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RBAP IPSAS Training

Opening Remarks

by

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Good morning, colleagues from UNDP Headquarters, including all resource persons, in particular Mr. Darshak Shah, UNDP Deputy Assistant Administrator, Deputy Director and Chief Finance Officer in the Bureau of Management, who has flown from New York specially to be with you today and for the rest of the week. I would also like to welcome all participants from Country offices in the region, John Kidd, newly appointed Head of GSSC, his Deputy Karl O'Flaherty and all GSSC colleagues who have recently joined the UNDP family in Malaysia.

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to Kuala Lumpur for this Regional IPSAS training. UNDP Malaysia is happy to be hosting this IPSAS training workshop since, as you know, Malaysia has been selected as the site for the UNDP Global IPSAS Shared Services Centre (GSSC) which, hopefully, will be a global centre of excellence and the focal point of support for Global IPSAS implementation in UNDP when it goes live on 1 January 2012.

As some of you may know, Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, UNDP Associate Administrator was in Malaysia in July to make the announcement on the establishment of the IPSAS Centre together with the Secretary General in the Ministry of Finance of the Government of Malaysia. The Accountant General's Department in the Ministry of Finance, is the host agency for the GSSC and is providing host facilities in terms of office premises and establishment costs. In fact the approval for the establishment of the UNDP Global Shared Services Centre was done in record time in Malaysia since we first officially approached the Government only in February of this year. It required two Cabinet decisions, one at an overall policy level which we got in early May 2011 and then on the Legal Agreement which we got approximately a month ago. There were some tough months of legal negotiations which I had to lead in-country with the support of my team here and our Legal Support Office in New York but I am happy to say we got agreement on almost everything we wanted.

The UNDP country office in Malaysia has, indeed, been very involved in the processes of getting the Government to agree to host the Centre and provide financial incentives, in the recruitment exercise of national staff, all of whom have now been appointed, in identifying and liaising with the Government in setting up the office premises and in procuring the equipment and other items for the GSSC. At the moment the work on the premises is making good progress and it is hoped that GSSC staff will be able to move in by mid-December. In the meanwhile, staff will be mainly in training and we have made interim arrangements. I would like to take this opportunity to especially thank Dara, my ARR (O) and Lum, our HR Specialist for their very hard work during the period. We now have Jasson from our office dedicated fully to supporting the GSSC from the CO and from next month, we will have another colleague providing support on the finance side. Thanks also to Darshak, Simon, George and other HR colleagues.

I am also happy to inform you that the Secretary General in the Ministry of Finance and I signed the GSSC Agreement on 24 October which was doubly auspicious since it was UN Day.

It is clearly very prestigious for Malaysia to be selected by UNDP as the country of choice from a list of possible worldwide location options for the establishment of such a global centre of excellence. UNDP also believes that the establishment of the GSSC in Malaysia is in line with and supportive of Malaysia's Vision 2020 and its aspirations to become a high income country by then, because of its emphasis on the provision of professional financial services.

The hosting of this centre should also be viewed positively as a Malaysian Government contribution to the establishment of a global centre of excellence for the United Nations in the area of finance, specifically on International Public Sector Accounting Standards, which is regarded as global "best practice" in this area. In this context, I am happy to note that a number of Malaysian professionals have joined the GSSC. Most of them are with you today and will work together with the international staff at the GSSC, to help realise the objectives of the Centre.

It is hoped and I have no doubt, that the establishment of the GSSC in Malaysia will be beneficial to both UNDP and the Government of Malaysia, and assist in further strengthening UNDP's excellent partnership with the Government of Malaysia.

I hope you have a fruitful workshop and an enjoyable stay in Kuala Lumpur.

Thank you.