Mr. President, let me start by complementing you for your committed leadership in steering the discussions on the programming arrangements in a most purposeful and constructive manner.

I would also like to thank Administrator Ms Helen Clark for her informative statement and providing perspectives on UNDP’s development agenda, and the upcoming QCPR process.

As a country that has one of the longest relationships with UNDP and is the biggest contributor to its core budget among developing countries, we have an abiding interest in UNDP’s contribution and efforts on the global development agenda. I am also happy that just some weeks back, thanks to the active interest of the Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau, the Government of India and UNDP announced a new partnership to establish an International Centre for Human Development in India.

In so far as the current session of the Board is concerned, please allow me to flag three key issues of interest to us as regards programming arrangements for the period 2014-17.

The first is to ensure that the outcome of the current discussions remains guided by the objective of poverty eradication, which is the overriding priority of developing countries. In order to give meaningful direction to the programming arrangements for the period 2014-2017, it is imperative that UNDP resources are directed to where the need for poverty eradication is greatest, and brings benefit to the largest number of those stuck in poverty.

Second, the proposal for using ‘averaging in conjunction with mid term review’ should use the four year averaging concept given that we are covering a four year programming period. We are glad that this view, which is shared by all of us in the Asia-Pacific group, has now also been recommended by the Secretariat to the Board.

Third, per-capita GNI along with size of populations in each country, should have its foremost salience in determining country specific allocations, i.e. the lower the level of GNI per capita and the higher a country’s population, it should continue to get a higher allocation, which must remain focused on poverty eradication and core development imperatives in the area of nutrition, health and education, which incidentally, is also one of the nine established focussed outcomes for UNDP. Our delegation would also like to know in this regard the respective weightage given to the four concepts that are factored in while making country specific allocations.
Mr. President, we must also acknowledge that we are still in a time of an unresolved global economic crisis and political uncertainty in the world. At the recent Rio+20 Summit on Sustainable Development we agreed on “the future we want” and a roadmap, but nothing, by way of means for developing countries to realize the future that they want. As we discuss the roadmap for the next strategic plan and decide on the direction that the UN development agenda should take for the next four years, as part of the QCPR process, we would urge the following:

One, the DP in UNDP should now really become ‘decimating poverty’.

Two, strengthening institutional capacity building in developing countries be made another core focus area of UNDP. Many countries could do more if additional finance and technology were available. Unfortunately, there is little evidence of support from the industrialised countries in these areas. My delegation believes that by virtue of its unique position as the largest development arm of the UN system, UNDP can become a ‘force multiplier’ by fostering national and local capacities, strengthening networks for sharing of knowledge and best practices, promoting national ownership, and by building institutional capacities in developing countries.

Three, it is also pertinent to frame the discussion in the QCPR process by forging synergies and strengthening partnerships within the overall policy framework of the UN System while recognizing that “no one size fits all”.

Mr. President, South South Cooperation’ is being singled out as a new buzzword in the narrative of the developmental discourse for developing countries, however, much more remains to be done to give it the ‘muscle’ it needs from the UN system. For this, the first thing to do is to let it proceed and grow on the basis of its unique characteristics of national ownership and mutually agreed terms. Looking at South-South cooperation as either permitting a dilution or substituting for North-South aid would only serve to shackle it to the detriment of developing countries.

To conclude, Mr President and Madam Administrator, this Board Session, given its agenda, is an important and timely opportunity not just for stock taking but also to constructively contribute to UN’s development agenda. Our suggestions have been made in this spirit and I hope will find resonance in the UNDP community. As Chair of the IBSA Trust Fund for this year, please allow me also to express our thanks to the UNDP and the South Unit for all the support and assistance extended to our three countries in our endeavors to work with the UN on South-South cooperation projects in developing countries across the globe.

Thank you.