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Check against delivery

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Operational activities for development

Swiss Statement

presented by
Mr. Pio Wennubst
Counsellor

Permanent Mission of Switzerland
to the United Nations

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Mr. President,

Switzerland would like to thank the Secretary-General for his third interim report on the progress made in application of General Assembly Resolution 62/208 and the associated reports. The comprehensive analysis of the funding of operational activities for development is particularly informative. We would like to thank the Secretariat for the progress made in this reporting over the past years.

The Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of 2007 provided clear guidance on the United Nations development system. The strong consensus we reached at that time continues to be critical in orienting the work of the United Nations. It translates our common objective to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these activities so as to achieve better development results.

Twelve months from now, we will meet to agree on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review for 2013-2016. The members will then have the very important task of further guiding the system in light of the progress made since 2007 and the remaining weaknesses. It is therefore critical that we use the remaining time to be as informed as possible about existing opportunities for further improving the work of the United Nations so as to ensure constructive exchanges and evidence-based decisions in the autumn of 2012. The Fourth High-level Intergovernmental Conference on Delivering as One (DaO) led by countries who have voluntarily engaged in the reform process, the findings of the independent evaluation, and the country-led evaluations are key processes that have provided and will continue to provide us with a solid basis on which to build the next QCPR.

Today, Switzerland identifies the following key challenges to the implementation of Resolution 62/208:

Firstly, the TCPR states that UN funds, programmes and specialised agencies should harmonise their business practices so as to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their work. Despite the establishment of high-level mechanisms intended to address this issue, we have not seen sufficient progress, either at headquarters or in the field. We believe it is crucial that the members use the remaining months to clearly identify the hurdles preventing further progress in this regard and to adopt stronger and more explicit language in the next QCPR.

Secondly, the authority of the Resident Coordinator has to be reinforced. More than ever, we need to grant the RCs legal and financial authority over the UN country team. We have to provide them with the means to effectively coordinate UN programmes and to represent the UN in respect of the government and other development players. In that regard, effective firewalls are of critical importance.

This leads me to my third point. We are particularly concerned with the statement of the SG's report about the lack of authority, coordination and flexibility of the UN operational system in fragile and post-crisis situations. In these extremely complex situations, the UN system must be able to appoint the most qualified people, and grant them the power to fulfil their responsibilities in the full understanding of contextual risks and opportunities. In this context, the Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator

should be given greater authority over the UN operational system by the SG or the Chief Executive Board, and unhindered access to core resources so as to engage critical capacities. Here, Switzerland is convinced that improved inter-agency staff mobility and rapid personnel redeployment would help to optimise the use of existing capacities and to improve the quality of programmes, particularly in crisis and post-crisis situations.

On another note, we recognise that the overall structure of funding does not provide the right incentives for a better coordinated and hence a more effective system. The concerns raised by the SG's report on the lack of core contributions are well taken. In this regard, we would like to raise another question: what is the critical mass of finance required by each Fund and Programme to assure that it can perform well and that it can retain the best possible brains in order to guarantee relevant and effective activities in the field? International financial institutions and some successful vertical funds have been using convincingly comparable approaches in respect of their donors. General Assembly Resolution 64/289 asked Funds and Programmes to address this point. We would therefore reiterate our call to the system and look forward to a fruitful dialogue on this point in the 2012 Executive Board meetings in order to reach agreement on this critical mass in the upcoming QCPR.

We look forward to engaging in constructive exchanges with the UN system and all Member States as we prepare for the next QCPR. Switzerland is confident that an open and challenging dialogue on these issues will help the members to make sound and informed decisions in 2012. It is critical that we engage in this process with the common goal of strengthening the UN operational system to ensure it contributes to positive development change.

Thank you.