

**Statement by Ms. Valerie Cliff, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative – designate to Kuwait
to the High-Level Meeting of the Coordination Group of Arab Development Institutions and International Development Organizations
at the Arab Fund premises
Kuwait
4 February 2007**

Dr. Al Hamad, Mr. Manning, distinguished representatives of the Coordination Group of Arab Development Institutions, members of the donor and international development community,

It is my honor to be here today, representing the United Nations Development Programme. My name is Valerie Cliff and I am the UN Resident Coordinator – designate for Kuwait. I just arrived to Kuwait four days ago, so I am still very new here, but it is really my pleasure to be here at the Coordination Group Meeting and to have this opportunity to meet with all of you.

First of all, I need to extend the sincerest apologies from Mrs. Amat Al Alim Al Soswa, our Regional Director for the Arab States Bureau, who was very much looking forward to being here herself, but unfortunately had to decline just last week due to an injury. I know many of you were also very much looking forward to seeing Mrs. Al Soswa as well, so it is regretful that she could not be here in person.

On Mrs. Al Soswa's behalf, I'd like to say a few words about UNDP and what we do in the Arab Region and a little bit about our partnership with members of the Coordination Group.

We have 17 resident UNDP Country Offices throughout the Arab Region, represented in each Country by a UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, with CO's ranging from 8 or 9 UNDP staff in Bahrain, up to 120 plus staff in some of our larger offices in the region such as Sudan and Iraq. We

also have a large regional programme where we work with regional institutions on pan-regional initiatives such as governance, HIVAIDS, Higher Education and ICT for Development.

Our regional priorities are threefold:

First of all, working with host Government counterparts to support them in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which many of the speakers have already mentioned of course, focusing on coordination of the MDG development efforts, and planning efforts.

Secondly, providing effective humanitarian and development assistance in crisis and post-crisis situations in the region, particularly in Iraq, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Sudan, Somalia and Lebanon.

Thirdly, building on the successful advocacy work done to date through the series of annual Arab Human Development Reports, which were launched back in 2002 and that identified three critical development deficits in the Arab Region in terms of the freedom deficit, the education or knowledge deficit and the status of women in the Arab world.

To give you an idea of the size of the UNDP Programme in the region, in 2006, UNDP CO's in the Arab States had programme expenditures totaling a combined \$450 million dollars and our Regional Programme had additional programme expenditures of \$11 million dollars.

While UNDP contributes its own core resources to these development programmes throughout the region, the majority of our resources are contributed by host Government and third-party donor institutions and development institutions such as the EU, the World Bank, and other bilateral and multi-lateral donors and institutions, including through UN-managed multi-donor Trust Funds.

That is a very brief description of the scope of resources in UNDP in the Arab Region. Now, I'd like to speak for a few minutes on our partnerships with members of the Coordination Group.

Of course, I should start by mentioning our very grateful partnership with both the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Arab Gulf Programme for UN Development Organizations (AGFUND) for their support and co-sponsorship of the Arab Human Development Report. The most recent edition, focusing on the status of women in the Arab World, was launched recently by Mrs. Al Soswa in Sanaa, Yemen in December 2006. I'd be happy to order copies of the AHDR for anyone who may wish to have their own copies of this report or any of the previous three editions as well.

Both the Arab Fund and AGFUND have been very supportive of the AHDR and its related human development initiatives. We are very grateful to both institutions to have their strong support in highlighting the human side of the development situation with us in the Arab Region.

In addition to these institutions, our UNDP Administrator has also recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Dr. Ali and the Islamic Development Bank in November 2006 that aims to promote economic and social development in post-conflict countries and to alleviate poverty throughout the world. IDB is also a leading donor for our Palestinian Programme for support to educational infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza.

We've partnered with the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development in Sri-Lanka to provide housing units, a school, a health center and a mosque as part of the post-tsunami recovery effort.

Most recently, just a few weeks ago, we received a very generous contribution from the OPEC Fund for International Development which will be contributing \$3.5 million to co-finance our regional initiative on combating HIV and AIDS in the region, in partnership with national responses to the epidemic.

I am very sure we are doing other work with other organizations represented here as well, and the fault for not mentioning those on this occasion is solely mine.

In closing, I'd like to convey our eagerness to continue cooperating with other development institutions throughout the region. I'd encourage all of you to contact me or any of my colleagues, the UN Resident Coordinators throughout the region, if we can be of any support to you in your development efforts and programme throughout the region.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for this opportunity to participate in this important event.