

INTERVENTION – REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA

INFORMAL HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE
IV MINISTERIAL MEETING
LIKE-MINDED GROUP OF COUNTRIES SUPPORTERS OF MIDDLE-INCOME
COUNTRIES

74 United Nations' General Assembly
September 26st, 2019

Excellencies,

Allow me to first congratulate the Government of the Philippines for its recent election as chair of this Group and express our gratefulness for its leadership on convening the fourth version of this important event.

I would like to express Colombia's unconditional support for this Like-Minded Group in order to enhance its potential as a strategic actor in the coordination and promotion of Middle-Income Countries' interests and needs within the United Nations Development System.

Honorable members of the Group,

Based on the latest classification of the World Bank, today there are 107 Middle-Income Countries, out of which 60 are ranked as Upper Middle-Income Countries. Colombia considers that the way in which countries' development levels are measured does not respond to the spirit of the internationally agreed agenda on Sustainable Development. It is clear that economic growth is still important for developing countries, although a new and comprehensive vision on how to measure development is needed with urgency.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development invites all countries, without income distinction, to envision development in a multidimensional way. Therefore, it is inconsistent that the United Nations Development System, the international financial institutions and other multilateral actors classify States' levels of development through an unidimensional approach based on economic criteria.

As long as income thresholds continue to be updated on a yearly basis, the 'graduation' process will remain a major issue for Middle-Income Countries. Even though many Middle-Income Countries have succeeded in different international cooperation modalities, such as South-South and Triangular Cooperation, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda's mandate is clear on its complementary and not substitutive role towards North-South cooperation.

Excellencies,

We have broadly reiterated that Middle Income Countries still face diverse and significant challenges towards sustainable development. Taking this into account, I would like to mention that the repositioning process of the UN Development System, adopted in 2018 by consensus, is an opportunity to strengthen international cooperation with the United Nations in our countries to orient it towards the generation of national and local capacities, based on our national priorities and needs.

Since the reform's main objective is to improve the Organization's efficiency on the field to better support our countries on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we should find its convergencies with Middle Income Countries' interests.

In that sense, my delegation believes that the best instruments to guarantee that the cooperation best serves our countries' main challenges and priorities are the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks that replace the UN Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) as the main instruments for the planning and implementation of UN activities on the field.

Its comparative advantages rely on the fact that these instruments shall be formulated in permanent consultation with the host Government. Therefore, its cooperation priorities and results will be built exclusively under national priorities, development plans and crucial needs.

Secondly, it will strengthen UN accountability to our governments. Since it will centralize the actions for all UN agencies, the United Nations Country Teams shall now report to their empowered Resident Coordinators on the common activities for the implementation of the UN Cooperation Frameworks.

Allow me to stress that the implementation of the new Cooperation Frameworks, and the reform as a whole, will lead into positive results for our countries if we:

- Work cooperatively with the UN under a demand-oriented focus, replacing the traditional supply emphasis. This will concentrate the support of all UN Agencies into our main priorities and needs.
- Encourage more inter-agency work. The more joint and mandate-centered work from all UN agencies, the less duplicity of actions, efforts and resources in our countries.
- Design Cooperation Frameworks with agreed outcomes and impact indicators to center the support of the UN System into deliverables that strengthen and install sustainable national and local capacities.

As the United Nations Secretary General, António Guterres, stated on May 31st, 2018, “national ownership and a strong focus on accountability and results will guide the System every step of the way.”

Dear members of the group,

Allow me to conclude stressing that Colombia considers this Group as a key intergovernmental scenario able to launch discussions oriented to modify, in consultation with relevant actors, the criteria to measure development in a tailored approach, and to implant on member States a message on the importance to gather more voices and establish common positions towards a renewed vision on international cooperation in the margins of the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development.

I reaffirm Colombia’s commitment to this Group and its intention to co-work with all delegations and special guests here present until our goals as Middle-Income Countries are achieved.

Thank you.