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## Second Committee

### Summary record of the 20th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 21 October 2019, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Ms. Beshkova (Acting Vice-Chair) ..... (Bulgaria)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

**Agenda item 23: Operational activities for development** (*continued*)

**(a) Operational activities for development of the United Nations system** (*continued*) (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** (*continued*) (A/74/336)

1. **Ms. Ahmed** (Sudan) said that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development required a United Nations development system that was more effective and collaborative. Her delegation attached great importance to the principles for the United Nations development system set out in General Assembly resolutions 71/243 and 72/279. The eradication of poverty in all its forms should be the main objective of the revitalized United Nations development system. Close cooperation with Governments was essential in order to promote national ownership and leadership and ensure that national priorities were taken into account. The new generation of United Nations country teams should also strengthen consultation with Governments.

2. Improving the financing of the United Nations development system would make the system more effective and enable national priorities and needs to be met, in particular those of least developed countries and developing countries. Measures should be taken to ensure adequate, predictable and sustainable financing for the development system.

3. South-South cooperation was essential and, like triangular cooperation, had a valuable contribution to make to sustainable development. However, South-South cooperation was a complement to, rather than a substitute for, North-South cooperation. Her delegation welcomed the outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, which it hoped would be taken into account in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

4. **Mr. Paolino Laborde** (Uruguay) said that the United Nations should support the economic and social development of all Member States, including those that, by undergoing structural adjustments, opening up their markets and implementing other measures, had succeeded in reaching an intermediate level of development, but nevertheless relied on international cooperation to remain at that level. Some countries were

essentially excluded from accessing official development assistance (ODA) based on a criterion – per capita income – that did not reflect the economic and social reality on the ground, including persistent poverty and structural inequality, or take into account the multidimensional nature of development.

5. Because Uruguay had a per capita income of over a certain amount, it had been reclassified as a high-income country, making it ineligible to receive ODA, but per capita income figures hid disparities in the distribution of wealth and challenges such as inequality, inflation and high living costs. Uruguay was committed to the concept of development in transition and would continue to coordinate efforts aimed at ensuring that development was no longer measured solely in terms of per capita income.

6. **Mr. Alsharrah** (Kuwait) said that his delegation welcomed the efforts made to support and promote South-South and triangular cooperation, as such cooperation was essential for achieving higher levels of development in all its dimensions. South-South cooperation had positively affected the dynamics of international cooperation because it took into account the needs of developing countries. However, in view of its voluntary and cooperative nature, South-South cooperation was a complement to, not a substitute for, other types of cooperation, in particular ODA.

7. Some 40 years had passed since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries and the Kuwait Declaration on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which had been the launch pad for effective South-South cooperation. Such cooperation should not be limited to technical cooperation, but should include other forms of cooperation aimed at addressing social, economic and environmental challenges, improving coordination and achieving stability in the countries of the South, while taking into account the priorities of those countries, with a view to enabling them to achieve sustainable development by 2030. The holding of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation marked the beginning of a new phase in the partnership among the countries of the South.

8. Through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, his country had provided assistance to over 100 countries, making Kuwait one of the world's top providers of humanitarian and development aid. Developed countries should honour their commitments to developing countries and provide sufficient ODA. In order to address the complex challenges facing the world, better cooperation among all stakeholders was

also needed. The United Nations had a leading role to play in that regard by facilitating the exchange of experiences and lessons learned.

9. **Mr. Lenanguy Brinz** (Central African Republic) said that following the return of constitutional order to the country, the Government had begun to implement the 2030 Agenda and, to that end, had developed the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan 2017–2021. The Central African Republic had received support from technical and financial partners for the implementation of the Plan and the international commitments made under the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. Dialogue, monitoring and evaluation frameworks had been created with a view to improving cooperation and making the country's economic and social policies more effective. The technical and financial partners conducted regular country visits to appraise the work of the Government, collect data and discuss policy direction. At the national level, development was carried out in partnership with the private sector, local authorities and civil society.

10. Although the situation in the Central African Republic remained fragile, progress had been made. ODA and improved domestic resource mobilization had enabled the Government to begin the process of restoring the rule of law, creating effective and open institutions, providing high-quality and inclusive education and creating jobs, with a view to building a peaceful society and fostering sustainable development. The Government was modernizing the tax administration system, with support from the country's technical and financial partners, and training sessions had been held on value added tax, tax auditing and the accounting plan developed by the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa.

