GLOBAL, INTERREGIONAL AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES:
RATIONALE AND OPPORTUNITIES

I. BACKGROUND

1. The present conference room paper further elaborates the recommendation to establish a single, consolidated earmarking under line 1.3 for global, interregional and special programmes (GISP) in the next programming period (as set out in paragraphs 52 to 63 of document DP/1995/15). This elaboration highlights how the intended programming thrusts of the GISP earmarking relate to the changing environment for development cooperation, the three goals and four focus areas embodied in the overarching framework for sustainable human development, as well as to UNDP’s comparative advantages with respect to SHD promotion, neutrality, cross-sectoral responsibilities, worldwide country office network, and advocacy functions.

2. The paper also proposes a set of criteria against which the achievements of these programmes can be measured: mobilization of financial support; strengthening UNDP’s advocacy role; developing and adapting new approaches to capacity-building; strengthening capacity-building, including institutions; upstream policy analysis and support; supporting downstream activities; and influencing investments at the country level. Using these criteria, the paper concludes by providing an initial assessment of the achievements of the existing global, interregional and SPR programmes, indicating how these various activities would be refined, expanded and intensified under a combined programme earmarking in the next period.

3. It is hoped that the additional information provided here will assist the Executive Board in its deliberations on the earmarkings recommended under the next programming framework. As
noted in document DP/1995/15, the Board will also have available for review the results of a number of SPR sub-programme evaluations scheduled in 1995. Proposals for the modalities of access and management for this facility will be submitted separately in the context of the report of the Administrator on the implementation of the initiatives for change.

II. FOCUS FOR THE NEXT PROGRAMMING PERIOD

4. At its annual session 1994, the Executive Board considered the report of the Administrator entitled "Initiatives for change" (DP/1994/39) and adopted the pivotal decision 94/14 on the future of UNDP. In doing so, it supported the global framework for UNDP set out in the report and agreed that the overall mission of UNDP should be to assist programme countries in their endeavour to realize sustainable human development, in line with their national development programmes and priorities. The Executive Board endorsed three principal goals of UNDP: (a) strengthening international cooperation for sustainable human development and serving as a major substantive resource on how to achieve it; (b) helping the United Nations family to become a unified and powerful force for sustainable human development; and (c) most importantly, focusing UNDP resources on making the maximum contribution in programme countries to key dimensions of sustainable human development.

5. In addition to the three goals, the report on "Initiatives for change" identified, and the Executive Board approved, four areas of programme focus: (a) poverty elimination; (b) job creation; (c) promotion and regeneration of the environment; and (d) the advancement of women, as well as a set of patterns of intervention in which UNDP has demonstrated comparative advantage.

6. It is proposed in document DP/1995/15, "Further elaboration of the framework for the next programming period", that the earmarkings for global, interregional and SPR programmes be merged in the next programming period, allowing UNDP to continue to refine and develop approaches and mechanisms as set out in the Administrator's report on "Initiatives for change". It is intended that this merged programme serve as a catalyst for country-level efforts and global partnerships in the focus areas for sustainable human development and for the mobilization of additional resources for programme interventions in these and related focus areas.

7. Both interregional and SPR programmes are closely related and can serve as catalysts for country-level efforts for capacity-building and promoting national, regional and global partnerships in priority areas of sustainable human development. The experience of the current programming cycle has shown that in several cases, programmes have been developed that are jointly funded from both sources and similar in structure and functions.
Both programmes also support country initiatives with a view to adaptation between and across regions.

8. During the next programming period, global, interregional and special activities would have two major thrusts: global programmes on the one hand and interregional and special programmes on the other. Global programmes would address cross-cutting issues of global concern. These programmes would focus on stimulating and supporting global level research on topics relevant to sustainable human development, thereby enabling countries to access the most effective scientific and technological innovations and enhance their capacities in these areas. Interregional and special programmes would develop, expand, and test strategic and cohesive approaches to key areas of sustainable human development within the overall focus areas of poverty eradication, environment, employment and gender.

