UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board
First Regular Session, 27 January 2014

Item 5: UNDP Evaluation
Medium-term programme of work of the Evaluation Office

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

(Check against delivery)

Thank you Mr President.

Australia thanks the Evaluation Office for its medium-term evaluation plan for 2014-17 and commends the Office for the work that has been undertaken to develop this comprehensive work plan.

Australia welcomes UNDP’s commitment to evaluation and its efforts to improve results-based management. Independent evaluations are imperative to strengthening UNDP’s performance and accountability and to demonstrate effectiveness and value for money. Since its election in September last year, our Government has conveyed the importance it attaches to improved performance and accountability for aid activities to ensure value for money and build confidence in development partners. Australia acknowledges the significant work that has gone into improving performance and results reporting and encourages UNDP to continue to focus on ensuring results are underpinned by a strong evidence base. Strengthened evidence-based decision making will be crucial in ensuring the key outcomes of the new Strategic Plan—helping countries achieve the simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequality and exclusion—are achieved.
Australia supports the proposed country-level and thematic evaluations outlined in the Evaluation Plan and is pleased the thematic evaluations closely align with the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.

We welcome the inclusion of an evaluation of the overall contribution of UNDP to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment, in line with the Executive Board’s request in 2013. We endorse UNDP’s continued prioritisation of mainstreaming gender equality across its programs and are pleased this remains a central theme in the 2014-17 period.

Australia is very pleased that an evaluation of UNDP’s contribution to disability-inclusive development has been included in the work plan for 2014-17. Collectively, people with disability around the world have poorer health outcomes, lower educational achievements, less economic participation and higher rates of poverty than people without disability. In addition to specific programs, such as for landmine victims, it is important that UNDP looks to focus on mainstreaming disability-inclusive development across all its programs. As disability-inclusive development relates to all of UNDP’s work, we see great value in the Evaluation Office’s plan to undertake an agency-specific evaluation that addresses the issue on two levels: as a cross-cutting issue and results from direct support programming.

We note the Evaluation Office plans to undertake additional thematic evaluations later in the strategic plan cycle covering governance and crisis prevention issues. Governance and crisis prevention are core issues for both UNDP and the Australian aid program, particularly in the Asia Pacific region. Australia looks forward to receiving further details on these proposals in due course.

We commend UNDP on its central role in supporting the United Nations Evaluation Group and encourage it to continue to show leadership in promoting UN reform.

Australia thanks the Evaluation Office for the work undertaken to prepare this medium-term evaluation plan. Robust and timely evaluation provides a strong foundation for UNDP to be a more strategic, results-focused organisation. Australia is committed to supporting UNDP to further strengthen results-based management and looks forward to working with Executive Board members in these efforts.

Thank you.