordinating regional development cooperation. Its substantive development work should therefore not only continue, but its role, capacity and expertise should be strengthened. Moreover, the regional context of the Commission's work should not be diluted by other forums that were essentially subsidiary in nature. It would be difficult to support the establishment of new bodies whose comparative advantage over existing structures was doubtful.

47. Belarus remained committed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as demonstrated by its participation in reviews of implementation at the global, regional and national levels.

48. **Mr. Erwin** (Indonesia) said that the eradication of poverty must remain as the overarching objective of the repositioning of the United Nations development system, with national ownership and leadership at its core. On the ground, the system must maintain an open and inclusive dialogue with host Governments. The composition and activities of United Nations country teams, under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, were expected to support national development policies, plans, priorities and needs. The reinvigorated system would require close monitoring through the new accountability system and adequate, predictable and sustainable financing, which would be delivered through the new funding compact. Revamping the regional architecture, including the regional commissions, and strengthening multi-country offices, particularly for small island developing States, were key elements on which discussions should continue.

49. Indonesia would continue to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation through the newly launched Indonesian Agency for International Development, which would allow the country to increase the amount and impact of the assistance that it provided, including in the areas of infrastructure, climate resilience and trade and investment. Countries must seize the momentum generated by the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation to implement its outcome document.

50. The United Nations development system was encouraged to provide support to States to scale up and expand current programmes and explore innovative financing models, including partnership with the private sector. Indonesia had worked on various innovative financing initiatives, such as blended financing and social or religious financing for the Sustainable Development Goals, which were worth exploring further within the context of South-South cooperation.

51. **Mr. García Moritán** (Argentina) said that some 3,800 representatives from States, international organizations, civil society and the private sector had participated in the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, held in Buenos Aires in March 2019. The outcome document of that Conference shed light on the challenges and opportunities in the sphere of international cooperation and provided tools to strengthen South-South cooperation initiatives. The challenge that lay ahead was

to implement the outcome document, and Argentina was firmly committed to that task.

52. A discussion was needed on strengthening the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, which should be the forum for States to reflect on the avenues for the United Nations development system to engage with respect to South-South cooperation. The Committee supported States undertaking institutional strengthening for South-South cooperation and facilitated partnerships for concrete cooperation projects in key areas for development. Stronger regional and interregional platforms would also have a role in institutional strengthening and would lead to enhanced cooperation partnerships.

53. It was important to develop mechanisms and methodologies that reflected the South-South cooperation in which countries and regions were engaged. Many countries had been successful in that regard and a process could be considered – driven by countries of the South – to bring together the main initiatives that were gathering data and information on South-South cooperation. Current global challenges demanded that old divisions regarding cooperation be overcome and presented an opportunity to work together through triangular cooperation. In order to benefit fully from triangular cooperation, it should be construed on the basis of equality, political dialogue and institutional coordination.

54. **Ms. Leyva Regueira** (Cuba) said that meeting the commitments reflected in General Assembly resolutions [71/243](#) and [72/279](#) should strengthen the development pillar and the principles that guided the activities of the United Nations system. The system should continue to strengthen its contribution to national development priorities, on the basis of flexible and inclusive policies. Respect for national sovereignty, the self-determination of peoples and the leadership of national Governments over their own processes should also continue.

55. Unfortunately, key aspects of the reform remained pending, namely the review of the regional structures and of the multi-country offices. Broad and transparent intergovernmental consultations should be the starting point for the implementation of those mandates.

56. The United Nations system must ensure that the countries of the South could make a decisive contribution to the governance of the system. In that regard, the distinct roles of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in operational activities for development should be reinforced, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and the Development Coordination Office should enhance their transparency and accountability to Member States.

Predictable and non-conditional regular resources were the cornerstone of the system's financial architecture, which was based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

57. The intensification of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba for almost 60 years and the recent activation of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act of 1996 (Helms-Burton Act) obstructed the implementation of projects by United Nations entities and the promotion of sustainable development in Cuba. As indicated in the comments of the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Cuba contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the embargo ([A/74/91/Rev.1](#)), the embargo restrictions caused critical difficulties for the implementation of United Nations programmes and projects, in particular in the acquisition and purchasing of development and humanitarian products, even if they were purchased through multilateral cooperation. Furthermore, financial proposals and projects of the United Nations in Cuba were forced to include an extended period for procurement processes and allocate additional financial resources that could otherwise be allocated to development activities.