11. The Central African Republic had also received support from the International Monetary Fund, through the three-year Extended Credit Facility arrangement concluded in 2016. His Government would continue to explore all opportunities for increasing domestic resource mobilization while also attracting foreign investment, with a view to enabling the country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

12. **Mr. Moraru** (Republic of Moldova) said that his delegation welcomed the opportunity to take stock of the progress made in implementing General Assembly resolution [71/243](#). As noted in the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the resolution ([A/74/73-E/2019/14](#)), significant progress had been made in establishing new foundations, coordination and accountability at all levels. His delegation welcomed the efforts made in 2019 to

finalize important complementary pieces of the reform architecture aimed at supporting the new resident coordinator system, including the redesigned United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the country-level aspects of the management and accountability framework of the United Nations development system.

13. The funding compact, another critical element of the reform, was intended to address the imbalance between core and non-core resources. While the funding problems of the United Nations development system would not necessarily be resolved by the introduction of percentage targets for core funding, the compact should help to broaden the sources of funding support, in particular for the new resident coordinator system. The Organization should explore other core-like funding modalities, including well-designed pooled funding mechanisms that could help the United Nations development system to respond to the call for coherent policy advice and integrated approaches.

14. The repositioned United Nations development system should play a greater role in efforts to finance the Sustainable Development Goals, including by supporting Governments to leverage adequate financing, partnerships and technologies. His hope was that all United Nations country teams would eventually be able to support programme countries to develop financing coalitions, with a view to closing the Sustainable Development Goals financing gap.

15. His delegation acknowledged the progress made to date in developing a more strategic and coherent United Nations approach at the global and country levels. All stakeholders had a duty to ensure that the current reform process resulted in a more transparent, accountable and collaborative United Nations development system. Putting in place better accountability platforms required, among other things, unified reporting on the implementation of reform-related decisions by the governing bodies of United Nations development system entities, with a view to improving oversight and coherence.

16. His delegation commended the efforts of the Joint Inspection Unit to improve system-wide coherence and cooperation, organizational effectiveness, accountability and integrity, and agreed that enhancing inter-agency cooperation, particularly at the country level, could greatly improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services. The Unit's recommendations for improving efficiency and effectiveness, as contained in its report on the topic ([JIU/REP/2018/5](#)), should be implemented fully. His delegation also endorsed the recommendations made by

the Unit in its review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (JIU/REP/2019/2). The recommendations should be a catalyst for strengthening the accountability of the United Nations system with regard to gender mainstreaming, gender equality and the empowerment of women.

17. **Ms. Moe** (Norway) said that the ambitious reform of the United Nations was intended to improve the ability of the United Nations development system to help Member States to implement the 2030 Agenda in a coherent, integrated and efficient manner, but it would only be a success if all United Nations entities aligned their policies and procedures with the goals of the reform. Transparency was crucial to ensuring confidence in the reform process. To that end, all internal system-wide guidance documents and reports must be made publicly available, which would enable stakeholders to engage actively and meaningfully in intergovernmental processes.

18. Resident coordinators must be genuinely empowered to lead the efforts of the United Nations development system at the country level. For that to happen, the management and accountability framework must be fully implemented. In addition, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework should reflect the Organization's comparative advantage in each country, because the United Nations could not do everything everywhere. A consultative common country assessment, identifying the root causes of inequality and poverty in the country, would be a good starting point. The Organization's efforts to ensure that no one was left behind should be focused on reducing inequalities and promoting human rights and international norms and standards.

19. Gender equality and the empowerment of women had a multiplier effect with respect to growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development, yet gender had not been fully mainstreamed into the United Nations development system. The United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women must be fully implemented. The current funding pattern of the development system was an obstacle to reform and her delegation therefore welcomed the funding compact. All Member States should consider how to improve the flexibility and predictability of their funding. Insufficient funding of the new resident coordinator system was a concern. Norway was prepared to do its part in terms of burden-sharing.

20. Her delegation looked forward to receiving a comprehensive, evidence-based and analytical report from the Secretary-General in 2020 covering all provisions of General Assembly resolutions 71/243 and

72/279, including the resident coordinator system, as well as the annual report of the Development Coordination Office. Her delegation was eager to continue engaging in the reform process, particularly with regard to the review of regional assets and the multi-country offices, but the Organization must provide a timeline for consultations with Member States and briefing notes on the progress made to date.

