CONCEPT NOTE

**MIND OVER MATTER**

*8 day cycling action to support healthy lifestyles and social inclusion in Belarus*

*(following Bike4 SDG initiative)*

MIND OVER MATTER is a voluntary cycling campaign initiated by UNDP and its partners from government, civil society, private sector, international and diplomatic community in Belarus.

**Dates:** 27 August – 3 September 2017

**Geography:** Hrodna and Minsk voblasts, cities of Hrodna and Minsk

**Background:**

This cycling initiative is logical a follow up to 2016 Inclusive Belarus initiative, targeted at localization and promotion of SDGs 3 (Health), SDG 10 (Reducing Inequalities) and SDG 17 (Promoting Partnerships). Pedaling a bike and talking about mental health may not seem like a remedy for mental disability, but it might be exactly what Belarus needs more of. In Belarus, neuropsychiatric disorders are estimated to contribute to 17.4% of the global burden of disease (WHO, 2008). Around the world, people living with mental health issues often face isolation, misdiagnosis, stigma and inadequate community support that are strong barriers to leading a dignified life. Some positive steps to address the issue have been already taken, Belarus has signed in 2015 and ratified in 2016 the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, recently adopted the National Plan for its implementation. But we still have a lot of work ahead to make sure no one is left behind. Our common goals could only be achieved if we work together.

MIND OVER MATTER is an effort to promote healthy lifestyles and combat the stigma of living with mental disability. The **goal** of the action is to facilitate mental health advocacy through collaborating with people with mental health conditions and those dedicated to making a difference by changing attitudes to mental disabilities in Belarus.

The ride will also invite cyclists to discover panoramic views of rural Belarus and visit UNDP project sites, interact with local communities and explore the national culture.

**Objectives:**

* Promote healthy lifestyles among general population.
* Contribute to social inclusion and empowerment of people living with disabilities;
* Raise awareness about people living with a mental health issues and help communities to abandon the social stigma associated with mental illness through transparency and awareness.
* Promote friendliness to environment, sustainable tourism and energy efficiency.