



**Statement by Mr. Pradeep K. Deb, Joint Secretary
Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi,
on Agenda Item 4: Gender in UNDP in the First Regular Session 2005 of the
Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA (New York - January 20-28, 2005)
on 26 January 2005**

Madam President,

We thank the Administrator for his report on UNDP gender strategy and action plan. We appreciate the simple format of the document.

Madam President,

We notice from the document that it sets out specific elements of the corporate gender action plan. The report does not give any indication, however, about the manner in which each specific element is proposed to be implemented. This leads to some confusion regarding how UNDP would plan to make its interventions, for example, in the areas of 'engendering macro-economic policies and trade negotiations' and 'promoting women's empowerment in democratic governance, decentralization and civil society participation'. The relevance of the former in the specific context of a gender strategy is unclear and would seem to overlap with UNCTAD's mandate.

Similarly, the section under democratic governance indicates that emphasis will be placed on efforts to invest in women's full participation in democratic governance through support to woman candidates in Parliaments and local elections. We are not clear about the kind of support that UNDP proposes to extend to woman candidates in Parliamentary and local elections, or the manner in which UNDP proposes to do so. We would request the Administrator to expand on this, especially as elections are clearly domestic political issues and it is not clear whether this fall within the purview of UNDP's mandate. We would like the Administrator to reassure the Board that these activities would not constitute in any way, interference in the internal affairs of States, as in most democratic societies, such measures are bound to be perceived as unwarranted external interference in legitimate, democratic political process and could often be seen as violative of electoral laws and regulations. Similarly, clarification on UNDP's proposal to promote legislative, electoral and judicial reform to ensure that women's rights are protected in law and in practice should also pass the test of national ownership.

The document speaks of gender theme groups and strengthening of inter-agency thematic groups on gender. We request UNDP to take guidance from the recently adopted resolution on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

We note that UNDP RCA includes the need to promote the advancement of women to increasingly high positions. We hope that, while doing so, UNDP will bear in mind the need for extending such fairness to women from diverse geographical regions, especially women from developing countries. We also note that UNDP has a gender balance score card. We would request the Administrator to include an indicator on proportion of women from developing countries into the gender balance score card.

We would have liked the document to provide an assessment on UNDP's performance in the area of gender. Instead we only have the corporate gender strategy. While the gender strategy is reasonably clear, the action plan is not evident. Any action plan, in our understanding, must provide a timeline within which the action is proposed to be accomplished. The lack of a specific timeline in the document would make it difficult to assess UNDP's performance on the various segments outlined in the document in the future.

Thank you, Madam President.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)