21. **Mr. Lippwe** (Federated States of Micronesia) said that his delegation welcomed the decision of the Secretary-General to establish, in close consultation with the Governments of the Micronesian region, a dedicated multi-country office in the North Pacific to address the needs and priorities of the countries in the North Pacific and to support their efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. His delegation had long called for the establishment of such an office, which would bring the United Nations closer to the peoples of Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia and improve the delivery of United Nations development system services on the ground, which would in turn enhance quality of life in the region. The Heads of State of the five countries had met on the margins of the high-level week of the current session of the General Assembly to discuss the location of the new office and had recommended to the Secretary-General that the multi-country office be established in the Federated States of Micronesia. His Government stood ready to work with the United Nations and all partners to make the office a reality.

22. **Mr. Albuflasa** (Bahrain) said that South-South cooperation had become increasingly important over the past decade owing to the growing role of the countries of the South in the global economy and the efforts made by the United Nations and Member States to equip developing countries in the South with the tools to address poverty and food insecurity and promote industrial innovation and economic development. At the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, Governments had called for solidarity with the peoples of the South, with a view to accelerating progress towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

23. Bahrain had benefited from South-South and triangular cooperation in such areas as the development of sustainable agricultural practices and food security. It was extremely important for all Member States to exchange lessons learned and experiences, which would facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. South-South cooperation was essential to securing a sustainable future for all countries, not just the countries of the South.

24. **Mr. Bhandari** (Nepal) said that the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda demanded a highly responsive, effective and streamlined United Nations development system. General Assembly resolutions 71/243 and 72/279 provided good guidance in that regard. National ownership and leadership were essential for the sustainable implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 and the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024.

25. The core function of the resident coordinator system should be to coordinate the work of field-based United Nations entities and ensure that development efforts were coherent and aligned with national plans and policies. Accountability was crucial. Although the repositioning of the United Nations development system was a work in progress, it was important to avoid a long transition period, as all efforts should be focused on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The redesigned United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the country programme documents should be aligned with the development plans and priorities of Governments. National ownership would avoid duplication and wasted resources that might erode trust and confidence and potentially jeopardize the credibility of the United Nations in the long run.

26. Having shifted its focus to development and prosperity, Nepal placed faith in the ability of the repositioned United Nations development system to effectively address its development needs and priorities. In that regard, adequate means of implementation and optimum use of those means were crucial for an empowered and impartial resident coordinator system. Funding should be predictable and aligned with priorities of programme countries. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the international community must work to bridge the widening funding gap, as core resources were the bedrock of the United Nations development system.

27. South-South cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation had great potential to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He welcomed the holding of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, which he hoped would inspire the international community to harness the benefits of South-South cooperation.

28. Those left the furthest behind in the most vulnerable countries would bear the brunt of any failure of the reinvigorated United Nations development system to deliver on its promises. The ability to meet the needs

of those countries would be the true litmus test of the efficacy of the United Nations.

29. **Princess Al Saud** (Saudi Arabia) said that her delegation welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 71/243 and 72/279 and make the United Nations development system more effective. However, for progress to be made, transparency, accountability and adequate financing were crucial. Since the 1950s, Saudi Arabia had provided ODA to support projects in such key areas as infrastructure development and training, as well as during humanitarian crises. ODA provided by Saudi Arabia amounted to 1.9 per cent of its gross national income.

30. The work carried out by the resident coordinators was extremely useful. Her delegation welcomed the efforts being made to ensure gender parity and geographical balance within the resident coordinator system. While her delegation also appreciated efforts to improve efficiency, such efforts should be carried out in cooperation with the programme country, and the priorities of that country should be respected. Saudi Arabia looked forward to inclusive, comprehensive and transparent discussions on the reform of the United Nations development system, with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

31. **Ms. Micael** (Eritrea) said that South-South cooperation was characterized by national ownership, which was important for promoting a sense of partnership and solidarity within the global South. South-South cooperation offered a strategic approach to overcoming the structural challenges facing developing countries. Nevertheless, the difficulties faced by least developed countries, including conflict, climate-related challenges, natural disasters, limited productive capacity and poor infrastructure, could not be addressed through South-South cooperation alone. All available means of cooperation, including triangular, North-South and bilateral, should be explored. Strong leadership, enhanced synergies and efficiencies, and stronger and more focused partnerships in national priority areas were essential for ensuring the rapid social, economic and environmental transformation of developing countries. Eritrea was working diligently to boost its own productive capacity by investing in its human capital.

