Item 3: UNDP Global Programme, 2014-2017

Statement by Mr Peter Versegji, Minister Counsellor
Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations

Delivered on behalf of Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States of America.

(Check against delivery)

Thank you Mr President.

I have the honour to present this statement today on behalf of Canada, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States and my own country, Australia.

Let me begin by extending our thanks to UNDP and its staff for their hard work in drafting this Global Program. We were grateful for the opportunity to input into this process via stakeholder consultations and to UNDP for its efforts to address the concerns of member states in this final draft.

We agree with the principle underpinning this document, namely, that there are some issues that can be addressed only or most successfully at the global level. We welcome the five priority areas selected by UNDP to be the focus of the Global Program. These are issues that benefit from a global perspective and are sensibly drawn from the strategic plan, ensuring complementarity with the work of UNDP at the country and regional level.

We commend UNDP for identifying areas on which it has a comparative advantage and unique experience to offer, for example the emphasis on resilience building. We further welcome UNDP's efforts to advance the QCPR agenda in this way. In this regard we also
urge UNDP to seek synergies across the different parts of its mandate, in order to make full use of UNDP’s potential to show global knowledge and policy leadership.

Throughout the strategic planning process, the Executive Board stressed the need for UNDP to narrow its focus and not try to be everything to everybody. We are therefore satisfied that the Global Program has been selective in the areas in which it will focus. The five priority areas of the Global Program are important elements of UNDP’s broader work, and all feed directly into the vision of the strategic plan, which is to help countries achieve the simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion. We underline the need for these twin objectives to be the central consideration driving UNDP’s work in the five outcomes of the Global Program.

In this regard, we are not supportive of the corrigendum issued on Friday, which places the overall vision of the Strategic Plan at the level of a specific outcome.

With the upcoming structural changes in UNDP in support of greater policy and program coherence, we would be interested to be updated on the sector or thematic practices under the new Bureau for Policy and Program Support.

UNDP’s experience working with partner governments to integrate the Millennium Development Goals into national development plans will be an important contribution to the post-2015 agenda and we therefore support ongoing work in this area. We are also supportive of a data revolution. The use of evidence-based arguments based on population data, projections and scenarios to inform development strategies, goals, targets and policies will be integral to the success of the post-2015 agenda.

Access to comprehensive and reliable population statistics and analysis enables governments to plan national strategies and service delivery more precisely. It also supports the adjustment of priorities and policies on the basis of an accurate assessment of need, including for basic social services like health. We would therefore like to stress the importance of age- and sex-disaggregated results across all priority areas. Indicators under outcome 3 and 4 should be strengthened in this regard. Furthermore, given the focus of UNDP on poverty eradication and social protection, it is important to ensure the inclusion of marginalized population groups throughout the areas of work of the global program. This includes, for example, refugees from disaster zones residing within neighbouring countries for prolonged periods of time, as well as persons with disabilities.

We see real value in UNDP supporting and strengthening regional disaster risk reduction programs by sharing information across regions, particularly taking lessons learned and encouraging innovation through promoting cross-country partnerships. We are particularly supportive of UNDP’s work to increasing metrics and methodologies for improving the availability, quality and coverage of data on climate and disaster risks, this is vital for effective development programming at the country level.

We further support UNDP’s efforts to prioritise key drivers of development, particularly the inclusion of women and girls, and consideration of gender in all meaningful development solutions. We look forward to global best practice guidance on advancing the participation of women in political, civic, social and economic decision making. We agree that integrating resilience into the development process should be a key focus of
UNDP, including for marginalised population groups. We appreciate the efforts of UNDP to promote democratic governance including by increasing transparency and accountability. The results framework indicators are ambitious for this priority; we are particularly interested in the findings of a policy development exercise to increase the transparency and effectiveness of natural resource management.

We appreciate UNDP’s efforts to acknowledge its role in, and work collaboratively as a member of, UN system-wide mechanisms and processes, including the MDG Acceleration Framework and Sustainable Energy for All initiative. We are pleased that UNDP has identified opportunities to work collaboratively with other UN agencies to deliver on its priorities, in the spirit of delivering as one and UN coherence. These include working with UN Women on gender equality and women’s empowerment and with DPA on elections. We encourage UNDP to continue to look for these opportunities in all areas of its work.

We welcome the results and resource framework and its clear articulation of how the Global Program will contribute to achieving strategic plan results, through linking Global Plan indicators to strategic plan outputs. We also note with gratitude efforts to integrate QCPR indicators into the results framework. We appreciate that UNDP has factored flexibility into its monitoring of results and that there are provisions for program priorities to change and adapt over life of the program to meet new or changing global priorities. This will be particularly important for the work on the post 2015 agenda.

The result plan indicators are appropriate for the objectives of the program. They will measure improvements to development results and effectiveness by focusing on policy development. However, it is difficult to assess their suitability without baseline and target figures to give meaning to each indicator. We look forward to UNDP providing these figures to member states as soon as possible so we might provide further feedback.

On the resources planned to support the implementation of the Global Program, we would like to request UNDP to be more specific about the inclusion and cost of each component of the Program, consistent with the annualised programming financial framework of UNDP’s Integrated Budget.

UNDP has set itself an ambitious results agenda; we question whether it might benefit from consolidating its focus to a few key indicators under each priority area with policies tested at the regional level. In saying this, the diversity of indicators under each priority does ensure that each priority area is being addressed comprehensively.

We note that the document addresses the monitoring and evaluation of the Global Program. However, we would like to suggest that UNDP develops a more detailed, comprehensive, and strategic evaluation plan as part of its organisational responsibility as foreseen in UNDP’s Evaluation Policy.

I will finish by again thanking UNDP for their work to develop this Global Program. We look forward to sharing in the innovation and lessons learned and watching the Program progress over 2014 to 2017.