

India for flexible UN response to development needs

India has stressed that the UN system's operational activities should respond to the development needs of developing countries in a flexible manner for their benefit and at their request.

'The strength of the UN operational system lies in its legitimacy at the country level as a neutral, objective and trusted partner for both the recipient and donor countries,' Indian delegate Shatrughan Sinha said during a UN General Assembly Committee debate Thursday.

India backs the strengthening of these unique characteristics of the UN system's operational activities for development so that they can better support the long-term development efforts of developing countries, the film star parliamentarian said.

The issue of financing for development cooperation, in particular the need for adequate core funding, would therefore be an important issue that India would stress upon during next year's discussion of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR), he said.

India believes that the UN system's operational activities for development should be valued and assessed on the basis of the contribution they make to the efforts of developing countries to pursue their national development plans and priorities, Sinha said.

The General Assembly has recognised that the fundamental characteristic of the operational activities of the UN development system should be, inter alia, their universal voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and multilateralism.

'The international community needs to maintain its interest and funding for the relief and reconstruction phases of humanitarian emergencies, long after the eyes of the media have moved on to other stories and new emergencies,' he said.

A General Assembly resolution on TCPR recognises the importance of funding for long-term development as part of a smooth transition process, he noted. The resolution recommends that planning for the transition to development and supportive measures in this regard should be taken from the beginning of the relief phase.

The report on the 'Activities of United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) providing an overview of its programmes and activities cites a number of projects in India including a partnership between UNIFEM and the Indian Railways to incorporate gender-responsive policies and practices related to HIV/AIDS, Sinha said.

The report labels its collaboration with the world's third largest employer as a project that is a 'recognized model of public sector intervention' and adds that UNIFEM, along with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and representatives of Chinese Railways have visited the programme to look into possible replication, he said.

Noting the improvement in UNIFEM's funding situation, Sinha congratulated UNIFEM on attaining a record total income of \$57.6 million in 2005 and for exceeding its multi-year funding framework target of \$43.4 million.

However, core contributions stood at \$22 million, as against the target of \$25.4 million, he noted stressing the importance of enhanced core funding to help UNIFEM continue the pursuit of its mandated activities.

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