The UN System in Ghana gets New Head

The United Nations system in Ghana has a new Resident Coordinator, Ms. Christine Evans-Klock. She took up her new assignment in January 2015. As the leader of the United Nations Country Team, Ms. Evans-Klock is responsible for coordinating UN support for development and ensuring that UN assistance is aligned with national development priorities, plans and capacity building.

Prior to her appointment, Christine was working with the International Labour Organization based in Geneva, where she was the Director of the Skills and Employability Department, working with Member States to bridge the world of education to the world of work.

In February, Ms. Evans-Klock, who is also the UNDP Resident Representative presented her letter of credentials from the UN Secretary General to H.E. President John Mahama at the Flagstaff House in Accra. Among other things, they discussed Ghana’s aspiration to improve skills development for employment and adapt good practices from across the world to move young people into productive employment.

Christine has also paid courtesy calls on the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration; Finance; Gender, Children and Social Protection; Justice and Attorney General as well as Employment and Labor Relations, with more working visits planned to take place.

Ms. Evans-Klock is from the United States of America and holds an M.A. in International Affairs from Columbia University and a Ph.D. in Economics from Boston University. She takes over from Ms. Ruby Sandhu-Rojon who served as UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative until March 2014.
Message from the Country Director

Mr. Dominic Sam, UNDP Country Director

The highlight performance of the Country Office (CO) in 2014 was its ability to rise to the challenge and absorb very effectively additional work load resulting from the UN and UNDP global efforts to combat the Ebola pandemic in the last quarter. The CO provided operational support to the start-up of UN Mission on Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER), hosted UNDP SURGE staff and facilitated corporate procurement of logistics and equipment for the three epicenter countries (Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone). In addition, as part of the broader UN Country Team, the CO participated in the formulation of the joint Ebola Viral Disease (EVD) programme to support Ghana’s EVD National Preparedness Plan. This process was a vintage moment for the UN Delivery as One (DAO) in Ghana.

With the launch of the new corporate Strategic Plan of UNDP (2014-2017), there is the need for UNDP and national partners to rethink the rules of engagement that will deliver transformational development results to the people of Ghana. Delivering development results in today’s world and, especially, in a low middle income country like Ghana requires greater innovation and not business as usual.

Now is the time to explore smarter and innovative ways of delivering tailored development solutions. We must do fewer things based on UNDP’s comparative advantage that will deliver high value impact in peoples’ lives. This means that the setting of development priorities must be informed by broad consultations, be evidence-based and underpinned by national ownership. We cannot overemphasize the need for having a shared understanding of the complex development challenges, setting the right priorities, strengthening partnerships and leveraging national systems and structures for effective programme delivery. Beyond this, we should add to our development conversations issues of mutual accountability at all levels as well as sustainability and scalability.

Continue from next column

At UNDP, our programme results focuses on eradicating extreme poverty, promoting gender equality, bridging inequality, promoting representation and participation in decision making at all levels and building credible national institutions. In all this, our work leverages the broader context of the UN Delivering as One in Ghana.

Highlights of 2014 Achievements

Derived from the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and in line with Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda, UNDP’s work in 2014 focused on three inter-connected thematic areas: (1) Democratic Governance (2) Inclusive Growth and Development and (3) Sustainable Development.

Democratic Governance

Our democratic governance programme provides support to ensure that key national institutions of democracy are effective, responsive, inclusive, promote peace, and engender human security with focus on vulnerable groups.

Legal Aid Scheme: With UNDP’s support, the Legal Aid Scheme (LAS) was able to provide free legal services to the poor and vulnerable in all 10 regions and 16 districts across Ghana. In 2014 alone, about 7,700 cases were handled by the LAS. UNDP’s support which includes staff training, office furnishing, the implementation of a five-year strategic plan, a personnel strategy, and a legal aid guide has helped improve the efficiency and quality of services provided to clients.

Moreover, the development of a website, printing of over 70,000 legal aid brochures, and organization of legal aid clinics in 10 districts have increased access and knowledge of legal aid to deprived communities.

National Peace Council: With UNDP’s support, the National Peace Council (NPC) continued to drive the peace agenda in the country. In the quest to identify and avert violence at the grassroot level the NPC with UNDP’s support inaugurated the Boards of 9 Regional Peace Councils (RPC). It also furnished the secretariat of five RPCs with office supplies.

