



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY JANIL GREENAWAY, MINISTER COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TO THE UN, AT THE UNDP EXECUTIVE BOARD INFORMAL INFORMATION SESSION: "WORK OF UNDP IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE REQUEST OF PROGRAMME COUNTRIES" (New York, 29 April 2008)**

1. The Group of 77 and China thanks the presenter(s) for the information shared with us today regarding the work that the UNDP is doing in the field of human rights at the request of programme countries. We thank the bureau of the Executive Board for their efforts in organizing this informational session.
2. The Group also takes this opportunity to express our gratitude to the co-facilitators, Ms. Melanie Santizo-Sandoval and Mr. Francois Arsenault, who were appointed by the bureau to conduct consultations on its behalf in an attempt to reach agreement on outstanding elements of the strategic plan.
3. The Group is aware that this informational session comes against the backdrop of on-going discussions on the UNDP strategic plan 2008-2011 and so we recognize it as an effort to advance the ongoing discussions on the plan, and the current process of revision and updating.
4. The Group has always been and continues to be in full support of human rights and fundamental freedoms of all peoples, including, in particular, the right to development. We recognize that human rights are essential and important to all countries, rich and poor, developed and developing, and that the need to continue to ensure progress in the area of human rights is not an issue only for the countries in which the UNDP undertakes operational activities - it is an issue for both donor countries and programme countries.
5. Having said this, Mr. Chairman, the position of the Group of 77 and China on the issue of the human rights based approach to development in the Strategic Plan of the UNDP remains the same. That is, the Group of 77 and China remains fundamentally opposed to the inclusion of the human rights based approach to development in the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011.
6. Further, the position of the Group remains that programme countries, the clients of UNDP's operational activities, and developing countries in general, are equal stakeholders in the decision-making processes of the Executive Board, as well as in terms of giving guidance to the UNDP on their activities at the country level.
7. Some of the fundamental questions that continue to inform our position on this issue include the questions of: "Whose development objectives should underpin the strategic direction of the UNDP's activities at the country level?" "Should the strategic plan be based on responding to the development ideology of donors or to the development needs and priorities of programme countries?"
8. Numerous intergovernmental agreements have highlighted and emphasized the importance of national ownership and leadership in the success of development assistance, including previous MYFFs, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and in particular the 2007 TCPR. The G77 and China believes that for national ownership and leadership to be realised the development needs

and priorities of programme countries should drive the strategic plan - it is the principle upon which the Strategic Plan is based.

9. Further, we recognize that it is necessary for UNDP to continue to meet its resource needs, but this should not be done at the expense of the principle of national ownership. If this becomes the case, then it would beg the question of how serious we are about aid effectiveness in achieving development objectives.

10. In this regard, also, the G77 and China is extremely concerned at certain nuanced indications of linking UNDP funding to the inclusion of a human-rights based approach to development in the strategic plan. During our discussions on the Strategic Plan and other matters, we have again and again raised the issue of conditionality. We have said that developing countries should not have conditionalities imposed on them. Conditionalities contravene the principles of national ownership and leadership.

11. The G77 considers any linking of the provision of funding to the inclusion of the rights based approach to development in the plan, whether real or perceived, a form of conditionality, and it is of grave concern and consternation to the group. Indeed it does not speak well for the manner in which UNDP will continue to carry out its activities, nor for the environment within which the on-going discussions will continue and for the work of the Board in general.

12. We hope that this is indeed not that case, and that the consultative and decision-making processes of the Executive Board will not be hampered or complicated by such conditions.

13. In conclusion: It is clear that the UNDP currently undertakes, within its mandate, and at the request of programme countries, activities at the country level in the field of human rights. That is not at issue here. What is at issue is the inclusion of a human-rights based approach to development in the Strategic Plan. It is clear that this issue does not enjoy consensus support within the Executive Board for inclusion into the strategic plan, it would therefore not be possible to reach a final consensus agreement on the plan itself. We need to move on beyond this element if we are to have a successful annual session when the Board meets in June, and indeed successful future sessions in general.

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77

G-77