9. The following types of activities would be included in the global, interregional and special programmes:

(a) Overall strategies for sustainable human development;

(b) Poverty elimination, including food security, sustainable livelihood and job opportunities for the poor;

(c) Advancement of women and gender in development, HIV/AIDS and human resource development strategies, including education and health;

(d) Advancement of economically and environmentally sustainable development strategies and strategies for the sustainable management of natural resources, including forests, biodiversity and agricultural and water resources, strategies for sustainable energy development, and capacity-building for Agenda 21;

(e) Support to policy development, international cooperation and capacity-building for the diffusion, transfer and adaptation of technology to promote sustainable human development as well as to collaborative research efforts among scientists in developing countries; and

(f) Strengthening of development management and governance for sustainable human development, including decentralization, civil society institutions, urban management, civil service reform, local governments, financial management and the private sector.

III. JUSTIFICATION OF GLOBAL, INTERREGIONAL AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

10. Global, interregional and special programmes (GISPs) are developing cross-sectoral or cross-cutting approaches, bringing different sectors together around a particular development issue
such as gender, management development, poverty, HIV/AIDS and environment. We have learned from four decades of experience that development issues are complex and not given to easy or simplistic responses and that technological responses alone will not improve things unless our response also acknowledges the importance of cross-sectoral approaches in an enabling environment - political, social and economic issues and institutional capacity to facilitate change incorporating new technologies.

11. The rationale for GISPs should be examined within the context of profound changes that have been taking place in the world during the past decade: the end of the cold war, an increasing trend towards democratization and decentralization, improved access to information, rapid expansion of new national and local initiatives to meet development challenges, and new advances in science and technology. These, and other changes, will significantly affect patterns of interaction and exchange among countries, institutions and individuals. Global and interregional programmes would facilitate this multiregional exchange. Global conferences - on environment, population, social development, women, and human settlements - have highlighted the significance of interaction and exchanges among countries and institutions, between developing countries, and between developed and developing countries.

12. These programmes offer concrete opportunities to tap into expertise available in institutions and networks worldwide. In order for development programmes to be relevant and effective at the country level, it is essential for both developing countries and external support agencies (i.e., all external organizations that contribute to development activities, including international organizations, development agencies, foundations, institutes, non-governmental organizations and the private sector) to participate in and benefit from global research and interregional efforts.

13. GISPs give the flexibility needed to bring international alliances together in partnership to solve important problems. Such programmes can be designed carefully to tackle issues in a generic and strategic fashion, utilizing the best expertise available anywhere in the world. Such funding also allows new processes and procedures to be tested. They allow UNDP to test new internal processes of programme development, appraisal, monitoring and review. These programmes provide an opportunity for mutual learning from developing and developed countries. Country-level lessons are documented and shared globally on the one hand, and global level syntheses and conceptual frameworks are utilized within a country's own framework on the other. This learning process is mutually beneficial.

14. GISPs promote international partnerships and provide forums for examining issues, sharing information, and synthesizing lessons learned, leading to more effective and sustainable
responses to complex development problems. Countries, institutions and individuals with similar interests can join these partnerships - both contributing to and benefiting from the multiregional initiatives and activities.

15. These programmes represent a unique mechanism to mobilize financial resources from development partners - developing countries, bilateral donors, multilateral agencies, the private sector, and civil society institutions - to support new and innovative responses to important development issues at the country level.

16. GISP help to build national and local capacity through sharing of new scientific and managerial tools from the public and the private sector, the application of results of research for the benefits of the poorest segments of the population, and linking national and regional research and development institutions through interregional networks.

17. GISP can complement regional and country-level activities through formal cost-sharing arrangements, follow-up investments based on country-level preparatory work supported by the global and interregional programmes, and undertaking joint programming.

18. GISP promote the establishment of partnerships between UNDP and external support agencies on a longer-term basis in support of the global objectives. There is real justification of global and interregional programmes to respond to the problems that transcend national boundaries.

19. Within the thematic thrust of UNDP, as mandated by the Executive Board, one of the greatest technical cooperation challenges is to re-orient UNDP-funded country-level programmes to promote sustainable human development. This requires new products, methodologies and approaches to be developed based on analysis of country-level experiences. For example, the SPR programmes in particular are designed to mainstream new thematic thrusts by country-level experimentation, and regional and global level documentation, analysis and sharing of best practices.

20. These programmes can be a means of bringing about change and introducing new approaches. Interregional and SPR sources of funding, in particular, allow new and important issues to be tested in selected countries or areas. These funds allow the risk of developing new approaches to be minimized by restricting initiatives to carefully selected programmes. It may be more difficult to apply country IPF funding for such activities.