The NPC successfully intervened in 4 conflicts in 2014, one of which was the Bawku Conflict, leading to the resuscitation of the Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee (BIEPC). The recent turning in of guns in the Bawku Municipality can be credited to the work of the BIEPC. The media and civil society Organizations were not left out; 105 media personnel in 5 regions increased their knowledge on conflict sensitive reporting.
Social Accountability: With UNDP’s support, 33,299 citizens (17,284 males 16,015 females) participated in platforms for accountability established in over 80 districts through governance assessment and meetings between duty bearers and right holders. This led to increased participation of the citizenry in governance processes and improvements in service delivery.

Governance and Peace (Gap) Poll: UNDP in partnership with the Inter-Ministerial Coordinating Committee on Decentralization and the Centre for Democratic Development instituted the Gap poll, which is a social poll conducted on quarterly basis to assess citizens’ perception with regards to key governance institutions. In 2014 two polls were conducted, with fascinating results. For instance, the findings from the maiden poll showed that more Ghanaians (60%) trust the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAG) than the law courts (53%), while 57% trust the Electoral Commission (57%) and 64% the National Peace Council. Such findings help governance institutions to design interventions necessary to address governance and peace challenges in the country.

Ghana Revenue Authority: In 2014, UNDP addressed the issues of integrity and related communications challenges that existed among the Customs Division of the Ghana Revenue Authority and its stakeholders by implementing an Integrity Survey that sought to identify incidence of corruption, its causes and recommendations for addressing them.

We also supported the development and implementation of a Communication Strategy that enabled the Customs Division to carry out tax education and sensitization of the media and direct clients on customs rules and procedures. The result was a marginal reduction of perception of corruption among tax officials from 90% in 2012 to 85% in 2014, according to a 2014 Afrobarometer survey. Our support to the development of an electronic version of the Customs Harmonized Systems Code facilitated customs processes and international trade.

Conflict Map: With UNDP’s support, the National Peace Council mapped out latent and violent conflicts in Ghana contained in the document, Mapping Conflicts in Ghana. In partnership with the University of Cape Coast, a digital version of this document was developed and launched to meet modern technological demands. It offers Ghanaians the unique opportunity of understanding the causes and nature of conflicts, the actors involved as well as various peacebuilding approaches undertaken.

The map helps stakeholders to fashion out solutions before conflicts escalate. It provides guidelines for duty bearers for the purposes of planning. Various security agencies use the map to understand the characteristics of conflicts for their effective management. This collaboration with the National Peace Council to proactively manage conflicts is part of ongoing efforts by UNDP to strengthen the capacity of state Institutions to deliver effectively and efficiently.

Ebola Preparedness: UNDP’s work on Ebola in the worst affected countries has clearly shown that persons with disability have peculiar needs when it comes to accessing Ebola prevention information. To help bridge this gap, UNDP provided support to the Ghana National Association of Persons who are Deaf to train 100 team leaders in Ebola prevention. This is part of a broader UN Joint Programme supporting the implementation of the National Preparedness Plan with WHO and UNICEF taking the lead under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator.

The training, which was facilitated by the Ghana Health Service occurred in 3 zones: (1) the Southern zone, comprising leaders from the Western, Central and Greater Accra Region; (2) the Northern zone consisting of leaders from Upper East, Upper West and Northern Region and (3) the Middle zone, including representatives from Brong Ahafo, Ashanti and Eastern Region.
Inclusive Growth and Development

This programme contributes to Ghana’s inclusive growth agenda through a variety of modalities: (i) Flagship knowledge products, such as Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) reports, Human Development and other topical reports (ii) Policy and programme support at national and sub-national levels to promote economic transformation and equity in the context of Ghana’s Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA II) 2014-17 and the Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (CPESDP) 2014-2020.

Others include (iii) Support for Ghana’s participation in major international development effectiveness fora and coordination activities in country and (iv) Contributing to enhancing the evidence-base for policy making and platforms to promote data and information sharing and results monitoring for accountability and development effectiveness.

Organization of Major Events and Processes: In 2014, UNDP supported the Ministry of Finance in respect of its development effectiveness agenda and participation in related fora. We also supported the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) to organize a national consultation process to draw lessons from Ghana’s mainstreaming and localizing of the MDGs as an input for discussions on the Post-2015 Development Agenda as well as organized a major Pan-African Conference on Tackling Inequalities in the context of Structural Transformation, in collaboration with other partners.