58. In contrast to the genocidal policy of the Government of the United States, Cuba was continuing to advocate an effective global partnership for sustainable development based on mutual respect. Cuba would continue to promote close cooperation with the United Nations system and remained firmly committed to South-South cooperation, reaffirming the universal right to development.

59. **Mr. Al-Mansouri** (Qatar) said that international cooperation was the best means to implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2030 Agenda. He commended the efforts of the Secretary-General and called for increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations development system, including by reinvigorating the resident coordinator system.

60. During 2018, his country had pledged some \$500 million in unearmarked multi-year support for core resources of several United Nations agencies. That included a contribution to support the resident coordinator system and a \$20 million contribution to the regional Sustainable Development Goals accelerator labs network initiative of the United Nations Development Programme. Qatar was pleased to have been ranked first in the Arab world and eleventh globally in contributions to inter-agency pooled funds in 2017.

61. Qatar attached great importance to South-South cooperation. It had hosted the Second South Summit in 2005 and the Arab States Regional South-South Development Exposition in 2014, and had served as Chair of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation. It also taken part in the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation and looked forward to participating in the Third South Summit scheduled to take place in Uganda.

62. **Ms. Udida** (Nigeria) said that key milestones had been achieved through the new generation of United Nations country teams, led by an empowered resident coordinator system. The reform was beginning to engender the efficiency gains necessary for the proper alignment of capacities with expectations. Success in implementing the new accountability lines within the United Nations country teams would require continued leadership and close monitoring, especially by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. In that context, the Secretary-General was encouraged to continue to take deliberate steps to ensure that all entities engaged in operational activities remained strategic, accountable, transparent, collaborative, efficient and effective in delivering results at the country level, while continuing to comply with the resolutions establishing their respective mandates, especially General Assembly resolution 71/243. For its part, the reinvigorated resident coordinator system should focus strictly on development in the host country, and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks should be implemented in line with national needs and priorities.

63. The concerning fact that there were currently more conflicts globally than at any point in the past three decades called for greater complementarity between the humanitarian, development and peace actions of the United Nations development system. That approach was in keeping with the primary objective of a world that was peaceful and prosperous, with no one left behind.

64. Those United Nations entities that were leading their own internal repositioning exercises should ensure that their efforts reinforced the direction of the overall reform as outlined in General Assembly resolution 72/279. The efforts of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group to strengthen the existing collaboration between key institutional partners would accelerate global efforts to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the country level.

65. The Nigerian Technical Aid Corps scheme, which drove the country's South-South cooperation initiatives, had challenged the commonly held perception that Africa was only a recipient of aid. Since its

establishment in 1987, the scheme had sent tens of thousands of volunteers to bridge human resource gaps in the areas of education, judicial services, health-care delivery, agriculture, engineering and public service in over 36 countries in the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions.

66. **Ms. Hamdouni** (Morocco) said that political will was crucial to ensuring the implementation of the mandates that remained outstanding from the landmark General Assembly resolution 72/279. The successful conclusion of the funding compact had addressed the lack of predictability, incentives and flexibility with regard to financing that was impeding the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Efforts were needed to build on the momentum and make the commitments of the compact a reality. Reform was not only a matter of changing structures, but also of bringing about the "mindset shift" required for a fit-for-purpose United Nations development system.

67. Morocco had made South-South cooperation one of the major pillars of its foreign policy, with its actions and initiatives centred on the human component. As part of a national dynamic under the leadership of King Mohammed VI, organizations and institutions from the public and private sectors and civil society had been involved in promoting South-South cooperation. That dynamic was also reflected in foreign direct investment in developing countries and the promotion of international trade, capacity-building and technical assistance. For the academic year 2019/20, Morocco had received some 14,000 foreign students, a large proportion of whom were from African countries, through its cooperation frameworks with partner countries. Among other initiatives, the Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation was currently preparing the eighth Africa Students and Youth Summit.

