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**Remarks by
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TO THE HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON STRENGTHENING THE UNITED NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM'S RESPONSE TO THE DIFFERENT NEEDS OF PROGRAMME
COUNTRIES
New York, 10 July 2008**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to moderate this important panel on “Strengthening the United Nations development system’s response to the different needs of programme countries”.

Before I introduce the panelists, allow me to share a few personal reflections.

The 2007 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) of operational activities of the United Nations development system gave clear mandates for strengthening the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the United Nations system. The TCPR also strongly reaffirmed national ownership and leadership and reiterated that “one-size-does-not-fit-all”. These principles, in and of themselves, make it imperative for the United Nations system to adapt its support to the various needs of programme countries.

The current global dynamics add to this imperative. New demands arise from the need to help countries cope with the impact of global economic difficulties, the growing price of food and energy, climate change, natural disasters and conflict. The system is called upon to adjust its support as countries’ economic and social situations evolve, for instance, as they move on the path from relief to development or as they graduate from Least Developed Country (LDC) to Middle Income Country status.

The diversity of the United Nations development system enables it to better adjust its support to different country situations. But whether or not an organization is present in a country, continues to be key in determining whether national stakeholders may access its technical expertise.

It also influences the extent to which the various United Nations system organizations work together.

During the recent Development Cooperation Forum, a number of participants deplored a fragmentation of the international development cooperation architecture, even using the expression “balkanization”. I do not think that this applies to the United Nations system. Nonetheless, we certainly have scope to improve coordination and coherence in our work – and to ensure that developing countries have the opportunity to choose, from the rich array of expertise available within the United Nations system, the support most adapted to their needs.

The United Nations development system *is* making strides in increasing coordination and coherence at country level. The Delivering as One initiative is one good example, although similar efforts are being made in other countries. Mozambique will update us on the lessons learned from this experience in the pilot countries, based on a seminar it recently hosted. Our other panelists, who are not pilot countries, will share their own experience on how well the system is adjusting its support to their specific situations, while working in a more coordinated manner.

The objective of this panel is to provide a platform for an interactive discussion on how to strengthen the UN development system’s responsiveness to the diverse needs of programme countries. As a guide to this debate, panelists may wish to consider the following questions:

- What are the major factors that determine the setting of the UN priorities in programme countries? What is the experience with UNDAF with respect to establishing activities aligned with the national development priorities?
- What processes were employed that contributed to the closer alignment of the activities of the UN country team and the programme country’s needs? What are lessons learned, remaining challenges and specific recommendations on how the UN development system could adjust to countries’ needs?”
- Is the UN development system ready to meet the increasing expectations by Member States and maximize effectiveness and impact of its support?

We have with us this afternoon distinguished panelists:

- H.E. Mr. Jose Luis Guterres, Vice Prime-Minister, Timor-Leste;
- H. E. Mr. Henrique Banze, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mozambique;
- H.E. Mr. Rodolfo Pastor Fasquelle, Coordinator of the Social Cabinet and Minister of Culture, Arts and Sports, Honduras; and
- Mr. Jan Vandemoortele, Senior Advisor on Policy, Division on Policy and Practice, UNICEF (And Former Resident Coordinator in Pakistan).

We will first hear short interventions by the panelists, after which I will open the floor.

To encourage a free-flowing interactive dialogue among participants, and to give all those wishing to speak the opportunity to do so, the time allotted for each intervention from the floor is four minutes. If you have come with a written statement, I would encourage you to distribute the statement, rather than read it out in its entirety.

It is my pleasure now to give the floor to H.E. Mr. Jose Luis Guterres, Vice Prime-Minister, Timor-Leste.