



## ***New UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark, Addresses the Annual Session of UNDP's Executive Board***

***"We Need a New Deal for Development," She Says***

*Helen Clark's excerpted statement follows.*

Mr. President, Members of the Executive Board, Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It is a great privilege and honor for me to have joined UNDP as the new Administrator.

...Over the past few weeks I have been at our New York headquarters, meeting with many staff of the organization. I have also had the pleasure of meeting with many of you here today in other settings, as well as with a wide range of other partners and stakeholders in the UN system and beyond.

In June I will depart on my first trip as Administrator, to Africa where many of our development challenges loom largest. I will visit governments, UNDP and UN country teams at large, other development partners, and some of those supported by our work in Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ethiopia.

I come from a background of working on economic and social justice in my own country, New Zealand. I know what a huge difference strong and accountable institutions, a resilient economy, good health and education systems, better social safety nets, and economic and social inclusion and participation make to the prospects of our peoples. These issues are very important to me, and have been throughout my time in public life.

Globally, the resources, the technology, and the knowledge exist now to improve the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable. Our challenge is to muster up the political will and the resources, and to support the strategies and actions required, to make the much needed improvements a reality.

### Where we are today; where we should go

This is a difficult time to be pursuing our development mission, as our world experiences the deepest global economic recession it has faced in decades. Alas, those least responsible for the crisis stand to bear the brunt of its impact over the longer term.

The recession is adding to the stress which very high food and energy prices had already imposed on many countries, pushing as many as 200 million people into extreme poverty between 2005 and 2008. At the same time, we face the huge climate change challenge, related to the world's current unsustainable use of natural resources.

These global problems reflect our interdependence, and they require global solutions. That is why we need a multilateral system which reflects the realities of the 21st century. That system should not only help deliver improved living standards for the poorest and most vulnerable, but also should ensure that their voices are heard at decision-making tables.

The United Nations family should be the vehicle which drives that action and provides that voice. UNDP can be a leading contributor to making that happen. How we collectively handle the global recession is a case in point.

Developed countries have been impacted, some severely, but for the most part they have had tools at their disposal to address the crisis. The longer term effect of the recession on developing countries is potentially much more devastating.

With families facing shrinking livelihoods and job losses, and with governments confronting slumping revenue, and consequently cutting back on spending, many fear that there will be a reversal of gains which had been made towards meeting the MDGs.

UNDP has been responding to requests from program countries for support in analyzing the impact of the crisis; designing policy responses – including on how to protect the most vulnerable; and facilitating resource mobilization. It is critical that we work especially closely with the Bretton Woods Institutions at this time.

At the top of my overall priorities is sharpening UNDP's focus on poverty reduction and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. In today's circumstances, this is challenging, but it is also critical that we keep this focus on the near medium term. The MDGs are at the very heart of UNDP's mission, and are clearly central to the strategic plan approved by the Executive Board...I came to New York in 2000 as New Zealand Prime Minister to sign the Millennium Declaration, along with the leaders of most other Member States. 2015 seemed a long way away then – but now there are only six years left to the date set for achieving the MDGs. So, we need concerted action. When our global community sets goals and targets, we have a duty to work together to meet them...

I also believe it is critical to draw the work being done on addressing the climate change challenge into the center of the way in which we think about development. The truth is that the brunt of the negative impacts of climate change will be borne by some of the poorest countries and people in the world.

We need a new deal for development which is sustainable in every sense and tackles both energy poverty and poverty overall. To this end, UNDP must step up its work this year to support developing countries achieving an outcome at Copenhagen in December which is consistent with designing a sustainable path out of poverty and for achieving the MDGs. The deal to be sealed at Copenhagen must be a development deal too.

What could be achieved at Copenhagen, including through finance mechanisms being worked on, has significant implications for development. These mechanisms could become a major new and additional source of development financing, complementing, and at some point possibly even surpassing the significance of ODA. A new development paradigm could be in the making.

### The Annual Report

UNDP's core strengths lie in its strong presence around the globe; the leading edge it brings to development thinking; the capacity building, capacity development, and upstream policy advice it can provide in support of national development strategies; the resource mobilization it can support around those strategies; and the coordinating role it plays on behalf of the UN's development family.

The spirit and substance of our work is captured in the document before you: the first Annual Report on the new Strategic Plan. It is a reflection of the work of UNDP together with that of our associated funds and programs, the UN Capital Development Fund, UNIFEM, and UN Volunteers, which all provide valuable complementary expertise...

The Board last year requested UNDP to include in its reports analytical information about strategic results, including program and project results. Inevitably at this early stage what you have before you are largely reports on process and on inputs into development.

In terms of accountability, I believe we should be able to be very clear to the Board in the future about what we do, how much of it we do, what actions we have taken, and what those activities

cost.

Because the core of our contribution to development lies in capacity building and capacity development, however, reporting on its actual outcomes is a much more complex matter, and in many areas may well take a decade or generation to assess more fully. UNDP is not a super-NGO, and our Strategic Plan specifically directs us away from small scale projects without country wide impact and also away from infrastructure projects which do not support capacity building.

Over time, however, with well designed interventions in support of program countries' national development plans, there will be measurable indicators of achievement in country. But of course the progress that is made depends on many actors working together – the program countries and the wide range of other organizations contributing to development...

This annual report shows what our levels of activity were with program countries in each area of the four key goals established in the Strategic Plan. It reveals that two-thirds of UNDP expenditure occurred in the areas of poverty reduction and the MDGs, and democratic governance...

#### UN Reform and why it matters

The global recession makes this a difficult time for development. But out of crisis also comes opportunity to look at fresh ways of doing things and to innovate. That is what we at UNDP must do as we pursue the goals set down in our Strategic Plan and as we support the ongoing process of UN reform so that we truly can deliver as one.

Since our ability to support governments may be impacted by the international recession and constrained resources, there is an even greater imperative for the UN family to work together. UNDP has heard the calls of Executive Board members and Member States for a more coherent, effective, and efficient UN development system. Such a system can better support national partners to address the many challenges they face. We cannot be effective working as a disparate set of agencies, without a coherent programmatic and operational approach.

So we must keep our eye on the end game – better delivery and better results – not co-ordination and reform for their own sake.

As Chair of the UN Development Group, I pledge UNDP's full commitment to working constructively with all our partners in the UN family, and also to building the very best relationships we can with the widest possible range of stakeholders in development – civil society, donors, the IFIs, and all other contributors. And, of course, our most important partnerships must be with the governments and peoples of the countries in which we work.

The UNDP Strategic Plan reflects our dual role. We are a programmatic and operational development agency. We also manage the Resident Coordinator system on behalf of the UN system as a whole... Within UNDP we are now working to ensure that all agencies implement their commitments under the agreements. We need your continued support to ensure progress....

#### Conclusion

I thank all Members of the Board for their support in helping to sustain and guide UNDP.

Much hard work and many challenges lie ahead. But I am confident that working together, and alongside others in the UN family and other stakeholders, we can make a difference for the better and meet our common development goals. The poorest and most vulnerable people in our world deserve nothing less.

**To read the full statement, please visit [www.undp.org/newsroom](http://www.undp.org/newsroom).**