Paramaribo, 14 January, 2013. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Social Affairs and Public Housing of the Republic of Suriname and the Country Director of the UNDP Suriname Country Office in Suriname today signed a project document “Capacity Strengthening of Ministry of Social Affairs & Public Housing (SOZAVO)”.

The project aims at strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Social Affairs & Public Housing (SOZAVO) to develop relevant policies, systems and processes which can be used to enhance its ability for efficient and effective planning and management of activities, and improved and targeted services to its beneficiaries. This initiative will also enable the Ministry to be more effective in fulfilling its mandate and responsibilities. This will result in the enhancement of the social well-being of low income groups, persons with disabilities, elderly, and children and youth.

Based on a Comprehensive Capacity Development Plan developed with the support of UNDP in 2010, the ministry of SOZAVO has identified and prioritized some specific areas for capacity enhancement in the short and medium term with assistance from UNDP.

Outputs incorporated in this project as separate components, while together they are part of the larger and comprehensive capacity development framework, which the ministry is committed to implement in the years to come.

This project is meant to enhance the capacity of the ministry to effectively provide immaterial services, increase abilities of Sozavo to guarantee efficient and quality care of elderly and persons with disabilities; establish Sozavo Data Base; improve basic tools for policy planning and formulation; support the development of a National Policy document on Elderly and Persons with Disabilities; increase the capacity of Sozavo to design, formulate and implement nationwide policy aimed at supporting and protecting elderly; support the development of policy document for implementation of a system of increasing readiness and capacity of Sozavo to implement a system of decentralized social services; assist the development of policy document on transportation services for Persons with Disabilities and elderly; increase capacity and readiness of Sozavo to implement a Social Fund for the protection and support of Persons with Disabilities and elderly; and increased capacity of Sozavo to fulfill its coordinating role in the field of public housing.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is fulfilling the role of an overseeing and monitoring entity for the outcomes captured under the United Nations Development assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2012-2016 signed between the Government of Suriname and the United Nations and its technical agencies active in Suriname.

As expressed by the Minister of SOZAVO this project will contribute towards the initiatives of the government of Suriname in delivering its social development agenda and is instrumental in the development of the so needed capacity development within the ministry.

The UNDP Country Director, Mr. Thomas Gittens extended a special vote of thanks to Minister Amafo, for committing funds from her regular budget to cost-share the financing of this project. He welcomed this gesture which clearly is an attestation of commitment and ownership from the part of the Minister and the Government of Suriname.

He also confirmed UNDP’s commitment to sustain and strengthen the cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Public Housing and remarked that he is confident that this new project we will be able to provide a valuable contribution to the ministry to better serve its clients.