Promotion of Development Effectiveness: UNDP provided support to the newly re-launched Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) to enhance development effectiveness and coordination to tackle disparities and promote socio-economic transformation in the Northern Savannah Ecological zone (NSEZ). UNDP also provided support to the Office of the President (OoP) for the development of a monitoring platform to track deliverables emerging from the President’s State of the Nation Address (SONA) and for the development of the Ghana Commodity Exchange (GCX) and associated Warehouse Receipt System (WRS).

Enhancing the Evidence and Data for Policies and Programmes: In collaboration with other partners, UNDP supported the Ghana Statistical Service to carry out the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) and deliberate on actions and priorities relating to Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS).

Research and Reports: In a follow-up study on Fiscal Space, which was undertaken in support of the Ministry of Finance, UNDP helped to identify priority measures that could assist Ghana in tackling the unsustainable fiscal and current account deficits which have taken a toll on its development in recent years. UNDP also provided support to the NDPC for the costing of the recently finalized Ghana Shared Growth Development Agenda (GSGDA II) 2014-17.

Sustainable Development

Under our sustainable development programme, UNDP supports the Government of Ghana to promote Ghana’s transition towards a green economy and a low-carbon and climate resilient society. We ensure that national systems and existing institutional arrangements for climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as disaster risk reduction are functional.

Improving Energy Efficiency: Under the UNDP-GEF supported Refrigerator Energy Efficiency Project implemented by the Energy Commission; more than 5,200 units of old, energy inefficient appliances have been replaced across the country. A total of 15,000 units are expected to be replaced by the end of 2015.

A ban on the importation of used refrigerating appliances prevented over 260,000 old appliances from entering into the country in 2013 alone and an 80 percent drop in their imports by the end of 2014. The few that are smuggled into the country are confiscated at the ports and decommissioned at recycling facilities. So far, more than 20,000 seized refrigerators have been...
sent to the recycling facilities. Thanks to the progress made so far, Ghana has realized an annual energy savings of 34,550 MWh, enough to power 11,516 households in a year.

**Improved Cookstoves:** Under the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative, UNDP in partnership with the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and the Energy Commission of Ghana promoted the use of improved cookstoves through the establishment of a Cookstove Testing and Expertise Laboratory in Kumasi to serve the Northern sector of Ghana.

The lab will be used for testing purposes, but also, create an avenue for research and development to continually improve the design and manufacture of improved cookstoves in Ghana. The facility was jointly commissioned by the Vice Chancellor of KNUST, Prof. William Otoo Ellis and the UNDP Country Director, Mr. Dominic Sam in a brief ceremony held in Kumasi on Tuesday, March 31, 2015.

**Currently, UNDP is supporting the Ghana Standards Authority to develop technical standards to regulate the thermal and energy efficiency of cookstoves, as well as the indoor air pollution. A labelling scheme will be designed to clearly inform consumers about the quality and safety of the cookstoves.**

**Ghana Cocoa Platform:** This platform has been created to boost stakeholder dialogue and joint action planning to address the main barriers for sustainable cocoa production in Ghana. In 2014, the platform convened dialogue among stakeholders and farmers at regional levels. It also inaugurated four Technical Committees to facilitate problem identification, development of policy recommendations and action plans for the cocoa sector. The Ghana Cocoa Board, which chairs and hosts the platform, endorsed its mainstreaming into its organizational structure for sustainability of public-private partnership.

**Solar-Powered Irrigation:** Under a partnership with NewEnergy and the Energy Commission of Ghana, UNDP provided four solar-powered irrigation pumps to four communities to pump water for irrigating up to 15 hectares of land. The goal is to make sustainable energy accessible and affordable to smallholder farmers for productive uses, in order to increase productivity and farmer income levels by facilitating all season farming. The project takes place at Tamalgu in the Karaga District, Nakpanduri in the Bunkpurugu Yunyoo District and Datoyili and Fooshgu in the Tamale Metropolis. The installations have a total capacity of 22.5 Kilowatts capable of delivering up to 1 million liters of water daily, which will benefit 61 farm families, consisting of 550 persons, with the potential to irrigate up to 26 ha of land.