68. **Ms. Taikeophitoun** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the new resident coordinator system should enable United Nations country teams to respond effectively to the specific development needs and priorities of Member States, particularly countries in special situations facing lingering vulnerabilities and external shocks. However, the imbalance between core and non-core funding in the United Nations development system was a matter of concern, as was the continuing decline in contributions to core funding. If that trend persisted, it would have an adverse effect on the performance of the United Nations development agencies and on the development of programme countries. It was essential to ensure sustained, predictable and sufficient funding for the strengthened resident coordinator system to fully function and deliver tangible outcomes on the ground.

69. Partnership played a critical role in supporting the effective realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. The partnership framework between the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the United Nations for 2017–2021 reflected the commitment of the latter to support the former in achieving the development goals set by the Government in alignment with the 2030 Agenda. The framework was also aimed at assisting the country in graduating from least developed country status and transitioning to upper-middle-income country status. The United Nations country team should enhance its collective efforts to mobilize resources to support the implementation of that partnership framework.

70. **Ms. Gomes Monteiro** (Cabo Verde) said that the Secretary-General had outlined key structural reforms that embraced the values of transparency, accountability and multilateral collaboration. While that results-oriented approach would facilitate the action needed to fully attain the Sustainable Development Goals, a clearer picture was needed as to whether the ongoing reform was increasing the efficiency of the United Nations development system and helping countries to implement the 2030 Agenda on the ground. In that regard, Cabo Verde valued its own experience of “delivering as one” through its joint office, which had been widely recognized as having generated efficiency gains and enhanced results.

71. As small island developing States faced unique challenges in pursuing sustainable development, economic development initiatives must be tailored to their specific circumstances. The call for multi-country offices to consider domestic circumstances in the development of country-specific and regional development initiatives was therefore welcome. That approach should be applied to cross-cutting programmes throughout the United Nations development system.

72. The availability of financing was a source of concern. Given the financial crises affecting the system, the commitments delineated in the funding compact were both needed and timely.

73. **Mr. Gayito** (Ethiopia) said that developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, required a more robust and fruitful partnership with the United Nations, through well-resourced and well-staffed United Nations country teams, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level. Ethiopia continued to support the reform agenda of the Secretary-General to create a more coherent, integrated, transparent, effective and efficient United Nations development system, with the 2030 Agenda as its guiding framework. The reinforcement of national ownership and leadership, ensuring country-

specific responses rather than a “one-size-fits-all” approach and making country-level delivery the measure of success should be the guiding principles of the reform process. A better, stronger United Nations system at the country level that could support countries' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda in line with national development plans and strategies was imperative to securing sufficient and predictable core funding.

74. As host to one of the largest United Nations country teams in the world and one of the largest United Nations regional presences, Ethiopia wished to stress that a streamlined and coordinated approach to the United Nations at the regional level was imperative. It was critical to consolidate the leadership role of the regional commissions and leverage their locational advantage to improve coordination among the work programmes of the organizations in each region. The regional commissions should have a critical role in supporting countries in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, harnessing their functions as providers of technical capacity, analytical work and policy advisory services and as dedicated platforms for norm-setting and sectoral and intersectoral dialogue. In that regard, the Secretary-General should provide options, on a region-by-region basis, for longer-term reprofiling and restructuring of the regional assets of the United Nations.

75. Reinvigorating South-South cooperation, which was complementary to, and not a substitute for, North-South cooperation, was important to support developing countries in fulfilling the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, he called upon the international community to support the full implementation of the outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation.

76. **Ms. Luo Jin** (China) said that, although some progress had been made in implementing the 2030 Agenda, developing countries continued to face severe challenges. In order to create the international environment needed for implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the international community must, among other things, adhere to multilateralism, strengthen unity and cooperation, enhance mutual trust and maintain an open, transparent, inclusive and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system.