32. Peace and stability were indispensable to unlocking the full potential of conflict-affected countries and freeing up much-needed resources. The recent positive developments in the Horn of Africa had fostered a new spirit of regional cooperation, following two decades of conflict and mistrust. The countries of the region were working closely together to address

complex issues related to peace, security and development in a manner that was consistent with the priorities and aspirations of the peoples of the region. The establishment of peace and stability in the region promised to lead to increased trade and investment, improved transportation and communication systems and better infrastructure.

33. **Mr. Ammann** (Switzerland) said that his delegation welcomed the Joint Inspection Unit's thorough review of the effectiveness, added value and impact of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. Switzerland had provided financial support for the first phase of the System-wide Action Plan and his delegation was therefore pleased to learn that the Joint Inspection Unit had concluded that considerable progress had been made, given the resources invested. The System-wide Action Plan had proved to be an effective framework for tracking system-wide progress and bringing about improvements, and had led the way in terms of setting standards for gender equality and gender mainstreaming. The System-wide Action Plan had also shown that the United Nations system could work together differently. The review had also highlighted the valuable work and leadership of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), which was a good example of how UN-Women was successfully leveraging its coordination mandate.

34. With regard to the second phase of the System-wide Action Plan, Switzerland agreed with the Joint Inspection Unit that quality assurance was important for a mechanism that relied on self-reporting and that individual entities should take responsibility for quality assurance. Nevertheless, one of the reasons for the success of the System-wide Action Plan was that all United Nations entities were assessed in a harmonized manner. Any quality assurance mechanism must therefore do the same, so that ratings remained comparable across the entire system.

35. His delegation was concerned that the area of human and financial resources, which was a reporting entity's most visible commitment to achieving gender equality, had seen only limited progress. The System-wide Action Plan must not become a mere fig leaf. All United Nations entities should increase their investments in gender equality.

36. His delegation agreed with the Joint Inspection Unit that accountability must be strengthened. Making the figures of individual reporting entities publicly available would increase transparency and accountability. However, those figures did not necessarily need to be shared in the

report of the Secretary-General. His delegation would be interested to receive an update from UN-Women on progress in the development of an online data portal where ratings could be published.

37. **Ms. Carpentier** (Chief of the New York Office of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), said that promoting South-South and triangular cooperation, including increased South-South trade and sharing of good practices, lessons learned and experiences from the South, was an integral part of the mandate of UNCTAD. In 2018 and 2019, UNCTAD had held dozens of policy dialogues and capacity-building workshops on South-South cooperation, established a number of partnerships aimed at advancing South-South cooperation and lent its support to over 20 regional, subregional and interregional events and initiatives.

38. UNCTAD had supported many developing countries to participate in South-South trade and establish partnerships. For instance, UNCTAD had helped to establish a partnership among four African countries and India aimed at unlocking the hidden value of cotton by-products, and it continued to assist countries to participate in the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries. With regard to technical cooperation and capacity-building, UNCTAD had established regional centres of excellence in Viet Nam and Mauritius to build the capacities of least developed countries to develop and upgrade their fisheries sectors, while in South America, the Middle East and North Africa, UNCTAD was promoting knowledge-sharing among competition and consumer protection agencies.

39. In preparation for the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, UNCTAD had published a report entitled "Forging a Path Beyond Borders: The Global South", which offered recommendations and practical suggestions for consideration by the countries of the South. At the Conference, UNCTAD had held a side event on illicit financial flows in Africa and the role of South-South cooperation, during which participants had discussed how such flows were impeding the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and what policy actions could be taken to address the problem. Following the Conference, UNCTAD had held a briefing in Geneva, in partnership with the South Centre, the International Labour Organization and the Group of 77 and China, to update stakeholders on the outcomes of the Conference and to discuss how to further promote South-South and triangular cooperation.

*The meeting rose at 4 p.m.*