

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to be here with you today on such an important occasion. World Environment Day is a globally celebrated event, on which I wish to sincerely congratulate all of you. This day is not just a worldwide holiday, but also another opportunity to reflect on our achievements over the past years, as well as the pressing challenges and priorities that we are still to address to conserve the Earth.

Let me start by highlighting UNDP's ongoing active partnership with the Government of Turkmenistan, namely the Ministry of Nature Protection, in a number of environmental areas ranging from comprehensive governance matters down to very specific ecological concerns. It is now well recognized both internationally and in Turkmenistan that environmental protection concerns all sectors and is vitally linked to socio-economic development, livelihoods and even security.

Climate change is now a top priority on the world's agenda. Climate change affects our life, and our life affects climate change. Whatever we do impacts the environment: when we turn on lights in our houses, charge our mobile phones, drive our cars. Affecting climate change leads to affecting our development resources such as water, land, forests, energy and many more. This means that, if we want to at least preserve what we have now, our achievements, our children's future, all countries have to act now as one to significantly reduce carbon emissions which will irreversibly contribute to climate change and its consequences over the coming years. To address climate change is estimated to take 50-100 years. Thus we need to adapt our economies and our ways of life to the ongoing consequences of global warming, so that we are most prepared to lay our solid platform for further concrete action.

UNDP is on the ground in developing countries across the world, providing policy and technical assistance to governments and people as they work to mitigate or prevent the rapidly intensifying effects of climate change. In Turkmenistan, we as UNDP seek to provide all possible assistance to the Turkmen government in fulfilling its commitments in this global picture. UNDP is now ready to offer its support to a State Committee established by the President of Turkmenistan to perform the functions of the Designated National Authority for the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto protocol and the Carbon Finance facility. The Carbon Finance facility is an effective economic tool to reduce greenhouse emissions through modern energy efficient technologies and trading mechanisms.

I am also happy to tell you that project preparation negotiations are currently underway with the oil and gas sector of the country to help Turkmenistan apply modern, energy efficient and climate friendly technologies while maintaining the provision of high quality energy services to its people.

UNDP is active not only in Turkmenistan. For example, in Croatia, UNDP is working with the Government to limit the amount of carbon produced by the building sector, its most energy-intensive industry. In Chile, UNDP introduced the use of solar ovens to help prevent deforestation. There are many more examples of UNDP support to find and implement solutions that reduce poverty and sustain biodiversity in an environment vulnerable to climate change. And because UNDP is a worldwide network of experience and knowledge, we can bring to Turkmenistan examples of best practices from other countries.

And, as I said earlier, it is only together by uniting our efforts that we will be able to succeed in making some significant difference in climate change. As the UN Secretary-General has said: "Although individual decisions may seem small in the face of global threats and trends, when billions of people join forces in common purpose we can make a tremendous difference."

In conclusion, I would like to note that of course UNDP is not limiting its work in Turkmenistan only to climate change. This year is an international year of biodiversity. And we continue our cooperation in the area of biodiversity, including the development of the first National Park in Turkmenistan, and addressing land management issues in support of the ongoing agricultural reforms in the country. Once again, my warmest congratulations on World Environment Day and let us together look forward to and aspire for a clean and safe environment.

Thank you.