Statement by

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On behalf of Ireland, US, UK, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Italy and Israel

At the

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Agenda Item 5: Evaluation in UNDP

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Mr President,

I am pleased to make this statement on behalf of the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Israel, Italy and my own country, Ireland.

The outgoing Board President remarked as he left office that the independent Evaluation Office is one of the “pacesetters” of UNDP and recognised worldwide for its excellence and thought leadership. We agree with that assessment.

It is useful to remember how essential evaluation is as a management tool for better results, accountability, and learning. In this regard we would like to acknowledge the leadership of Indran Naidoo, Evaluation Director and the entire evaluation staff for their excellent work in supporting Member States to assess the development and institutional results and impact of UNDP’s work and the organisation itself to understand what works, what doesn’t work and how to improve performance.

The medium term evaluation Plan before us today is a useful framework for Board members to help ensure that the Office
continues to make an important contribution to the delivery of results by UNDP, especially as its new Strategic Plan comes into operation with a considerably enhanced results and resources framework. We encourage the Office to continue to search and adopt new ways to improve the evaluation of UNDP’s performance. In this regard, we welcome the Office’s thinking on several fronts:

1) a new format to present and discuss salient evaluation findings and recommendations in the annual report to the Board;

2) joint reporting with audit and investigation office on relevant topics; and

3) using the Evaluation Advisory Panel as a way to strengthen the independence, credibility and quality of the evaluations and to promoting learning through the use of evaluations in the organization. The timing of these proposals, at the outset of the Strategic Plan and during considerable corporate restructuring, is very welcome. We look forward to discussing some of these elements with the Office in the coming months.

We look forward to considering later this year the results of the independent review of the UNDP Evaluation policy and the implications of any changes to the Plan.
This review and the recent peer review, and other efforts to provide external advice and quality assurance to the Office, are very welcome opportunities to strengthen the processes and overall credibility and utility of the evaluation work undertaken.

We also encourage refinement of applied methodologies to improve analysis capacity, especially in the areas of efficiency and value for money. In short, we support the initiatives taken by Mr. Naidoo and his office to ensure the Office continuously strives for excellence.

We would like to draw attention to six issues:

1. Supporting UNDP’s efforts to look more closely and assess the impact of its work, how it is directly contributing to effecting changes in people’s lives, especially in the areas of crisis prevention and governance. We would urge a staged and incremental approach to this very welcome change in focus and, where necessary, assisting in building capacity throughout the organisation especially for decentralised evaluations.

2. Continuing to prioritise joint evaluations, not just for the sake of doing so, but where the advantages and synergies are clear, for example some of the work currently being done with UNEP.

3. One lesson learned from the development of the recent Strategic Plan was that the Office, in preparing its work, needs
to look more closely at the absorptive capacity of the organisation, for example whether a slightly reduced number of thematic evaluations could be envisaged and whether their timing is useful for the revision of the next Strategic Plan especially taking into account of the elaboration of a new post-2015 development agenda.

4. At the grassroots level, evaluation is rightly and increasingly promoted and used for enhanced decision-making. We would strongly encourage the Office to play its role fully on the global evaluation stage, especially in supporting capacity development, especially for decentralized evaluations, together with international development networks and evaluation capacity development organisations.

5. Last but not least, we welcome the Office’s plans to continue with the Assessment of Development Results (ADR) evaluations, to make the necessary methodological adjustments and to align the ADRs with the new strategic plan 2014-17. We would like to see the Office incorporate the Strategic Plan’s indicators and targets into the new ADRs to make them a robust instrument to evaluate individual country program’s performance. We also strongly encourage the Evaluation Office to work closely with management to establish
a robust results-chain to ensure programme managers at all levels learn from evaluations and are held accountable for improving their programs' performance.

We look forward to receiving the Annual Report on evaluation at the annual session and encourage the Office to include in the Report a detailed budgetary break-down on its proposed programme of work.

Mr. President, the Evaluation Office has established its credibility and its leadership for partnership and knowledge generation.

The Board, when reviewing the Evaluation Policy last year, expressed its satisfaction with the high degree of independence the Office had established, as did the recent external peer review.

We fully support the decision being proposed at this session to recognise this by adding the word “Independent” to the name of the Office.

We consider that this is fully in keeping with best international practise and will add to accountability and transparency.

We welcome the Plan presented to us today and encourage UNDP management to work closely with the Office to ensure its full implementation and adequate funding throughout the period of the Strategic Plan.

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