Position Paper of China on the United Nations Reform

The world is undergoing major developments, transformation, and adjustment, but peace and development remain the call of our day. The trends of global multi-polarity, economic globalization, IT application and cultural diversity are surging forward; and countries are becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent. Yet, the world faces growing uncertainties and destabilizing factors as well as interwoven global threats and challenges that keep cropping up. Against this backdrop, China is ready to work together with other countries to forge a new form of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation, to build a community with a shared future for mankind, and to build an open, inclusive, clean and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity.

As the most universal, representative, authoritative inter-governmental international organization, the United Nations is an effective platform for collective actions to cope with various threats and challenges, and the best venue to practice multilateralism. Over the past more than 70 years since its founding, it has played an irreplaceable role in promoting world peace and progress of humanity.
However, as the international landscape evolves, the UN is faced with new challenges and needs to undertake reforms for improvement to better fulfill its responsibilities stipulated in the UN Charter, adapt its thought and concept, structure and operation model to the needs of global governance, and continue its efforts to safeguard world peace, contribute to global development and uphold the international order.

I. General Principles of UN reforms

1. Reforms should be in the interest of multilateralism, enhance the UN capacity to deal with global threats and challenges and strengthen its role in the global governance system.

2. Reforms should safeguard and follow the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter and the basic norms governing international relations.

3. Reforms should be advanced through discussion and collaboration for the benefit of all. The reform process should be led by Member States and advanced in an open and transparent manner, and their voice needs to be heard to forge broad-based consensus and to maintain and promote their mutual trust and solidarity.

4. Reforms should increase the voice and say of developing countries in international affairs. Their propositions and concerns need to be prioritized and accommodated in particular, and greater
input should be provided for development.

5. Reforms should increase the UN's execution ability and management efficiency, strengthen communication and coordination between the UN system and Member States, improve the internal accountability of the UN, to fully respond to the expectations of the international community.

China supports UN reforms in areas of peace and security, development and internal management, and holds that reforms in these three areas should be advanced in a well-coordinated way. China looks forward to more detailed reform proposals by UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

II. Reform of the Peace and Security Pillar

Global security is confronted with severe challenges as a result of frequent international and regional hotspots and intertwined traditional and non-traditional security threats. China supports the UN in playing a bigger role in the area of peace and security and keeping pace with the times.

The reform of the peace and security pillar of the UN should observe the following principles: (1) The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the countries concerned should be respected, and the choice of individual countries for political system and path of
development in light of their national conditions should be respected. (2) Targeted measures should be taken in line with the different nature and cause of conflicts, instead of simply replicating the existing patterns of resolution or imposing solutions on countries in conflict. A holistic approach should be adopted to address both the symptoms and root causes of conflicts. (3) Countries concerned should be fully consulted and their views respected. The role of regional countries and organizations should be highlighted and brought into full play. (4) The UN’s efforts in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development should be aligned and coordinated. Input in development should be scaled up to enhance self-development capacity of all countries and create conditions for lasting peace.

China advocates prevention, and holds that differences should be prevented from escalating into confrontations, and confrontations into conflicts. China supports the UN in carrying out preventive diplomacy and stepping up the mediation and good offices of the Secretary-General.

China supports the reform of UN Peacekeeping Operations as appropriate, including policy guidance, command system, internal and external coordination, and field support, in order to further improve the efficiency, effectiveness and cohesion of UN
Peacekeeping Operations and ensure the full implementation of its mandates authorized by the UN Security Council. The Peacekeeping Operations should adhere strictly to the basic principles and prioritize political resolution, and explicit, feasible and focused mandates should be formulated for the operations. The UN Secretariat should enhance coordination with the troop (police) contributing countries and major contributors of UN peacekeeping assessment, and improve communication between the UN Headquarters and field missions. The UN Secretariat should take necessary measures to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations and special political missions, set up periodic review mechanisms respectively and adjust in a dynamic manner its priorities at various stages.

China supports further strengthening the cohesion, interaction and coordination among all departments of UN Secretariat. There should be a clear division of labor and sound coordination between the proposed UN Under Secretaries-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and for Peace Operations and the Assistant Secretaries-General with regional responsibilities. Attention should be paid to addressing cross-pillar and trans-regional issues to forge synergy among various departments. The UN Headquarters and field missions should intensify communication to ensure smooth flow of information and effective implementation of policies.
China supports the departments on peace and security affairs of the Secretariat in actively developing partnerships with related regional and sub-regional organizations, maintaining close communication with countries concerned in the region and respecting their views, and taking a regional approach to addressing regional issues.

China hopes the departments on peace and security affairs of the Secretariat will work closely with the departments on management and operational support affairs, and improve financial and human resource allocation, to provide effective, timely and sustainable assurance to the peace and security pillar.