**Promoting Sustainable Cocoa Production:** In collaboration with the Ghana Cocoa Board, cocoa farmers in 166 communities were sensitized on prevailing forest laws and tree registration process, followed by the distribution of 263,000 economic tree seedlings to 3,160 farmers. This has resulted in the growing of shade trees in 1,200 ha of cocoa farms. At the policy level, prevailing land and tree tenure policy and their implications for sustainable cocoa farming was analyzed to provide knowledge basis and policy recommendation.
On December 5 each year, dozens of volunteers participate in the International Volunteer Day to make a difference in the lives of people and places.
New Projects

Joint Party Support and Strengthening Project
(The J-PASS Project)

To deepen Ghana’s democratic gains, UNDP has designed the J-PASS project jointly with five political parties in Ghana, namely the New Patriotic Party (NPP), National Democratic Congress (NDC), Convention Peoples’ Party (CPP), People’s National Convention (PNC) and the Progressive People’s Party (PPP).

This innovative project aims at boosting public confidence and participation in the 2016 general elections, increase trust in political parties and election results as well as promote the participation of women and youth in decision making processes in Ghana’s multi-party democracy.

On December 16 2014, UNDP signed an MOU jointly with the Electoral Commission and political parties to deepen Ghana’s democratic processes under J-PASS.

As a modest intervention project ahead of the 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections, J-PASS focuses on three key areas of promoting (1) internal democracy, (2) gender equality and youth participation and (3) election results monitoring. In addition, this project seeks to provide a platform for inter-party electoral dialogue to be nurtured at all levels of the electoral process in close collaboration with the Electoral Commission.

Aware that Ghana lags behind in the sub-region, in terms of percentage of elected women representatives, the project seeks to address some of the critical logjams of women leadership within political parties.

The J-PASS project places premium on increasing the trust of electorates in organizations rallying for political power and the genuineness of the electoral results ahead of the next general elections.

J-PASS strengthens the legitimacy conferred on the government as it seeks to pre-empt public mistrust in the final outcome of the election. This leads ultimately to peace and consequently the development of the nation.

Legal Service and Justice Sector Reform Project

The rule of law, which is a key component of democracy and good governance, is firmly rooted in Ghana given its laws that promote peace, stability, economic growth, justice, and equality, especially for indigents.

A baseline survey of the Justice Sector conducted in 2012 as collaboration between UNDP and the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General’s Department (MoJAGD) however showed that the level of transparency and the speed of processes and proceedings in the formal justice system is very low in Ghana and served as a disincentive for using them.

The delays were attributed to the weakened functionality as well as structural and institutional capacity challenges that result in inefficiencies within the legal service and justice sector.

To remove the bottlenecks and improve efficiency, the MoJAGD is developing a comprehensive reform programme with support from UNDP. The programme is to ensure that the legal service and the justice delivery system is more accessible, fair, responsive, accountable and structured to provide legal services efficiently and improve access to justice.

The programme has two main outcomes: (1) to strengthen the administrative efficiency and inter-institutional collaboration of Legal Service and Justice Sector institutions by the end of 2016; and (2) to strengthen the technical and operational capacity of Legal Service and Justice Sector institutions by the end of 2016.

It will be implemented over a period of two years. This project is expected to contribute significantly to addressing the nagging problem of increasing numbers of remand prisoners without trial.

Did You Know?

Feminine suffixes such as ‘-ess’ or ‘-ette’ can reinforce the notion that women are subordinate, or doing a different job to men. For example, instead of using actress or stewardess, for women professionals, it is better to use the generic term (actor or flight attendant) to avoid promoting gender inequality.

Referring to a woman as a ‘career woman’ instead of a ‘professional’, or to a ‘server’ as a ‘waitress’ can exacerbate gender inequality.
Our Success Stories

From donkey carts to ambulance vans
How pregnant women are saved in rural Ghana

“But for the ambulance van, I would have been carried on a donkey cart or a motorbike to the nearest clinic or hospital. It could have been a little too late to save either my life or that of my unborn child”, says Rina Laaragee who had serious running discharge during labour and had to undergo emergency Caesarean section.

A large number of women die annually as a result of pregnancy related complications such as severe bleeding, hypertension, infections and abortions. The latest Ghana Millennium Development Goals (MDG) report shows that Ghana’s maternal mortality ratio remains high (164 per 100,000 live births in 2010) despite several efforts and interventions by government and development partners to improve maternal health.

