



Opening remarks of H.E. Ambassador Ib Petersen, President of the UN-Women Executive Board 2015

UN Women Executive Board
First Regular Session 2015

Date: 9 February 2015

- I am grateful for the opportunity and honoured to have been appointed as the President of UN-Women Executive Board for 2015. For a Danish Permanent Representative and for a person who has worked for women’s empowerment for the last 25 years - this is indeed a “dream” assignment.
- Dreams are important but not enough – we need action as well. And this year – 2015 - there will be a lot of action, as we will discuss later. I expect it to be a highly collaborative, challenging journey, and, most of all, a journey that will bring change to women and girls around the world.
- Women’s rights and empowerment has for long been a top priority for Danish Governments. We know from our own experience how women’s empowerment can transform societies. Denmark this year celebrates the 100th anniversary of women’s right to vote and run for parliament. We also know transformation is a long term struggle – only four years ago did we get the first female Prime Minister.
- The government of Denmark has supported UN-Women since its foundation including the opening of the UN-Women Nordic Liaison Office in Copenhagen in June 2013. The work of UN Women is in line with the Danish strategy for development cooperation, where gender equality is a priority in relation to securing the rights of women and girls, and furthermore in relation to achieving better and more effective development. Denmark is the fifth largest donor to UN-Women, and also providing diplomatic and political support to the Entity.
- Together with the Vice-Presidents and with the support of the entire memberships I wish to build on the good work and successes of the Executive Board in 2014. As mentioned,

2015 is a crucial year marked by the conjunction of major intergovernmental processes that will change the development landscape:

- 2015 is the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Conference. The Beijing+20 campaign and review undertaken by UN Women will be an extremely important landmark for the work of the intergovernmental negotiations taking place this year and will provide us with a deeper understanding of what we have achieved and where the gaps are.
- Also, the 15 year review of Security Council Resolution 1325 on women peace and security as well as the Secretary General's review of UN Peace Operations and the Peacebuilding Commission's review of the Peacebuilding Architecture [remind: Programme of Action from First World Conference in 1975 in Mexico City was titled: Equality, Development and Peace] will underline the importance of including the gender perspective in peace operations.
- From now until September the negotiations on financing for development, and the negotiations on the Post-2015 development framework and the adoption of the universally agreed Sustainable Development Goals will be where we set the scene for our efforts for the next 15 years, including on gender.
- And in Paris in December, we will finalise COP21 climate negotiations.
- This historic conjunction offers an opportunity - AS WELL AS an obligation for UN-Women, member states and other stakeholders – to ensure true transformative change to the lives of women and girls around the world. This is the moment – as was stated by The Girl Declaration last year [show it]
- I look forward to working with you to support UN Women in the fulfillment of its mandate, convinced that as stated in the Strategic Plan, the pursuit of gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment is one of the defining challenges for the twenty-first century. It is a prerequisite and a powerful driver for sustainable development, inclusive development, poverty eradication, peace and security and the realization of human rights for all. We know it – let's make sure it gets into the political declarations, the implementation and not least the monitoring of the implementation.
- With its three-fold mandate – normative, coordinating and operational – UN Women is in essence an embodiment of the role of UN. It will and should play an important role at all levels during negotiations and implementation of outcomes. Need support from and cooperation with member states and with other relevant stakeholders. Several dimensions:
- Engage men and boys, the other 50% of the world population. Later we will hear from Management about the “HeForShe” campaign, which has already made impressive

headway. Reminds me again of Girl Declaration: “This is the moment when my rising no longer scares you”.

- Other stakeholders – we need to broaden, private sector/business sector in particular important. Both from a resource mobilisation point of view but just as much from a rights and empowerment perspective. A lot already done, almost 1000 business CEOs signed up to Global Compact’s Women Empowerment Principles. We need many more. And we need to look for new forms of partnerships with private sector in particular also with a view to raise more funding for UN Women.
- Because above all we need a strong UN Women. That is fit for purpose, effective and efficient (re on evaluation later) and financially much more robust, as we will also discuss later today. Member states need to come forward and I hope we this year will see a marked increase in member state contributions.
- The Board has a specific role to play in making sure that UN Women will be delivering on its mandate, including on the ground. To that end, we will be discussing important issues throughout the year and at this meeting. Evaluation, implementation of the Strategic Plan, internal audit and investigation, resource mobilisation and the integrated budget for 2016-2017 will be some of the main issues on the agenda.
- In addition to this, it is my hope that *members* of the board will assume their role and responsibility in providing the necessary contribution to that work. Equally important I also hope that the membership will be assisting UN Women through general political support for our shared agenda as we engage in intergovernmental negotiations with the aim of building a more equal and just future for all women and men.
- To conclude: this is our agenda, it is challenging but surmountable and failure is not an option. I look forward to work with all of you giving support and guidance to UN-Women in a common effort to promote gender equality and women’s rights worldwide.