

**Statement of the Representative
of the Russian Federation
at the consultations on the system-wide coherence**

New York, 4 February 2010

Mr. President,

Let me present the following considerations of the Russian Federation on the Reports by the Secretary General.

1. From our point of view, the proposals concerning the governance of operational activities (Chapter I of the Report on the implementation of the GA Resolution 63/311) are related in many respects to the ECOSOC activities and are in line with the last-year Secretariat elaborations. Once again in the forefront there is the idea on the insufficient effectiveness of the ECOSOC activity. It runs through the numerous last-year reform proposals which are found in the Annex to the Report. Meanwhile, besides the general words, the Report contains no clear reason of why the adoption of these proposed recommendations should be expedited. Many of them have no added value, others are not realistic and were rejected by the Member States in the past.

In particular, we do not see any practical value of the proposals on performance of “a comparative analysis of agendas, calendars, programmes of work and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Executive Boards and the governing bodies of the specialized agencies” (point (a)(ii), p.5); sharpening “the distinction in work of the Economic and Social Council between providing leadership on development issues, policy coordination and operational policy” (point (c), page 6). We do not understand the recommendation on undertaking “an in-depth evaluation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review process” (point (b), page 6). Who, when and what is the aim for this undertaking? The proposal on enhancing “the role of the coordination segment in coherent governance of United Nations operational activities” reminds us Secretariat idea on the fusion of the coordination and operational segments (point (c)(ii), page 6) which was failed. The other one reanimated doubtful idea is to “empower a smaller body from within the membership of the Economic and Social Council, composed of national officials responsible for United Nations operational activities” in order to “strengthen substantive preparations for decision-making in the operational activities segment» (point (d) and footnote 6, page 7). The portfolio, mandate, membership and the format of the activity of this body are not clear. But the principal point - it is not clear which is the reason for its creation.

We do not see the necessity to undertake special measures for “ensuring that countries participate in governing bodies on equal basis” by “strengthening equitable participation of national policymakers dealing with United Nations operational activities for development in deliberative and negotiation processes of the Economic and Social Council and the Executive Boards”. The format of participation of the national representatives in the ECOSOC activities is the question of the competence of the governments of the Member States who take sovereign decisions on the composition of the national delegations and inclusion of the heads and experts of the national directive organs. The idea to “consider adopting an organizational model for the Economic and Social Council based on stand-alone segments convened throughout the year (point (c)(ii) page 11) is not founded at all.

As a whole we cannot support this Chapter because of the lack of clarity and reason for the proposals as well as of the necessity of its adoption. At least we need additional explanations and consultations from the Secretariat. We would like to emphasize once again that we are against a new artificial reform of the ECOSOC as for reforming it as such. We advocate the maintenance of the mandate, the format and the structure of the Council as well as for the intergovernmental character of the decision- making process.

2. Options of procedures to present and approve common country programs (CPP). We are against options 3-4, which require, as is admitted in the Report, a fundamental change both in the mandate and in the composition of existing governing bodies. We are supportive of the idea to choose option 2 as a basis for further elaboration and stand ready to work over the a draft resolution, outlined in para.33 of the report. As we have understood, option 2 foresees the presenting of the CPP to the governing bodies of the participating UN agencies with an emphasis on approving by each of them of a corresponding part of a program falling within the mandate of a particular agency. This would require more detailed and specified clarifications by the Secretariat on the differences of this option compared to the option 1. In its current version option 2 is lacking clarity and leaves much room for different interpretations, which make it possible to consider options 1 and 2 to be identical.

3. The principles and proposals to create an independent mechanism for system-wide evaluation outlined in the Report (para. 38-39) can be supported in general. We are waiting for specific parameters of a new independent unit which will manage the program of system-wide evaluation.

4. The proposals regarding the strengthening of financial reporting (Chapter IV of the Report), including improving timeliness, coverage, quality and comparability of financial reporting, analysis of disaggregated funding flows, enhancing online access to funding information, as well as establishment of the central database of operational activities raise no objections.

5. We attach key importance to the independent evaluation of the progress of the Delivering as one programme country pilots. We think that the proposed timelines can be supported more so that the evaluation would hardly begin before July.

Both outlined options of evaluation are worth a detailed consideration. At the current stage it would be premature to give preference to any specific one of them. Charging the Joint Inspection Group (JIG) with such a large-scale task which is of principal importance for the far-reaching intergovernmental decisions is in some contradiction with the current work modalities of the “inspectors” (who prepare reports on their behalf in groups of 2-3 persons without any significant secretarial support). A confirmation of the capacity and preparedness of the Group is needed. While not opposing the creation of a “special mechanism” in general, we should consider the viability of a “hybrid” of the two options where the JIG members would participate in the work of this mechanism.

In general, most of the proposals in Chapters II-VII of the Report can be used as a basis during further consultations. At the same time we note that the Report failed to cover on the issues of improving the accountability of the internal secretarial and interagency coordination structures.

Mr. President,

Allow us to touch upon the second Report that refers to the creation of a “hybrid” body on the matters of gender equality and empowerment of women.

We would like to thank the Secretary General his Report and the emphasis made on concrete, practical aspects for the gender architecture reform.

Unfortunately the submitted report leaves out a whole number of key aspects. More so, instead of giving exhaustive answers to how the new architecture would work, it rather gives rise to new questions.

Since the time is limited, we cannot cover all issues of interest to us, though many of them were flagged by us earlier. That is why we would like to drive everybody’s attention to the most vivid points in the document.

The Russian Federation alongside with many other Member States has repeatedly underscored how important it is for the future architecture to be universal in its sphere of competence and geographic coverage. There is not a single state in the world that can say that is absolutely free of violations and discriminations against women. That is why we are surprised to see that in the organizational chart of the future structure there is no regional unit for the countries of the West. We hope that this is rather an unfortunate omission, but not an intended step. Otherwise there would be doubts of whether the new mechanism is really impartial and free from special privileges to an individual group of countries.

It is still not clear, what would be the place and the role of the “hybrid” in the general UN System, what would be its status. We believe, that the combining of the secretariat functions and operational activity does not mean that this mechanism should get transformed into a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly, which we pointed out to the cosponsors of this Report while they were drafting it.

There is no clear picture regarding the administrative consequences of the reform, first and foremost at the regional and national levels. It is not clear who and by which criteria would define the number of employees outside the headquarters in every particular case. It is notable also that, pursuant to the Report, the personnel on the ground will be practically moved out of the UN resident coordinator’s control, which in fact is a violation of the undivided authority principle. We deem such situation unacceptable.

The given reform does not foresee any abolishment of a gender issues specialists’ posts in different bodies and units of the Organization. At the same time the new mechanism is equipped with some functions of supervision over the work of the whole UN System in this area. We doubt the rationality of such a step.

The report offers only a general outline of the interaction of the Executive board to be established to supervise the operational activity of the structure with the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

At that the Executive Director is delegated with the overall authority in every financial matter, since this body will be entitled to devise its own financial terms and rules. We are apprehensive of whether this might lead to a creation of “a state within a state”, which we cannot accept.

We are worried that practically all activity of the new mechanism and even a significant portion of the Headquarters functions will be financed by voluntary contributions. Won’t this lead to a situation when the work will be conducted only there, where it is of interest to donors and not there, where it is really needed?

In conclusion we would like to emphasize, that the gender architecture reform is one of the components in the compromise “package” approach to be used to find solution to all questions, as reached within the consultations on the system-wide coherence.

Thank you.