

Statement
Like-Minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle-Income Countries
Economic and Social Council
Operational Activities for Development Segment

March 2, 2017. New York

Mr. President

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Like-Minded Group of Countries Supporters of Middle-Income Countries, composed by Armenia, Belarus, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama and the Philippines.

We would like to commend you, Mr. Vice-President, for organizing this Operational Activities for Development Segment in occasion of launching the implementation of the 2016 QCPR resolution. We would also like to congratulate you for organizing a panel on a topic that is very strategic to our group: the role of the UNDS in addressing the needs and diverse challenges of Middle Income Countries.

Mr. President

In the QCPR adopted last December, the General Assembly called upon the United Nations development system to continue to support developing countries in their efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals and their development objectives, and requests the system to address, the special challenges facing the most vulnerable countries, as well as the specific challenges facing the middle-income countries, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda 6 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In this regard, we would like to highlight the importance of the mandate given by Member States in order to implement paragraphs 71 and 72 of Addis Ababa and 65 of the 2030 Agenda, among others.

We, the countries classified as Middle-Income Countries, advocate for the promotion of the principles of universality, integrality, and the need to ensure that no one is left behind, as recognized in the 2030 Agenda. All efforts should target those most in need, regardless of their geographical location. We should therefore target the people in need and not only the countries. The 2030 Agenda must be relevant to all countries and the support that the UNDS gives to program countries must be equally relevant. We have to respond to the sustainable development needs of all of us, leaving no one behind, and ensuring that challenges and vulnerabilities faced by middle-income countries do not cause regression of their development efforts and achievements.

In addition, even though we celebrate UN efforts to enhance coordination, particularly at the operational level, we highlight the need to improve that coordination and work on a long-term, system-wide strategic planning towards middle-income countries. In this regard we strongly believe that the UNDS should establish an inter-agency and system-wide coordination action plan for sustainable development in middle-income countries. This mechanism should be built upon a solid evidence-base, and be defined by clear objectives, indicators and sources of financing.

We would also like to reiterate our call on the United Nations Development System, in consultation with the IFIs following on paragraphs 129 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and 48 of the 2030 Agenda, to develop transparent measurements of progress on sustainable development that go beyond income criteria, building on existing initiatives. These should recognize poverty in all its forms and dimensions, and the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of domestic output as well as structural gaps at all levels. We commend the efforts undertaken by DESA on this issue and reiterate the importance of achieving further progress in this regard.

As we have previously stated, the UN Development System needs to develop a flexible, overarching, and coherent framework for its engagement with middle-income countries. Such a strategy could harness the experiences of those UN entities that have strived to differentiate their business models and programming approach to adapt to different country contexts, including by developing more refined indicators of progress that take into account variables related to their mandated areas of work, and treat national and per capita income as proxies for a country's ability to assume or share financial responsibility for development.

National experiences and capacities of middle-income countries need to be supported, strengthened and promoted in order to facilitate their contribution to the implementation of the Agenda. The multiplier effect of such cooperation will benefit other middle-income countries, least-developed countries and even developed countries. Policy coherence should be at the core of that cooperation and should be aligned with national development plans and strategies, strengthening and promoting national capacities and addressing their vulnerabilities.

Current funding realities and the fact that middle-income countries constitute the larger group of Member States call for the role of the UNDS to be further articulated in light of the differentiated capacities, priorities and needs, particularly in relation to service delivery, policy advice and technical assistance.

The process for elaborating the strategic plans of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women constitutes a great opportunity for the System to further elaborate on how to implement what the 2030 Agenda, Addis Ababa and QCPR have indicated to address the sensibilities and challenges of Middle Income Countries. We are ready as a group to actively engage in this process and contribute from our own experiences and sensibilities.

I thank you Mr. President