77. The United Nations development system should be guided by General Assembly resolutions [71/243](#) and [72/279](#), with a focus on development as a core activity and poverty reduction as a primary task. As mandated by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Secretariat should continue

to push forward the regional-level reform and the multi-country office review. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and country programmes should be implemented in line with national conditions and priorities. Resident coordinators should communicate and cooperate closely with programme country Governments and report to them in a timely manner. The leadership and views of Member States must be fully respected.

78. North-South cooperation should remain the main channel of global development cooperation, with South-South cooperation as a complement to and not a substitute for it. Developed countries should honour their ODA commitments and provide financial and technical support to help developing countries to enhance their development capacity. Developing countries should deepen South-South cooperation, while implementing the outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation. The United Nations development system should provide greater support for South-South cooperation in line with the needs of developing countries.

79. Poverty eradication was the greatest challenge to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and, taking into consideration national conditions and the stage of development reached, the international community should provide effective support for the efforts of developing countries to eradicate poverty, with a focus on infrastructure, health and other areas closely related to people's livelihoods.

80. Despite its own development challenges, China actively supported the work of the United Nations development system, made contributions to the Organization's core resources and provided financial support for emergency relief, post-disaster reconstruction and women's and children's health programmes, among other initiatives. Furthermore, China participated in South-South cooperation by actively assisting capacity-building efforts in developing countries in such areas as agriculture, industry, combating climate change and human resource training.

81. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiola** (Mexico) said that operational activities for development were probably the most important item discussed by the Committee and the Economic and Social Council, given their direct impact on the ground. While the reports presented at the current session contained relevant information on the steps taken to implement the reform of the United Nations development system, they were unable to answer all the questions posed by Member States. Hence

the need to improve the working methods for the item in both the Committee and the Council. The appropriate forum for the Development Coordination Office and the relevant specialized agencies, funds and programmes to answer the Member States' questions was during the Council's operational activities for development segment, in which all countries should be able to participate, whether or not they were members of the Council.

82. The review of the United Nations development system at the regional level remained a pending issue. In its resolution [72/279](#), the General Assembly had clearly requested options on a region-by-region basis. As the reports that had been submitted did not contain the requested options, the request had been reiterated by the Council in its resolution [2019/15](#). A "one-size-fits-all" approach could not be applied.

83. **Ms. Haque** (Bangladesh) said that the importance of South-South cooperation as an effective form of development cooperation had been growing, while North-South cooperation had been declining. South-South and triangular cooperation had played an important role in the development trajectory of Bangladesh. As the country implemented its national development vision, which included graduating from the least developed country category, robust South-South and triangular cooperation would help it to address its development needs and challenges.

84. Bangladesh had included South-South cooperation in its national policy for development cooperation and, through its access to information programme, was leading three South-South cooperation platforms to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices. Examples of innovative development solutions and methods of ensuring good governance from Bangladesh had been highlighted in United Nations publications. Bangladesh, which was seeking to facilitate South-South cooperation with partners who excelled in different areas, had compiled a report containing 22 best practices from those countries.

85. Implementing the outcome document from the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation would require serious efforts. While development partners must fulfil their ODA commitments, multilateral, regional and bilateral financial and development institutions needed to increase the financial resources and technical cooperation available to promote South-South cooperation. In addition to the existing financial institutions and initiatives that were extending financial support to the South, new regional and global banks and funds should be set up. Bolstering South-South cooperation required a

fundamental change in the global financial and economic governance structure, with a more central role for the South in international economic decision-making.

86. Developed countries must take steps to accelerate technology transfer to the South. However, stronger collaboration was also required among developing countries to close the technology gap. Triangular cooperation should promote capacity-building for the economic and social advancement and environmental sustainability of the South. The reformed United Nations development system should undertake more activities to support South-South and triangular cooperation, taking into consideration national ownership and leadership and country-specific needs. As part of the institutional framework for advancing South-South and triangular cooperation, Bangladesh would set up a South-South knowledge and innovation centre to leverage existing systems, resources and expertise. Efforts were also under way to establish the scope of a ministerial-level forum for countries of the South.

