

STATEMENT BY MR. M.S. PURI, ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, AT THE OPEN  
CONSULTATIONS ON 'STRENGTHEN GOVERNMENT OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES  
FOR DEVELOPMENT ON THE UN SYSTEM FOR ENHANCED SYSTEM WIDE COHERENCE  
ON APRIL 24, 2009

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank you for organising informal consultations on the 'Strengthening governance of operational activities for development of the UN system for enhanced system wide coherence' paper. Our thanks also to the Deputy Secretary-General.

At this stage we do not propose going into the details but would like to assure you of the willingness of our delegation to constructively engage in this process.

My delegation associates itself with the statement of the Joint Coordination Committee of G-77 and NAM.

Mr Chairman,

India's basic position is guided by the fact that the UN's operational activities for development must meet the needs and aspirations of developing countries. They, i.e. developing countries, must be the primary drivers and national ownership and leadership be a real fact in UN's development programmes.

And, the best way to ensure national ownership is to truly plug into national development plans steering clear of any conditionality based "from us to you" approach, which is common among major MFIs, and which has resulted in even the largest players on the money and finance side admitting to stigmas being attached to their actions.

In this context it is extremely important to remember the high legitimacy of UN development representatives in their host countries. This should not be compromised in any manner, especially by involving them in activities that have intrusive connotations.

Mr Chairman,

Elimination of duplication, overlapping and fragmentation, are laudable objectives in themselves, but we should be wary of confusing this with complementarity. The UN, which is neither a Bank nor a Fund, has provided a home to several new ideas and acted as a crucible for several of these development thoughts. This richness in diversity must not be lost sight-of in our endeavours for strengthening coherence and coordination.

Developing countries are varied and have differing requirements. This demands that we eschew a “one size fits all” approach.

We must also clearly recognise the criticality of funding, especially its adequacy, and, of course, predictability. And, here, sad to say, we are woefully inadequate as far as the response is concerned.

Mr Chairman,

We welcome any move that would strengthen GA and ECOSOC’s supervision over the entirety of UN Development Operations and find it difficult to accept that we as Member-States are not sufficiently coherent.

The idea of a small Advisory Board that could provide an effective input may appear to be a sound one but in examining it we must remember that some years back the size of ECOSOC was increased as a larger body provides greater legitimacy and there are demands all around for universalization of governing bodies.

We must also be careful that creation of new bureaucratic structures should not simply add further layers in the search for further coherence.

Coherence of UN agencies, in any case, must not undermine policy space and policy flexibilities of developing countries, which are required in accordance with their national priorities and circumstances. The key test is not how coherently or unified the UN entities are in carrying out their activities but how effectively they are able to deliver to developing countries in implementing their, i.e. the developing countries, nationally determined plans.

Thank you.

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