STATEMENT BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OPERATIONAL
ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT SEGMENT

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PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Mr Vice-President,

My delegation would like to commend you for your exceptional stewardship of the Segment, and acknowledge with appreciation the discussions that have ensued over the past two days. My delegation further aligns itself with the statement that was delivered by the Republic of Ecuador, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr Vice-President,

The year 2017 truly marks a “new beginning” as we launch the implementation of the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR). South Africa takes note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for the development of the United Nations system (QCPR): Funding Analysis.

We would like to highlight the following observations on the report:

Operational Activities for Development needs to pursue the welfare and development of developing countries, therefore complimenting national efforts to address the triple challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality faced by the developing countries.

My delegation remains concerned that as we approach the conclusion of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), the rapid increase in poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment,
and the struggle for the most basic access to services and scarce resources continue, despite the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. South Africa believes that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions should be the primary focus of the United Nations Development System.

Mr Vice-President,

We remain faced with the constant decline in core resources resulting in the inability of the United Nations development system to fulfill mandated programmes and activities, whilst non-core resources to earmarked initiatives have increased. This imbalance has created fragmentation as well as confusion between the models of funding to be used, either inter-agency pooled funding, thematic funds, or joint programming, which must be addressed urgently. The current QCPR must focus its efforts toward maintaining its traditional mandate, which outlines the manner in which the UN development system provides support to programme countries in their development efforts. We need to ensure that the shortfalls in the previous QCPR are not repeated. The UN development system can only achieve success with adequate, predictable and stable funding for operational activities. We therefore request the Secretary-General to provide, in his next Report, an update on steps taken to address this challenge.

Whilst recognizing the importance of addressing new and emerging challenges, my delegation is concerned about the prioritization of humanitarian funding over funding for development. The importance of investment in development projects and activities should not be
undermined as they assist to build and create infrastructure and systems that will contribute to more stable environments, lessening the risk of humanitarian crisis, therefore reinforcing that development is and must remain the fundamental priority of the UN development system.

Mr Vice-President,

In order to address the afore-stated impediments, the UN development system needs to enhance its cooperation and collaboration amongst its entities, to ensure proper alignment of their respective mandates to avoid duplication and to ensure efficient programming. Entities throughout the United Nations development system need to continue to strive for the betterment of the donor base from the traditional donor countries due to their financial muscle. Without the strengthened support of the donor countries, the United Nations development system will continue to be weakened.

Furthermore, the Resident Coordinator system needs to be strengthened with a view to enhancing the coherence and effectiveness at country level. In particular, UN Country Teams need to be supported to ensure the full implementation of the provisions of the new QCPR, especially in the compilation of the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAFs).
Mr Vice-President,

In conclusion, my delegation assures you of South Africa’s commitment toward the successful implementation of the current QCPR. This will, inter alia, require closer collaboration between Member States with the UN development system to assist the international community with the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals by all countries, particularly developing countries, which continue to lag behind as far as development is concerned. This will ensure that no one is left behind.

I thank you.