China attaches importance to fighting sexual violence in conflicts and protecting women's lawful rights and interests. China supports the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution, as well as their full participation and decision-making power throughout the peace process. Attention should be given to bringing out their unique strengths to enable them to become a positive force for peace. China supports fuller participation and a greater leadership rate of women in Peacekeeping Operations and special political missions.

China holds that, in reforming the peace and security pillar, the UN Secretariat should attach importance not only to gender parity among the UN staff but also to geographical balance, by appointing
more personnel from troop-contributing countries and the seriously under-represented developing countries to middle- and high-ranking management positions in the proposed Department of Peace Operations and other departments.

China hopes the UN Secretary-General will enhance communication and consultation with Member States on the reform of the peace and security pillar and improvement of its working methods, heed their views, address their legitimate concerns and increase transparency of the reform process.

III. Repositioning United Nations Development System

The international community shares a common aspiration to deepen international development cooperation and seize development opportunities so as to tackle challenges and achieve common development and prosperity. The United Nations is tasked with the important mission of coordinating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. China supports the UN in moving forward and repositioning its development system as needed, in an effort to strengthen its functions in implementing the 2030 Agenda, so as to help Member States, the developing countries in particular, achieve greater development and enhance the well-being of the mankind.

1. Principles
- Focusing on development. With the fundamental purpose of promoting development and poverty eradication as the primary task, consistent efforts should be made towards a more equitable and balanced global partnership for development, and to effectively mobilize and increase development resources with a view to helping all countries, the developing countries in particular, strengthen their capacity for development. Development perspective should be incorporated into the global macroeconomic policy coordination framework, and global economic governance should be improved with increased voice and representation of emerging markets and developing countries.

- Ownership and leadership by Member States. All countries, big or small, strong or weak, should take part in the process of repositioning the UN development system on an equal footing. Priority areas and measures of the repositioning should be aligned with the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other guiding documents. The views and suggestions of all Member States on the repositioning should be respected and well heeded, while ensuring that the concerns of developing countries are taken into consideration. An inter-governmental process should be launched to build broad consensus on the basis of thorough consultation among Member States.
- Following the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Principles of sovereign equality, non-interference in internal affairs and promoting international cooperation enshrined in the UN Charter must be followed. Every country has full sovereignty over its own development and implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and its choice of development mode and path in accordance with its national conditions should be respected.

- Principle of “Common but Differentiated Responsibilities”. It is important that North-South cooperation remains the main channel of international development cooperation, with South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation as its useful complements instead of substitutes. The international community should urge developed countries to honor their Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments and scale up their financial, technical and capacity building support to developing countries, in the meantime support developing countries in enhancing South-South cooperation and encourage private sectors to play an active role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

2. Priorities

- Enhance coordination of the UN development system at the headquarters level, and the role and function of the Department of
Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) should be strengthened as it is the core department within the Secretariat for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. A system-wide, comprehensive and detailed work plan should be formulated for the UN Development Group to better implement the 2030 Agenda. Action should be taken to improve efficiency and effectiveness of and build synergy among the Secretariat and the UN development system, and to define the responsibilities of each entity in accordance with its respective mandates and in line with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Give full play the central role of the Economic and Social Council and the High-Level Political Forum in areas of development policy coordination, mutual learning and exchanges of development experience, and monitoring and reviewing of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Actions should be taken to strengthen the functions and capacities of UNDESA in implementing all SDGs to ensure full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These actions could include increasing inputs of financial and human resources and improving internal management, among others.

- Encourage regional commissions to support Member States' efforts in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its follow-up and review. Regional commissions should also be encouraged to
conducted targeted policy analysis based on the national conditions of countries in the region, with a view to facilitating overall development of these countries. UNDESA's function of providing policy guidance to regional commissions should be further strengthened.

- Support resident coordinators, in accordance with their mandates by Member States, in focusing on development and helping Member States implement the 2030 Agenda in such areas as policy advice, finance, technology and pragmatic cooperation. Resident coordinators should be accountable to Member States, and report their work to Member States on a regular basis. The responsibility of a resident coordinator, his/her scope of work, and country programmes should be defined through consultation with Member States in light of the latter's national conditions. Recommendations from Member States on the appointment and mandates of resident coordinators as well as the composition and responsibilities of the country teams should be respected.

- Fully implement the Monterrey Consensus and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and insist on the current international development cooperation framework, with North-South cooperation as the main channel and South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation as useful complements. Developed countries should honor their ODA commitments and increase contributions to
development cooperation and enhance support for the UN development system.