21. The research sponsored particularly by global programmes assigns specific weight to developing country perspectives on the role of science and technology in development. Both north-south and south-south exchanges and sharing of the latest information promotes better understanding of complex development issues by sponsoring activities ranging from laboratory research to field testing on a widespread level.
22. SPR and interregional programmes, in particular, bring together advisory and other services from developing and developed countries in key sectors and themes in all regions. This usually involves carrying out a number of country-specific activities within a broad policy, multidimensional and multisectoral framework. Information on what does or does not work is synthesized nationally, regionally and interregionally. Lessons learned and tools developed are communicated from one country to another throughout the world through network approaches and technical cooperation among developing countries.

IV. UNDP’s COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

23. Among UNDP’s comparative advantages, the following are particularly relevant to the present discussion of GISP:

(a) Promoter of SHD. As the facilitator and promoter of sustainable human development (SHD), UNDP’s comparative advantage is its ability to support country-level initiatives in its focus areas - poverty, jobs, environment, gender - from a holistic perspective; its capacity to catalyse and implement international initiatives directly relevant to human development; and its ability to open up space for collaboration and partnerships between the state, civil society and market institutions through programmes that promote dialogue and identify mutually complementary roles;

(b) Neutrality. UNDP is not constrained by political, regulatory or other considerations that may face other external support agencies such as bilateral donors and development banks. This enables UNDP to provide the highest quality expertise to developing country partners, respond to country-specific needs, and support special activities which bilateral donors may not be possible to support directly;

(c) Cross-sectoral responsibilities. The mandate of UNDP as a development organization provides it with a unique perspective and potential to facilitate and support holistic responses to development issues - poverty elimination and sustainable livelihood, environmental regeneration and improvement, and empowerment and participation of women. These and related focus areas require interdisciplinary responses to key development issues, incorporating documentation and analysis of experience, and capacity-building at the country level.

(d) Worldwide country office network. UNDP’s unique worldwide field office network facilitates coordination within the UN system and enhances consultation among donors and among different governmental ministries and departments, the private sector and civil society institutions. At the country level, ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity of
the resident coordinator system to facilitate a more coherent and integrated approach to development, together with other development partners, provide a strong basis for breaking down the compartmentalized development approach and for more effective linkages between interregional, regional and country-level programmes;

(e) Advocacy role. UNDP has an advocacy role in special areas - poverty elimination, grass-roots participation, environmental improvement, governance, gender, sustainable livelihood, civil society institutions and the conservation of indigenous knowledge. UNDP can play an important role in mainstreaming these themes at the country, regional and global level through global, interregional and special programmes.

V. ACHIEVEMENTS OF UNDP-FUNDED GLOBAL, INTERREGIONAL AND SPR PROGRAMMES

24. The achievements of the global, interregional and SPR programmes can be measured in several ways: the mobilization of additional financial support from external support agencies, mainstreaming, at the country level, substantive themes mandated by the Governing Council/Executive Board, developing and adapting products and approaches to capacity-building, strengthening capacity-building, support for upstream and downstream activities, fostering international partnerships, influencing and generating investments at the individual country level, and building partnerships within the UN system.

25. Applying these criteria to an initial assessment of the activities currently supported by the individual global, interregional and SPR earmarking may prove useful to the Executive Board in its consideration of the Administrator's recommendation to merge these programmes under a single earmarking in the next programming period.

26. The 1994 report on the implementation of the SPR programmes is expected to be circulated during the current session. In addition, the Executive Board will be provided with the results of various SPR sub-programme evaluations scheduled during 1995. The achievements discussed in this section are based on initial assessments of both the global and interregional programmes and the SPR programmes.

VI. MOBILIZATION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

27. The global, interregional and special programmes have resulted in significant financial support being channeled from other UNDP sources and, most importantly, from external support agencies - bilateral donors, UN specialized agencies, World Bank, the private sector, and civil society institutions. This support has consisted of cost-sharing and trust funds from bilateral
donors and programme countries, additional funding from the country IPF and parallel financing.

