Dr. Ashok Nigam
UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative
Opening Speech on the “Post-2015 Development Platform” project document signing
Riyadh, 10-January-2015

Al Salamalikum

I am delighted and honored to be present here today to sign the “Post-2015 Development Platform” project, which represents our continuous and successful partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I would like to thank Your Royal Highness Ambassador Prince Khaled bin Saud bin Khaled and Your Excellency Dr. Yousef bin Terad Al Saadon, for supporting this new global initiative, which is evidence of the important role that the Kingdom and its youth are taking in the global effort towards sustainable development.
Most importantly, I would like to thank the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah for the significant humanitarian assistance that the Kingdom has recently given through the United Nations and for giving this opportunity to young people to be able to interact and share different experiences through The Saudi International Youth Dialogue Forums and contribute to global development.

The Saudi-Indian Youth Dialogue Forum, held under a joint project between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNDP Saudi Arabia covering the theme of “ICT for Development”, allowed Saudi Youth during their visit to India to interact and discuss with Indian youth and other related entities creative solutions for youth participation in development and making youth voices heard around the world. The project that we are signing today arose from these interactions.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, youth are the real wealth and strength of any nation. Today, we stand witnesses to the results of how youth initiatives can create possibilities such as this global initiative.

This project will design and launch a new UNDP-managed global funding mechanism to channel voluntary contributions from around the world to UNDP country work in the emerging areas of the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, such as poverty reduction and social inclusion, food-energy-water security, health, education and environmental sustainability. The project will develop an innovative web-based ‘giving’ platform through which philanthropists and ordinary people around the world can provide online cash contributions to specific areas of assistance as displayed on the web-based platform. It can potentially be a major contributor to creating a better future for generations to come.
This initiative is evidence of how dialogue among youth of different nations, religions and cultures can bring about positive change for global development. In this case it is providing opportunities for people to help people around the world through the setting up of this Post-2015 Development Platform.

The Synthesis report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda titled “The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet” has recognized that “Young people will be the torchbearers of the next sustainable development agenda through 2030.” The Secretary General has also called on countries to explore innovative ways of funding the sustainable development goals at scale. This initiative responds to these calls.

We anticipate the official launch of this platform will take place during the upcoming General Assembly meetings in 2015 in New York with the official launching of the Post-2015 Development Goals. It will highlight the important role of Saudi Arabia as a major global development partner and enabler.

We at UNDP will work on the initial design phase, which is supported financially by the Saudi Government and will mobilize global experts to help design and launch the global funding mechanism and web-based contribution platform. I wish to seize this opportunity to confirm UNDP Saudi Arabia Country Office commitment to youth development and express our gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and HRH Prince Saud Al Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs, for their continued support and assistance.
As the world moves towards the Post-2015 and Sustainable Development Goals agenda from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), new global partnerships such as this are essential for success. The Post-2015 Development Platform represents a development effort ‘from people for people’ recognizing the fundamental principle that we all inhabit one planet and we all individually and collectively need to leave no one behind ensuring equality, non-discrimination, equity and inclusion at all levels.

Finally, I thank the youth with us here today for their contribution. They represent youth dedicated to make this world a better place.

Shukran