

Постоянное Представительство
Российской Федерации
при
Организации
Объединенных Наций

Phone: (212)861-4900



Permanent Mission
of the Russian Federation
to the United Nations
136E 67th Street
New York, NY 10021

Fax: (212)628-0252
517-7427

*Unofficial translation
Check against delivery*

STATEMENT

by Representative of the Russian Federation Mr. VASSILY NEBENZIA
at the ECOSOC 2005 substantive session on agenda item 3 a)
“Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly and ECOSOC”

12 July 2005

Mr. President,

The Russian Federation positively assesses the results of the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations for development reflected in UN GA resolution 59/250.

Its principal outcomes, in our opinion, include the reaffirmation of the leading role of the governments in defining the priorities and modalities of countries' cooperation with the UN, including at the country level; putting the operational activities in the context of the MDGs; the necessity for the funds and programmes to strictly respect their mandates while preserving their organizational identity; the reaffirmation of the voluntary nature of the UN operational activities among their other fundamental characteristics; the reaffirmation of the principle that the country presence of the UN system should be tailored to meet the specific development needs of recipient countries; the strengthening of the resident-coordinator system and ensuring its participatory, collegial and accountable nature etc.

We want to stress that resolution 59/250 is the only basis for all further steps to reform the UN operational activities. The task before us during the current session of the Council is not to reconsider the provisions of the resolution or push for initiatives that go beyond it, but to find optimal ways to implement the decisions taken at the level of the General Assembly.

In this context, we welcome the presentation of the management process for the implementation of resolution 59/250. We are generally satisfied with the precision of its recommendations, targets for each group of issues, actions, benchmarks and timeframes.

Let me highlight specifically the following points.

We support the measures aimed at **national capacity building** presented in section C of the enclosed matrix. We look forward to the appropriate initiatives to be specified in this field.

We support the necessity to improve the quality of **CCA and UNDAF** while ensuring the leading role of the recipient governments in their preparation (part 1 of section E of the matrix). CCA/UNDAF processes should benefit from the analytical work already done at national level

and be less resource consuming. We note the importance of the participation of all UN entities, including the specialized agencies and ECOSOC regional commissions, in CCA/UNDAF processes. We reaffirm our position that in countries with low levels of UN programme resources, the preparation of CCA/UNDAF is not always justified and it should not be a precondition for the cooperation of these countries with the UN development system.

Also, in this context we want to stress that, at this stage, we are against any steps towards the transformation of UNDAF into some sort of common for all agencies country programme or the establishment of different types of common country programmes while discontinuing existing country programme documents.

We favour a balanced and pragmatic approach to further **strengthening of the resident-coordinator system** (part 2 of section E of the matrix). We share the importance of providing adequate financial support to the RC system and improving the selection and training process of candidates for the positions of RCs in line with paragraphs 54 and 55 of resolution 59/250. At the same time, the measures to increase the authority of resident coordinators in terms of “oversight of the design and implementation of UNDAF” (paragraph 58 of the same resolution) should not be interpreted broadly and infringe on the prerogatives of the recipient governments in the cooperation with separate agencies, create an additional “bureaucratic” layer in their bilateral contacts or lead to an increase in the administrative expenditures at the country level.

We fully support the necessity for the RC system to function in a participatory, collegial and accountable manner. We look forward to receiving the resident-coordinator accountability framework as well as the indicators and targets on the provision of support to the RC system by each agency.

We have duly noted the proposal contained in section D “Transaction costs and efficiency” of the matrix to establish by the end of 2007 **UN joint offices** in at least 20 countries. We want to stress that in our understanding, such joint offices are envisaged only for countries with minimal physical and programmatic UN country presence. It is well known that at present the establishment of UN joint offices as a pilot initiative is being discussed with varying progress only with regard to two countries, whereas already during the next year it is planned to make a significant quantum leap in the opening of such offices. Do we talk here also about countries with minimal UN field presence, and isn’t this initiative a little too hasty, considering that the effectiveness of the work of the first two joint offices is still to be proven? Besides, unfortunately, we do not know anything about the different variations of a joint office model that are mentioned in the matrix on page 20. In general, we are of the opinion that this process should be more transparent for Member-States.

Let me also refer to the information on **joint country programmes** that are supposed to be implemented in the countries where joint offices will have been established. In this regard it should be taken into consideration that the current procedures of formulation and approval of the country programme documents have just been reaffirmed at the annual sessions of UNICEF and UNDP/UNFPA Executive Boards this June. All considerations of this issue should go in line with these decisions of the Board with full participation of Member-States.

We support the alignment of **cost recovery** principles by the operational agencies. As we understand, we speak here exactly about the principles, but not specific recovery rates. We do

not think that it is reasonable to take any steps on this issue bypassing the Executive Boards of funds and programmes that are actively involved in relevant discussion and decision-making. Accordingly, the proposal to develop interim guidelines for UNDG agencies on cost recovery from multi-donor trust funds and joint programmes should be presented first for the consideration of the Executive Boards.

Regional structures. We take note of the proposals on alignment of the regional technical support structures and regional bureaux, including their regional coverage and locations of common regional offices (section D of the matrix). We look forward to receive suggestions in this regard planned for January 2006, the discussion of which should start in the Executive Boards of funds and programmes.

Section H “**Regional dimensions of operational activities**”. We fully support the strengthening of cooperation within the UN development system at regional and sub-regional levels. We see, in particular, room for more active and effective involvement of specialized agencies and regional commissions that have limited or no representation at country level. Regional commissions, in particular, have acquired a solid technical and analytical capacity and expertise allowing them to carry out successful technical cooperation programmes in a number of areas that are of interest for recipient governments. Maximum use of this capacity by the country resident agencies in the planning and implementation of their activities will significantly increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness of UN system work in the field of development and will improve its image as a coherent system. UN Resident Coordinators play an important role in developing such cooperation. We propose to include reporting on this aspect in their annual reports.

Mr. President,

We have read with interest the Secretary-General’s report on **funding options and modalities for financing operational activities**. We share, in principle, the importance of broadening of the donor base of funds and programmes, support the improved predictability, long-term stability and adequacy of financing of operational activities.

With regard to the possible new funding options we believe that they should not change the voluntary nature of funding for operational activities, which allows UN funds and programmes to materialize one of the main comparative advantages of their work – neutral and non-politicized nature of assistance that gives them trust and support of recipient governments. We are ready to further discuss this issue taking into account the interests of Russia as an emerging development assistance donor.

We welcome the improvement of the **annual statistical data report** by the inclusion of multi-year dimension in the report. We support the necessity of further improvement in data quality and comprehensiveness as well as in methodology, including by enhancing cooperation with the UN Statistical Commission and other multilateral institutions. We support the task of improvement of the statistical basis for holding as of 2006 a triennial comprehensive review of trends and prospects in funding for development cooperation.

Thank you.