



**STATEMENT BY MRS. RUCHI GHANASHYAM, MINISTER, ON AGENDA  
ITEM 4: GENDER IN UNDP, UNDP CORPORATE GENDER STRATEGY AND  
ACTION PLAN IN THE ANNUAL SESSION 2005 OF THE EXECUTIVE  
BOARD OF UNDP/UNFPA 13-24 JUNE 2005 ON JUNE 15, 2005**

Madam President,

We thank the Administrator for the report presented for this item and Mr. Nishimoto and Mr. Gleeson for their presentations.

Just two days ago the Executive Board heard a detailed presentation from Dr. Nafis Sadik, the team Leader of an evaluation team that studied gender mainstreaming in UNDP. The presentation provided some important preliminary lessons. The team would also come up with recommendations in the next few months. It should be logical to expect that any corporate gender strategy that UNDP comes up with at this juncture should benefit from the lessons learnt by the evaluation team and incorporate its recommendations into the strategy. It would not, therefore, seem to be the appropriate time now for considering the gender corporate strategy and action plan. In other words, it is not clear to us how UNDP will incorporate or act upon the recommendations made or the lessons learnt by the Evaluation Team if the Executive Board were to take a decision in this Session on the corporate strategy and action plan. We would request Mr. Nishimoto to elaborate on how this would be done.

There are also some basic issues that need greater clarity. Firstly, the UNDP corporate gender strategy and action plan is about UNDP's own programmes and projects. UNDP's strategy and action plan can only measure the degree to which it has been successful in mainstreaming gender in its own activities. The programme is not meant to measure or comment upon either the gender situation in the country as a whole or the programmes undertaken by the Governments of the programme countries.

There are some elements in the document which was discussed in the First Session of the Executive Board in January 2005, which seem to have overlooked this aspect. For example, supporting women candidates in parliaments and local elections is clearly outside UNDP's mandate and in most countries such activity by an outside agency would be unconstitutional and against the law and would be seen as unwarranted interference. We had expressed similar views at the meeting of the Executive Board in January 2005 and these remain valid.

Secondly, like other programmes, UNDP activities in this area must be in keeping with national plans and priorities and must be carried out with the support of national governments. The importance of national ownership to the success of UNDP gender programmes was clearly brought out by Dr. Sadik, who clearly stated that success of gender programmes depended to a great extent on the support that these policies and programmes receive from the government.

Thirdly, in many societies gender issues are extremely sensitive and delicate. UNDP must recognize this in its approaches at the field level. Programmes should be undertaken at the request of programme countries. There may be room for advocacy, but advocacy measures need to be situated in the context of the situation in the country concerned.

Fourthly, the process of developing gender-sensitive MDG monitoring system or indicators for the work at the field level must be done in close coordination with the governments concerned. Here again we emphasize that measurements are for UNDP's own programmes and we have noted that Mr. Nishimoto's statement clarifies this.

We welcome the commitment that UNDP is displaying to the important issue of gender mainstreaming. We would stress that UNDP should act to empower women from developing countries. UNDP's commitment to gender should not be restricted only to paying lip service to the cause of women from the developing countries. Rather, there is need for UNDP to recognize and support the needs of women from the South. We are not looking only for equitable geographic representation - where the needs of women from the South are concerned, we are looking for an unlevel playing field which favours and supports the South. In other words, it is not enough that a number of women have been recently recruited by UNDP – we want to hear that more than 50% of these came from the developing countries.

Thank you, Madam President.

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