Speech by UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator
Mr Frode Mauring

Model UN – Gaza Strip / 27 September 2012

Distinguished Guests
Colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me as the UNDP Special Representative of the Administrator to address this energetic audience this morning in Gaza.

The Model UN has grown since the 1940s and today we have over 400,000 students worldwide participating every year.

This Model UN initiative will provide you with an exceptional opportunity to enhance knowledge of global challenges. It will teach you about international diplomacy; the patience needed to reach consensus; and the teamwork that reaps rewards.

Equally important, it is a forum where you will learn to understand the diverse perspectives of different countries on international issues, and, how to address them.

As a side effect, I trust you will end up having a better knowledge on the difficulties we in the UN have in promoting UN values and representing a body of international powers within a system that at the end of the day is a membership organization of 193 world countries.

Today, you and I have something very important in common: our shared concern and sense of responsibility for the world’s future.

Your interest in world affairs is of great importance in this fast changing world, which urgently needs us to take action to ensure sustainable development.

In this era, challenges have a global reach and cross all borders. Our future depends on how well we work together to meet those challenges. We must work together to

- Eradicate hunger and poverty
- Build a just system based on good governance and human rights
- Stand for people in crisis and whose rights have been infringed and
- Overcome climate change to create a greener and more sustainable world for all
The UN is the key instrument for tackling these challenges. The world needs a forum where sovereign states can come together to address common problems and forge a common future.

The UN provides the countries of the world with a forum to balance their national interests with global ones. It operates on the cooperation, agreement and participation of its member states.

The UN was founded with the mission to maintain world peace, develop good relations between different countries, promote cooperation, and encourage a respect for human rights.

Every day UN staff are in the field, providing food, shelter, developing systems and processes, and some even putting their lives at risk.

UNDP contributes to addressing some of these challenges through facilitating access to knowledge around the world, empowering women, youth, governments and communities, and giving a voice to people, especially the poor and marginalized.

Recent events around the region – Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Libya - have shown the power of young people to take the initiative and positively change the course of history. Increasingly, young people are saying, “This is not the world we want.”

Today is your moment to make your voices heard. The world is looking to you as the next generation for inspiration and action.

Just by bringing you together to discuss important international issues of today, you are laying the foundations as tomorrow’s leaders to advocate for solutions to these pressing problems.

Together we can find a way to make globalization work for the three billion people who are still living on less than two dollars a day - the people who will probably never enjoy a glass of clean water and are trapped in poverty.

The United Nations needs the engagement of young people on the challenges that will shape the world you leave to your children.

After all, you will soon be community leaders, lawyers, doctors, innovators, entrepreneurs, diplomats perhaps work for the UN or even be Secretary General.

We need your support to press forward our mission to promote peace, development and human rights.
The world must take account of the legitimate aspirations of young people for equal opportunity and a life of dignity.

In Gaza, setting up and launching a Model UN conference is indeed an initiative to be proud of especially under the difficult circumstances it is under.

According to a recent World Bank report the unemployment rate in Gaza reached 28.4 percent and only 34 percent of young Palestinians aged 15-29 are in the labour force.

The Model UN initiative will broaden your horizons to stimulate your skills in research, public speaking, negotiations, diplomacy, conflict resolution and global issues.

Such skills and values will empower you as youth to make a difference in your community.

I know how much of a challenge putting this conference is, but the beauty of the Model UN is that it will give you the courage and confidence to become agents for change.

My advice to you is enjoy your Model UN journey and be proud of what you will accomplish during the next three days.

Remember the words of Nelson Mandela "sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that generation".

I wish all the participants a successful Model UN and hope that it will be a fruitful and rewarding experience for you.

Thank you