28. There are many examples of the significance of global, interregional and SPR programmes in mobilizing additional resources to support country and interregional level-initiatives. Some of these are:

(a) Capacity 21 programme, with an allocation of $1.2 million from SPR, generated $48.6 million in cost sharing for the programme for country level support;

(b) Management Development Programme (MDP) had $28 million from SPR, which in turn mobilized about $30 million from cost-sharing and over $50 million from country IPFs;

(c) HIV and Development Programme received about US$2.5 million from interregional funds and mainstreamed a large amount of regional and country IPFs;

(d) Water Supply and Sanitation Programme, with $17 million from global and interregional allocation, mobilized $26 million from bilateral donors and $5 million from the World Bank;

(e) Environment and Natural Resources Programme led to the mobilization of $23 million from cost-sharing and country IPFs with $17 million from SPR;

(f) Urban Management Programme, with $5.6 million from interregional IPFs, generated $6 million cost-sharing and $5 million parallel financing;

(g) SPR allocation of $200,000 for the Forestry Programme raised about $3 million in cost-sharing;

(h) Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment (LIFE Programme) raised about $6 million through cost-sharing, trust funds and parallel financing during the second phase from the SPR contribution of $200,000.

VII. DEVELOPING AND ADAPTING NEW APPROACHES TO CAPACITY-BUILDING

29. Several products, directly linked to country-level actions, have been developed, adapted and applied at the country level through the global, interregional and SPR programmes: SHD exercises (Bolivia, China, Egypt, Guinea); model innovative approaches to meeting basic learning needs, especially those that improve the usefulness of basic education through intersectoral linkages (Bangladesh, Honduras, Lebanon); and methodologies for state modernization and public sector management (Colombia, Egypt, Honduras, Nepal, United Republic of Tanzania, and Venezuela).
30. Other products include training approaches and tools for the integration of environmental considerations into national development policy and planning practices; disaggregation of statistics by gender to enhance programming; methodologies for energy and water sector assessment and for community development; methodology of "process-consulting"; productive and sustainable farming and food systems; and tools for effective municipal finance and land management. These methodologies and approaches would improve the use of human and financial resources at the country level to meet the objectives of the SHD vision.

VIII. STRENGTHENING CAPACITY BUILDING INCLUDING INSTITUTIONS

31. Global, interregional and SPR programmes are either focused on capacity-building or include a capacity-building component designed to strengthen institutions and to develop human resources at various levels, ranging from government ministries to community groups. The Management Development Programme, for example, is expanding methodologies to cover all social partners, including local governments, civil society organizations and professional associations. MDP builds capacity through different entry points - economic and financial management (Nigeria), aid coordination (Zimbabwe), accountability (Tanzania), decentralization (Nepal) and poverty eradication (Pakistan). The demand for the services of MDP from programme countries has accordingly increased rapidly during the past few years. The HIV and Development Programme has stimulated and supported important research on economic and social aspects of the epidemic. It has supported greater understanding of the need for an enabling environment critical for effective policies and programmes for HIV.

32. The Capacity 21 programme assists countries to incorporate the principles of sustainable development into their development plans and programmes, to involve all stakeholders into development planning and management, and to create a body of experience and expertise in SHD that will be of continued value to developing countries and multilateral and bilateral donors. Among the country-level initiatives supported are the formulation of Agenda 21 and an action plan for its implementation in China, capacity-building for environmental management in Gambia, and strengthening of indigenous groups to protect the environment and the cultural patrimony in Honduras.

IX. UP-STREAM POLICY ANALYSIS AND SUPPORT

33. Sectoral and intersectoral strategies have been prepared by programmes dealing with sustainable agriculture, food security, forestry, water and sanitation, gender in development, energy, urban management, environment, civil society institutions, poverty eradication and grass-roots participation and other areas of UNDP concern. Poverty eradication and grass-roots programmes have provided upstream support in various countries to formulate
national poverty alleviation action plans, develop innovative approaches for poverty reduction, and link civil society organizations in preparation for the World Summit for Social Development (e.g. Jordan, Malawi, Morocco, Philippines, Sao Tome, Zimbabwe). New knowledge is generated and used at the country level through interregional and special programmes. Poverty situation analysis in Malawi is one example.

34. Capacity 21 and the Environment and Natural Resources Management Programme have contributed to the formulation and implementation of national environmental policies and action plans, and training of UNDP staff and concerned government counterparts to integrate environmental considerations into programme planning and management processes. Workshops have been held in about 100 countries. MDP has supported the design and implementation of civil service reform and decentralization policies in several countries including Tanzania, Zambia, Namibia, Nepal and Venezuela.

