Mr. President, Members of the Executive Board,

I am pleased to introduce this session on country programmes and related matters.

Country programmes articulate the strategy for high level results to which UNDP will contribute in each country, responding to their specific demands. A quality Country Programme Document (CPD), therefore, is an important first enabler of development effectiveness and of UNDP’s work in pursuit of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Tabled for your approval today are three new CPDs: Angola, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

In addition to these new programmes, I would also like to draw your attention to two expiring country programmes which will be seeking an extension through 2020. These are the country programmes for Madagascar and Yemen.

In this regard, allow me to recall that requests for first one-year extensions of country programmes are approved by the UNDP Administrator and presented to the Executive Board for information.

Thus, the Executive Board may wish to take note of the first one-year extension, through to 2019, of the country programme for Madagascar.

Requests for further extensions are submitted to the Board for approval. This is the case of the country programme for Yemen, for which the Executive Board may wish to approve this fourth one-year extension through 31 December 2020.
As for all new programmes, the three new country programme documents before you today have all undergone a thorough quality assurance process by UNDP's headquarters-based programme appraisal committee to ensure they meet quality, effectiveness and efficiency standards.

Since the commencement of UNDP's Strategic Plan for 2018-2021, almost all (over 90%) of the CPDs scored a 'satisfactory or higher' quality assurance rating at first review, cementing the significant increase in our CPD quality from previous years.

In order to sustain this positive trajectory, and following the approval of the new UN Cooperation Framework last June, UNDP is undertaking two initiatives to further strengthen our quality programming in a reform environment:

First, we are revising the CPD template to better emphasize how UNDP's programmes contribute to the Cooperation Framework. I note in this regard that UNDP's CPD outcomes have been derived verbatim from UNDAF/Cooperation Framework outcomes since 2014. The new CPD template will be shared with the Board for approval at the 2020 First Regular Session;

Second, we are rolling out a customized global best practice training and certification - "Managing Successful Programmes" – to strengthen staff capacities for effective programme management.

Building on the successful efforts of the past five years, these initiatives will further improve our programming agility, while promoting coherence with the UN Cooperation Framework.

As always, we look forward to your deliberations.

Thank you.