87. **Mr. Malik** (India) said that his country welcomed the steps that had been taken by the Secretary-General to reform the United Nations development system. One of the key elements of that reform was the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, to which India had made a voluntary contribution through the special purpose trust fund. For India, the quadrennial comprehensive policy review should adhere strictly to the 2030 Agenda, with an unrelenting resolve to eradicate poverty. The United Nations system should focus on those services that it was uniquely qualified to deliver, based on solid intergovernmental guidance and supported through predictable, adequate and flexible resources.

88. United Nations development activities must be based on the fundamental principles of national ownership and leadership. The quality and volume of resources for the implementation of the new arrangements must lead to improvements in the system's predictability and impartiality, while ensuring that resources meant for core development programmes were not diverted, which would have a negative effect on the development agenda of developing countries.

89. In recent years, the scope of South-South cooperation, as a supplement to North-South cooperation, had expanded to include trade, investment, infrastructure and connectivity, as well as the coordination of policies and strategies among developing countries. Drawing on its unique experience in the light of its size and diversity, India had consolidated its partnerships with countries of the South in myriad forms, including by holding meetings with Caribbean and Pacific partners, and had continued to

proactively facilitate the evolution of the discourse on South-South cooperation. India had extended lines of credit to countries of the South and had provided some 13,000 training slots annually to students from 160 countries through its technical and economic cooperation programme.

90. His country would continue to share its experience in modern technology, in particular digital technology and space technology. In 2017, India had launched the India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund to step up its South-South cooperation efforts. A total of \$176 million had been committed over the next decade for development projects in the least developed countries and small island developing States. India had also partnered with the global North in a tripartite arrangement to benefit countries in Africa and Asia.

91. **Ms. Muigai** (Kenya), referring to recent high-level events on a range of topics that related to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, welcomed the adoption of the political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly and said that her country was ready to work with all Member States towards its implementation. Although progress had been made in some areas of the Goals, the pace of that progress was not yet rapid enough. Sufficient resources had not been mobilized for the Goals, hunger had increased and the effects of climate change continued to pose a complex challenge. There was an urgent need for Member States to meet the commitments outlined in the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other outcome documents and resolutions.

92. Kenya supported the repositioning of the United Nations development system and its assistance to Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Closer coordination and consultation with Governments in implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks would be important as real change could be achieved only when Member States and the United Nations were fully aligned. Resident coordinators must maintain transparency and be accountable to host Governments in order to achieve collective and harmonized results in the pursuit of sustainable development. To that end, adequate and predictable funding of the system was a fundamental priority.

93. Sustainable development remained at the heart of her country's priorities, as reflected in the "Big four" agenda, through which Kenya sought to achieve food security and nutrition, universal health care, affordable housing and a vibrant manufacturing sector. South-

South cooperation continued to play a welcome role in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and was a cornerstone of her country's significant development aspirations. In December 2019, a summit of Heads of State and Government from the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States would be held in Nairobi, aimed at strengthening the collective commitment to the Goals through multilateralism, which was the principle at the heart of the United Nations reform process.

94. **Ms. Abd Aziz** (Malaysia) said that her country was pleased with the significant progress that had been made in repositioning the United Nations development system, especially at the country level where it mattered most, but was concerned by the unfulfilled mandates contained in General Assembly resolutions [71/243](#) and [72/279](#). National ownership and leadership were important in all matters pertaining to the ongoing implementation of the reform, which included effective and timely reporting by resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to host Governments and the drafting of guidelines for the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks in full consultation with host Governments. Ultimately, the objective of all reform mandates must be to address the interests and needs of respective programme countries.

95. Forging closer South-South cooperation should be one of the key approaches for developing countries to achieve their development goals. In that regard, countries should be proactive and should not depend too heavily on assistance from the international community. In pursuit of inclusive and sustainable development, Malaysia was keen to collaborate with partners from developed and developing countries. Malaysia shared its experience and expertise by providing assistance and training through its technical cooperation programme, which had benefited more than 32,800 participants from 143 recipient countries to date.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.