X. STRENGTHENING THE ADVOCACY ROLE OF UNDP

35. SPR programmes have strengthened UNDP’s capacity for advocacy of global themes mandated by the Governing Council/Executive Board: poverty eradication, grassroots participation, environment and natural resources, technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC), gender in development, transfer and adaptation of technology, and management development.

36. A modest amount of SPR has been used to open a computer conference facility on the Internet for organizations and individuals concerned with the issues addressed by the WSSD. The Gender-in-Development Programme has contributed to the strengthening of women’s organizations, facilitated regional and subregional cooperation of assessments of status of women, and assisted in the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference on Women. Country-based initiatives supported by the Programme include those in Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania and Sudan. The HIV and Development Programme has raised the awareness of the economic and social consequences of the epidemic.

37. The Private Sector Development Programme continues to promote the growth of the private sector in the development process. The Programme is supporting several country-based projects, including those in Egypt to enable the government to undertake a vital security market and development programme and those in China dealing with large enterprise management. MDP is supporting training programmes on governance for national staff of UNDP country offices to strengthen in-house capacity.

XI. INFLUENCING INVESTMENTS AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL
38. Over the past few years, many of the above results have led directly to or have influenced country-level investments. For example, UNDP/World Bank Water Supply and Sanitation Programme has been actively participating in the preparation of investment programmes. The Metropolitan Environmental Improvement Programme has led to the preparation of feasibility studies for follow-up investments. The UNDP/BCSD Public-Private Sector Partnership Programme is aimed at preparing feasibility studies to establish joint venture companies and promote investments in urban services, including waste management and water supply and sanitation in several countries including Colombia, Czech Republic and Zimbabwe.

XII. SUPPORTING DOWN-STREAM ACTIVITIES

39. The SPR-funded programmes have supported down-stream activities aimed at local actors - local governments, NGOs, and community groups. The Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment (LIFE Programme) has been promoting "local-local" dialogue between local government, NGOs and community groups. The Partners-in-Development Programme has been providing small-grants to NGOs to strengthen the local participatory processes. SPR was also utilized to support NGO involvement in the preparatory process for WSSD, through case studies on social development, experience-sharing between countries and among regions and to promote dialogues among NGOs and governments. Sustainable Agriculture Networking and Extension Programme (SANE) has initiated agro-ecological lighthouse activities at the country level (Cameroon, Cuba, El Salvador, Laos, Mali, Peru and Philippines). Lessons learned through the above down-stream activities are analysed and documented for replication at the national level and shared and disseminated at the global level.

XIII. PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

40. The global, interregional and SPR programmes have promoted international partnerships among development cooperation partners - developing countries, bilateral donors, multilateral agencies, civil society institutions, and the private sector. For example, the Urban Management Programme is the largest technical cooperation programme in the sector, involving partners from developing and developed countries and the UN system who meet regularly to share information and experiences, assess new tools and approaches, and mobilize additional financial resources to deal with the consequences of rapid urbanization. The Water Supply and Sanitation Programme provides a global framework for partnership among multilateral agencies, bilateral donors and networks of institutions to undertake water sector assessments and sharing of information about water supply and sanitation policies, programmes and practices. Support from UNDP global programmes include joint endeavours such as agricultural research conducted through the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and research on health through
similar consultative mechanisms in which UNDP as a co-sponsor plays a leading policy role.

XIV. PROMOTING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE UN SYSTEM

41. Interregional and special programmes have been instrumental in promoting partnerships with the UN system. For example, the Urban Management Programme is a partnership of UNDP, UNCHS/HABITAT, WHO and the World Bank in close collaboration with ILO, UNV and UNICEF. The programme promotes joint activities at the country and regional levels. The programme has supported the preparation of the DAC paper on urban development, the identification of agenda by the countries for HABITAT II and the preparatory process for HABITAT II. There are several examples of the use of poverty alleviation SPR for promoting partnerships with the UN system. In Mexico, the JCGP agencies and UNIFEM and WHO selected poverty as the main area for interagency collaboration. A study on poverty profiles will lead to joint programming. In the Philippines, the JCGP agencies provided technical cooperation support to the Presidential Commission to Fight Poverty to formulate an anti-poverty strategy. A study completed in 1993 was adopted as the basis for pursuing the government’s poverty reduction targets.