STATEMENT BY MR. AMIT MOHAN PRASAD, JOINT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE, AT THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD ON SEPTEMBER 09, 2009

Mr. President,

At the outset, let me congratulate you and other members of the Bureau for your able guidance to the UNFPA. We look forward to working constructively with you and other members of the Board during the course of this meeting and for rest of the year.

Let me also thank the Executive Director for her introductory remarks and providing estimates for the biennial support budget for 2010-2011.

Mr. President,

We welcome the presentation of the budget proposal for the 2010-2011 biennium in the Results Based Budget format. This would be helpful in ensuring enhanced accountability and contribute to greater efficiency in programme implementation. We would encourage the UNFPA to continue to strengthen the budget’s focus on expected management results and the linkages between inputs and results. As advised by the ACABQ, it would be helpful from the perspective of comparative financial analysis if UNFPA could provide information on management results achieved in the context of previous budget.

The decline in overall ratio of the gross budget to total income from 20.6% in 2008-09 to 19.6% in 2010-2011 is a positive development as a larger proportion of resources would be available for programme implementation. However, amidst the global economic downturn which has in particular adversely impacted the developing countries, the modest increase in total income in 2010-2011 biennium from US $ 1263 million to US $ 1400 million remains a cause of concern. Another worrying aspect is the continuation of trend of decline of regular resources as a percentage of total income, which is not conducive to the UNFPA efforts to aligning itself with the priorities identified in the strategic plan.

We would encourage UNFPA to redouble its efforts to have access to enhanced funding while increasing operational efficiencies.
We hope that through adoption of the International Public Service Accounting Standards (IPSAS), UNFPA would be able to further streamline its accountability framework and this would facilitate greater efficiency and coherence in implementation of the country programmes.

Mr. President,

India appreciates UNFPA’s consistent support to the national programmes, particularly those aimed at realization of the MDGs. We could not agree more with the Executive Director that concerted political will is needed to realize the MDGs including universal access to reproductive health by 2015. In this context, the International Conference on Population and Development @15 provides a unique opportunity to all of us to review the progress made so far and re-affirm our commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action.

India strongly supports the UNFPA’s strategic plan focus on national ownership, national leadership and capacity development, as well as advocacy and multi-sectoral partnership development to promote the centrality of the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development. India welcomes the focus of the strategic plan as well as the biennial support budget on population and development, reproductive health and rights and gender equality.

In India, presently, the UNFPA’s Country Plan–7 is in its second year of implementation. Though in financial terms, the contribution of the country plan is nominal to India’s ambitious Reproductive and Child Health Programme Phase–II, we value UNFPA’s role in terms of partnership, technical support and the access to global best practices that it brings to our national efforts.

The Government of India hopes that effective implementation of the UNFPA’s Strategic Plan, access to enhanced funding and in particular increase in regular resources, would be helpful in realizing the MDG targets.

Thank you Mr. President.