Mr. President,

Armenia and the UNDP are long standing partners with over 20 years of a record of co-operation. The content, depth and focus of our partnership have been evolving together and in line with the ever-emerging new priorities and objectives of the Government and the public of Armenia. The present new cycle of UNDP Country Programme Document for Armenia 2016-2020 reflects the rational of our established co-operation. I therefore thank the UNDP Armenia Country Office and the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS for their commendable efforts in drafting this document.

The New Country Programme Document has been a product of extensive consultations with the Government and other partners. Most importantly, this document, which represents the property of the UNDP, is viewed in the broader context of the development strategy papers of Armenia, most significantly, the Prospective Development Strategy 2014-2025, as much as other sectoral development papers. Viewed from such an angle, the present Document appears to capture well enough the priorities of the partner country. Indeed, it is through such careful synchronisation and complementarity that we should aim at achieving focused and result oriented implementation of co-operation projects. The success of the projects, of course, is best measured against the tangible results visible and experienced by the end users, that is to say, the public. The Document, in our view, reflects also the philosophy of co-operation between the primary responsibility bearer, the Government, on the one hand, multiple national partners amongst the broad civil society, and international co-operation partners, on the other. It is most commendable that the UNDP has been an important actor in the broad and extensive national consultative process in identifying and debating development priorities. Together with the careful analyses of the state of play regarding the present challenges, problems, opportunities and prospective solutions before Armenia, the Document sustains compatibility with the soon to be adopted Armenia-UN Development Assistance Framework 2016-2020. The latter, of course, being a broader
framework of co-operation between Armenia and the UN system at large and a joint property of the two partners, represents the baseline for partnership principles, programme strategies, project implementation, resource mobilisation, reporting and monitoring. In this context, consideration is given to the fact that in Armenia the UNDP has a particular role as head of the UN Resident Coordinator System and the United Nations Development Group.

Apart from an extensive multi-stakeholder national consultative process, both the UNDAF and the present Document are further reinforced by the recommendations of the Assessment of Development Results, carried by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office. This was the first ever Assessment for Armenia to measure independently the developments outcomes between 2005 and 2013. Armenia welcomed the assessment process, which in itself was transparent, inclusive and open to all stakeholders. It is a positive experience, which deserves continued application. Most importantly, the Assessment of Development Results contains recommendations for the UNDP future strategic positioning in Armenia, worthy of continued careful and in-depth consideration. Amongst the particular recommendations we carefully note those, which concern a focus on fewer, more strategically targeted outcomes, as well as leveraging synergies among thematic areas and strategic initiatives.

This last observation is considered, in particular, against the mutually recognised reality of decreasing external resources for development co-operation in middle-income countries, including Armenia. In this context, the UNDP, as an international partner, project operator and service provider to the Government, has already been refocusing its services to an upstream scale of policy advice and efforts to support national and local activities to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of existing national strategies, policies and plans. Both the UNDP and other UN system partners, utilising their core budget, and the Government of Armenia are sources of funding. However, without broader engagement of the international donor community we might not expect a full and comprehensive implementation of the objectives we set forth in our partnership documents. Fundraising is, therefore, a core element in our partnership, a shared objective to be pursued jointly. Without sufficient funds we risk failure of delivery of tangible results. The philosophy of better less, but realistic and tangible projects, might be fully justified in this respect. The success of fund-raising in light of decreasing resources would rely considerably on the attractiveness of specific projects, which manifest compliance with national objectives and international obligations of Armenia, and are persuasive in their capacity to deliver solid, substantial and concrete results to end users. We should be cognizant, that the success of this Document, as much as our other co-operation framework documents, would be measured by 2020 against such results. This is a call for joint and continued action by the
Government and its UN partners, as much as an appeal to our international donor partners. This is also an opportunity to thank the existing donors for their contributions, as well as for their support and comments on this new CPD. Their views concerning strengthened development partner coordination are well noted.

Furthermore, such an approach should be at the core of the monitoring, reporting and the evaluation of the implementation of our co-operation projects. We should have good reasons to be confident in our capacity to attract funds, as the UNDP led Country Office in Armenia has a commendable record of delivering good results in co-operation with the Government. We should, obviously, build on the present record.

Finally, the present Country Programme Document is considered at a critical time of finalisation of the new generation of development goals in the context of post-2015 agenda. It is evident that after adopting the SDGs, there will be a need to revisit and update and synchronise policies and programmes at national and international levels. Exploring mechanisms such as through adapting government relevant strategies and using strategic plan midterm reviews of the UN programmes, funds and agencies is one such method of due reflection of the post-2015 goals at the national level. Having said that, we are driven by the consideration of the ultimate priority of strategies, implementation and ownership of the development agenda primarily at the national level, as it is first of all at the national level that record and accountability of development are delivered. Careful adaptability of international development goals to a national context would, therefore, be a primary area of focus in our co-operation with the UN partners.

In conclusion, reiterating Armenia’s strong commitment to strengthening the effectiveness of our positive co-operation with the UNDP led UN Country Office and the direct link with the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, we look forward to a successful implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the new CPD in line with the national and international priorities, as well as the national execution modality as defined in the UNDAF 2016-2020. I am confident, that by 2020 we will be sharing good news.

Thank you.