

Extempore Remarks by Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, Deputy
Permanent Representative at the UNDP Executive Board Second Regular
Session, September 6, 2011

Madam President,

Let me begin, at the outset, by thanking Administrator Helen Clark for her statement which highlights the priorities and challenges that animate the UNDP agenda.

She very rightly drew attention to the famine and starvation situation in the Horn of Africa. The international community needs to act quickly with the UN in the lead. In this day and age, none of us should see something like this in any part of the world.

India has a large UN programme and a large UN country office. We have enjoyed good cooperation with the UN. It has stood us well for years and decades. As the largest contributor to the UNDP's regular budget among developing countries, India is unwaveringly committed to supporting and working with UNDP to bring about genuine change and enduring development in programme countries.

I welcome the presentation of the UNDP institutional budget estimates for the biennium 2012-2013, and note the significant volume reduction of US\$ 120.1 million. We hope that this reduction will in no way put at risk the efficacy of programme activities in developing countries or dilute the focus of the strategic plan.

Madam President,

The development landscape today is in a difficult and challenging phase buffeted by the vagaries of global economic and financial developments. Food and fuel prices are at a peak and we are faced with looming challenges from environmental issues especially climate change. This is also the time that requires UNDP to be most responsive and receptive to the needs of vulnerable populations across the globe. As our delegation has often underscored, the only successful and sustainable interventions UNDP can make in programme countries are those that are aligned firmly with the priorities of national governments and on the principles of national ownership and leadership.

We support the intensification of focus on countries going through significant and fragile transitions, particularly in South Sudan and the Arab region. We are also in support of sustained attention on the special needs of LDCs in recognition of their unique challenges.

It is universally acknowledged that an adequate and predictable base of regular resources is a pre-requisite for UNDP to fulfill its mandate and face up to the core challenges in developing countries. We therefore view with concern the continual drop in the proportion of core resources as part of total contributions, as reaffirmed, by you Madam Administrator in your Report on Annual Review of the Financial Situation in 2010.

Without intending to sound alarmist, our apprehension is that lack of adequate funding could hold back or even reverse the development gains made so far in which UNDP has been playing a significant role. We urge the UNDP to redouble its efforts to gain enhanced access to funds, and in particular, core resources, so as to realize the goals set out in the strategic plan.

On the issue of the integrated budget, we appreciate the regular progress updates we have received. Our expectation is that the quest for harmonization of organization budgetary process among the UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF will ultimately lead to enhanced operational efficiency and reduce transaction costs in programme implementation at the country level. We also look forward to adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in January 2012 by UNDP.

Madam President,

I will now turn to the important question of South-South cooperation that is very close to our hearts. I reiterate what my delegation has said in the past and that is, that UNDP needs to do far more to match its stated commitment with resources and attention at the ground and throughout the organization flowing from the highest levels. We will continue our dialogue with UNDP on ways and means to not only strengthen this mode of cooperation but also improve existing efforts and rectify problems which have been discovered in the process of implementation, including in our case, in the IBSA Trust Fund which involves India, Brazil and South Africa with the UNDP.

Our expectation remains that UNDP will intensify its efforts, and become a partner to programme countries in meeting the most pressing challenges of poverty eradication, food security, and energy access. While realizing that the UNDP has evolved into a large bureaucracy with an extensive agenda of complex interconnected issues, we must ensure that the effort on the ground does not get diffused and the focus remains firmly on these fundamental challenges. Concerted international action, in particular through the MDG agenda, has enabled major gains on poverty eradication. But millions even

now continue to remain mired in poverty. It is therefore imperative that poverty eradication remains the overarching priority of the UNDP.

I thank you, Madam President.

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