In a country where three out of every five districts health directorates have no ambulance services to carry pregnant women to health facilities during emergencies, UNDP’s donation of three ambulance vans and health accessories to the Piina Health Centre comes in handy.

“Since 2013 when we received the ambulance from UNDP, no single case of maternal death has been recorded in Piina”, says Ms. Florence Dery, the nursing officer in-charge of the Piina Health Centre.

The donation worth US$ 200,000 made to three health centres in deprived communities was to improve access and delivery of health care in deprived areas, especially among pregnant women, in support of the Ministry of Health and the Ghana Health Service for the implementation of MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) on maternal health.

The Piina Health Centre, in the Lambussie District of the Upper West Region of Ghana serves more than 5,000 people in Piina and surrounding communities. The donated van transports emergency labour cases to the Health Centre and other hospitals in the region, covering about 20 km.

“Between January and December 2014, forty-nine pregnancy-related cases, including prolonged labour, previous Caesarean section, threat of abortion and malaria in pregnancy were referred from the Piina Health Centre to hospitals for safe delivery. Without the ambulance, the story would have been different”, says Florence.

The MDG Acceleration Framework on maternal health is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Health, Government of Ghana, the United Nations system and other stakeholders to reduce the maternal mortality ratio in Ghana. It focuses on improving maternal health at the level of both community and district health care facilities, with three key priority areas including improved family planning, skilled delivery and emergency obstetric and newborn care.

For more of our success stories, visit: http://www.gh.undp.org/content/ghana/en/home/ourwork/our_stories/

For Ghana’s progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), visit: http://www.gh.undp.org/content/ghana/en/home/mdioverview/
Nursing by phone helps save lives in Ghana’s coastal town of Keta

"It started like a runny stomach but it was soon followed by vomiting. I was so scared that I thought I would lose my pregnancy and life", says Faith Kuwornu, a 27 year-old pregnant mother of three, in Ghana’s coastal town of Keta, in the Volta Region. Faith was among the dozens who escaped the deadly cholera disease that threatened the town of about 20,000 people in 2014.

Despite the 8.4 kilometer sea defence wall, rising sea levels caused by climate change expose Keta to heavy flooding. This worsens when it rains, as insanitary conditions and health hazards cause diarrhoea and cholera among the affected population. The floods effectively cut off most communities making it difficult for health workers to provide care for the people. Between 2008 and 2013, Keta recorded an average of 100 cholera cases annually. “Aside from cholera and other diarrhoeal diseases, malaria cases increase any time it floods”, says Dr. Andrews Ayim, Keta Municipal Health Director.

In 2014 when more than 28,000 cholera cases and 200 deaths were recorded in Ghana, Keta had none, even when the rest of the Volta Region reported 646 cholera cases. “Seeing that Keta recorded not a single incidence [of cholera] when our neighbouring district had about 120 cases, we are confident that our interventions of teleconsultations, awareness creation and the Oral Rehydration Therapy corners worked”, says Dr. Andrews Ayim.

Teleconsultation is an innovation to quicken surveillance response and provide prompt health care to people in remote areas and other places cut off by the effects of climate change such as extreme flooding. It takes advantage of mobile telephony where coverage is available, to provide medical consultation services on mobile phones to patients and health facilities at referral levels. The project supported by UNDP and GEF aims to develop systems and response mechanisms to better integrate climate change risks into the health sector. It involves training health sector workers and sensitize decision-making bodies at local and national health policy levels.

In Keta, the project provided about 30 android-enabled mobile phones, preloaded monthly with 500 minutes of talk-time and 20MB mobile data to doctors and nurses at 11 health centers and six community health facilities in the municipality. The project also trained 180 disease surveillance volunteers across the area. Health nurses share their telephone numbers with health volunteers, opinion leaders and other community members for timely updates on health situations for prompt medical advice, especially during flooding. “Anytime community health nurses encounter a situation that they cannot manage at their level they call senior officers for advice so that referrals are reduced to the minimum,” says Perfect Titiati, a Principal Health Nurse.

