





28 July 2000

## UNDAF Statement

*"The United Nations exists for, and must serve, the needs and hopes of people everywhere."<sup>1</sup>*

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was developed as part of the UN Secretary General's programme of reform which aims to prepare the UN for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We believe that the UN System must be alive to current realities and work to improve the coordination of development activities. The UNDAF, is therefore, intended as a framework for the UN System to act with common objectives, vision and strategies for collaboration, based on Government priorities.

India was among the first countries to embark upon the UNDAF in 1997. Co-ordination and collaboration between the over 18 organisations here constituted a particularly daunting task. We realise that by focusing on common goals, the UN System could have potentially far-reaching impact on human development.

The themes for the UNDAF – **promoting gender equality and strengthening decentralisation** – emerged from a process of intensive consultation with the Government. Other development partners including multilateral and bilateral organisations and civil society were actively involved. In keeping with the spirit of reforms, the process was marked by transparency and participation.

Promoting gender equality addresses a range of issues – social, economic, and cultural. As the UNDAF document indicates, this would require action with partners on several fronts from enhancing decision-making capabilities, promotion of equal opportunities to changes in the mind-sets of people.

Similarly, greater decentralisation presents several challenges to be addressed – support to capacity building, promoting effective community management and enhancing participation by all groups.

Our task will be to translate these plans into action to make a visible difference. We, the UN family are committed to working together in close collaboration with the Government of India to achieve the objectives of UNDAF. We are confident that UNDAF will make a significant contribution to the dialogue and progress on gender equality and decentralisation.

<sup>1</sup> From the Report of the Secretary-General for the Millenium Assembly of the United Nations



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