- Support the UN development system, including its programmes and funds, and specialized agencies to mobilize more development resources based on their own comparative advantages. Coordination and cooperation with international institutions, including the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), should be strengthened and partnerships with newly established financial institutions, such as the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the New Development Bank (NDB), should be deepened for mutually beneficial cooperation.

- Strengthen oversight of Member States on the UN Secretariat and the UN development system, and improve the accountability of both the Secretariat and the UN development system to Member States.

- Properly handle the development-peace-humanitarian nexus within the UN system and ensure that resources on development cooperation are not diluted.

IV. Management Reform

Increasing the operational capacity and working efficiency of UN bodies is key to an effective role of the UN. Reforms should aim
at:

- making departments of the Secretariat smaller but more efficient, strengthening their coordination and setting out a clear division of labor among them;

- ensuring Member States’ full participation in and guidance on UN budgeting process, resource allocation and internal management;

- enhancing transparency and accountability framework of the Secretariat and strengthening Member States’ oversight on the Secretariat;

Reform measures and their implementation should be evaluated on a regular basis for improvement. Pilot or tentative implementation may be arranged if necessary. The role of UN’s internal and external auditing and monitoring bodies such as the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the Board of Auditors (BOA) should be fully harnessed, and the result of evaluation, monitoring and accountability measures should be timely released, so as to promote implementation of relevant reform measures.

1. UN Programme Planning and Budgeting Process

China supports improvement in UN programme planning and budgeting process to make it more practical and accurately reflect changes in demand, and to maintain a stable and predictable budget

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scale. The Committee of Programme and Coordination (CPC), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and other bodies should play their role fully.

Budget report and its presentation should give Member States an overall picture of the budget and its implementation. Complete and sufficient budget information should also be provided to enable Member States to have a full understanding of relevant details.

The regrouping of budget parts and sections should help secure key functions of the UN. The current stand-alone sections of the Development Account and Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation should remain in order to better coordinate the management and use of development-oriented resources.

The plan outline should be strategic and disconnection with operational implementation should be avoided. It should give full guidance to programme budget and there should be a balance between long-term plans and changes of actual demand.

2. Redeployment of Budget Resources

China maintains that the Secretary-General may be entrusted with appropriate authority to allocate resources and enter into certain scale of commitments of Unforeseen and Extraordinary Expenses (UEE) according to practical needs. An appropriate level of Working
Capital Fund should be established in the same spirit. The usage of UEE and other resources should be regulated and monitored. UN budget resources need to be allocated in compliance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the UN, and in ways that uphold budget discipline and the authority and seriousness of budget planning.

3. Reorganizing Management Structure and Delegation of Authority

China is open to reorganizing the management structure of the Secretariat. Relevant reforms should help achieve more efficient policy-making and implementation, enhance coordination and cooperation, and avoid overlapping mandates or ambiguity of responsibility.

China supports appropriate delegation of authority. Relevant reform measures should help improve the management and efficiency of UN agencies. The guiding principles, scope and criteria of delegation of authority should be identified.

To ensure balance between power and responsibility, strengthen supervision and prevent abuse of power, it is necessary to monitor the delegation of authority, refine relevant supervision and accountability measures, and release the outcome of the implementation of
accountability measures.

4. Improving the Management and Support System

China attaches importance to the UN’s effort to improve and upgrade the internal management system in light of practical needs, and takes note of the promotion and application of the UMOJA and other management systems in the UN. Such reform should aim at achieving information sharing, standardization of operational processes, forming synergy and cost reduction. Different demands and concerns of Member States and users should also be accommodated. Relevant reforms should ensure reasonable inputs for expected outcomes.

China supports the promotion and application of modern information and communication technologies to improve working efficiency of the UN system. It is also necessary to avoid duplication and waste, strengthen performance tracking and evaluation, and ensure the compatibility, stability and accessibility among different operating systems, so as to improve user experience and meet practical needs.

China supports improvement of UN support system to make logistic services more efficient and accessible, controlling costs and achieving economies of scale. In selecting the shared service centers
of the global service delivery model, comprehensive assessment and full discussions should be made on the locations, taking into account various factors such as the level of supporting facilities, and procurement and logistic costs, so as to ensure reasonable, fair and balanced selection.

China supports reform on procurement process to secure efficiency and timeliness, and efforts to increase transparency and accountability in the process. Procurement costs should be reasonably controlled, channels expanded, and in particular, purchasing from developing countries should be increased.

5. Human Resources Management

China supports the UN in improving human resources management. Gender balance should be promoted through reform, and the longstanding issue of under-representation of developing countries in the Secretariat should be truly addressed by improving recruitment procedures and human resources management policies. China stands for the formulation of a timetable and a roadmap to promote equitable geographical distribution and diversity of the workforce, and to address the issue of under-representation of developing countries.