When suspected diarrhoea cases are detected, patients are treated for free; in Oral Rehydration Therapy corners – rooms stuffed with requisite medical supplies to help restore lost body fluids. Faith is grateful for the intervention which saved her pregnancy and life. “When I first called the community health nurse at dawn, she offered first aid on the telephone until she arrived at my house with another nurse an hour later. I was treated with Oral Rehydration Salts and Zinc tablets and rushed to the hospital because of my pregnancy. They saved my life and the unborn baby” she says.

The UNDP and GEF are supporting the Climate Change and Health project with US$1.9 million in partnership with the Government of Ghana. The project, implemented by the Ministry of Health and the Ghana Health Service is piloted in regions where prevalence of diseases, climate change impact and poverty incidence are high.
Recognizing Community Efforts to Reduce Poverty

On Tuesday, April 28, 2015, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the Small Grants Programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Ga West Municipal Assembly hosted a national event to recognize the outstanding efforts of the Integrated Development in Focus (IDF) and the Yaoman community to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The event took place at Yaoman in the Ga West District of the Greater Accra Region.

The IDF and women groups of Yaoman are the happy recipients of the 2014 Equator prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa

The national event was a sequel to an award presented to the IDF as the winner of the 2014 Equator Prize for Sustainable Land Management in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Equator Prize, organized by the Equator Initiative within UNDP is awarded biennially to recognize outstanding community efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The IDF was awarded for equipping women with financial and technical resources to restore degraded lands and develop small-scale enterprises. UNDP hosted the in–country event to showcase success stories, deepen local recognition for the sterling example of the IDF and facilitate lesson learning.

A visit to farmers’ fields preceded the community durbar
Mr. Mulugeta Abebe (Ethiopia) has joined the UNDP in Ghana team as a Deputy Country Director in charge of Operations.

Prior to this assignment, Mulugeta served as UNDP Deputy Country Director (Operations) in Juba, South Sudan for four years. For five years ((2006 – 2011), Mr. Abebe worked for the UNDP in Nigeria, Office where he served in various capacities covering Programme Finance, Finance and as a Service Center Manager. From 2002 –2005, Mulugeta also worked at the UNDP Bureau of Management Office of Information Systems and Technology as a Regional Information Manager for Eastern and Central Africa covering 12 countries.

Mr. Abebe brings to this position more than 30 years wealth of experience from the public and private sector as well as the UN System. He holds Masters in Business Administration, specializing in Finance from the University of Liverpool, U.K. and a Bachelor degree from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

Mulugeta takes over from Mr. Rene da Silva who was the Deputy Country Director (Operations) until March 2015. He takes up his new assignment in May 2015.
In January 2015, the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched a new campaign, 2015: Time for Global Action. This campaign gives world leaders an opportunity to seek historic and far-reaching agreements on a critical range of issues that affect people’s lives, including setting an ambitious agenda that will advance sustainable development, develop new streams of sustainability financing and reach a climate agreement in 2015.

“We are at a historic crossroads, and the direction we take will determine whether we will succeed or fail in fulfilling our promises,” said Mr. Ban when he outlined his priorities for 2015 at a briefing to UN Member States.

The Secretary-General’s report provides guidance for Member States to accelerate their path towards sustainable development. World leaders have called for an ambitious long-term sustainability agenda to succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the end of 2015.

Expected to be adopted in September, the post-2015 development agenda will seek to reinforce commitment to achieve all MDGs as well as break new ground with goals on inequalities, economic growth, decent jobs, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, peace and justice, among others.

UNDP Administrator Helen Clark said, “We have a shared responsibility to deliver an agenda which reflects the hopes and aspirations of the world’s peoples. Concerted action is needed to tackle the major challenges our world faces. Broad partnerships will be needed to achieve sustainable development.”

In addition to the agreement on the post-2015 development agenda, countries are expected to take action to strengthen their support for sustainable development at the International Conference on Financing for Development, which will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in July. The Conference is expected to produce new mechanisms that can unlock financing for sustainable development, particularly in the least developed countries.

Then in December, Member States will have an opportunity to act on the commitments made at the Secretary-General’s Climate Summit last year, and adopt a new meaningful and universal agreement to reduce carbon emissions during the Climate Change Conference to be held in Paris in December. This agreement would be a major step toward limiting global temperature rise to less than two degrees Celsius and would help build climate resilient communities.

For the United Nations and its partners, 2015 is indeed a time for action.