PRESS RELEASE

UNITED NATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF SURINAME SIGN THEIR COOPERATION AGREEMENT FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

Paramaribo, 15 February 2012.- The United Nations and the Government of Suriname have signed today the development assistance framework by which the international organization will support the Government's Ontwikkelingsplan 2012-2016, and help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. This framework marks a new chapter of the UN-Government of Suriname partnership and covers a period that represents the final four years before the MDG deadline of 2015.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Lackin, the UN Resident Coordinator, Marcia de Castro, and the heads of UN agencies, attended the ceremony and signed the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) that will drive the work of the UN resident and nonresident agencies in Suriname for the next four years.

The UNDAF is based on a thorough analysis of the national development challenges, and the UN's expertise and strengths in the country to best support the national development priorities. The UN Action Plan has been developed in an extensive consultation with the Government and other stakeholders to ensure its strategic alignment with Suriname's national development priorities framed in the recently approved Ontwikkelingsplan.

The UNDAF establishes three focus areas in which UN agencies will focus their programmes and projects to help achieving the national development priorities. These focus areas are: strengthening statistical information systems and the capacity to analyze and interpret the data for policy formulation and dissemination; support the development of key legislations, policies and budgets to promote development; and reach the most excluded and disadvantaged populations in Suriname.

The focus in promoting social development of most excluded populations is essential to progress in the achievement of the MDGs, for addressing disparities reaching the most disadvantaged will improve Suriname's position in achieving the international goals. Improved statistical and analytical information on disadvantaged groups will afford Suriname's legislators and decision makers better insight into the laws, policies, and budgets needed to secure targeted interventions from which all Surinamese will benefit. These focus areas will take into consideration the national circumstances of Suriname as well as five cross cutting principles to guide the UN work in the country, including a human rights based approach, gender equality, environment sustainability, result-based management, and capacity development. By having a more focused approach, the UN will better be able to serve the Government and the people of Suriname.

The programme will be nationally executed under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations Resident Coordination Office. Eleven UN agencies will be coordinated to execute the new UNDAF: the Pan American Health Organization/World Health
Organization (PAHO/WHO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the UN Information Centre (UNIC) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The new UNDAF is the third one for Suriname and it is the second time where UN and the Government of Suriname develop this agreement under the framework of the UN Reform.

The United Nations Reform

The UN Reform started in 1997 lead by the former Secretary-General, Kofi Anan. Among the issues addressed by this initiative was the improvement of the UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency at country level in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and environment. The Delivering as One Report issued by a UN panel established by the UN SG explored these challenges. As a response, the UN launched the “Delivering as One” pilot initiative in 2007.

Since the launch of the pilot in 2007 fifteen other countries including Suriname have adopted the Delivering as One approach. The decision to embrace the Delivering as One approach in Suriname was made by the Government of Suriname in 2007, formalized at a High Level Meeting between senior UN officials and the Government held in Paramaribo in May 2008.

The Delivering as One process means that the UN agencies in Suriname will work together as one organization to have greater impact in supporting the national development priorities.

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