

“We appreciate your strong recognition of our achievements” —Executive Director at Executive Board

Closing Remarks of Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, at the Annual Session of the UN-Women Executive Board, 28 June 2016, New York.

Mr. President, Members of the Bureau, Members of the Board, Distinguished delegates, colleagues and friends.

I would like to thank President Ambassador Mohamed Khaled Khiari and the vice-presidents for the excellent work that was done. I would also like to thank Member States of the Executive Board for all the significant inputs that we have received in the last two days.

We are pleased that most Member States found the Mid-term Review to be well balanced and that you appreciated the consultative process undertaken in order for us to arrive at the report. We also appreciate your strong recognition of our achievements in the first two years of implementation of the Strategic Plan.

We note some of the concerns that we have and the challenges that we face, but also and very importantly, the suggestions and the corrections that you have presented to us. Despite challenges, we are continuing on our trajectory: to support women and girls around the world to fulfil their potential, realize their dreams and be game-changers for peace, development and prosperity.

We look forward to engaging in the same open and highly consultative manner as we formulate our new Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Between now and the Annual Session of 2017, we will have the opportunity to build on the lessons of the Mid-term Review, which are considerable. We will undertake further analysis to strengthen UN Women’s impact, effectiveness and institutional performance. We will also sharpen the presentation of results so that as much as possible we measure the difference that we make.

I must also add the fact that, because we work in a collaborative way, with a range of stakeholders, there are a lot of areas in which we cannot attribute every result specifically to UN Women. That is just the nature of our work. But we will try as much as possible to indicate the difference that we make. We think that it is important that we do not shortchange ourselves by making ourselves absent in the appreciation of the results. I hope you understand that dilemma, but also appreciate that this is an exciting position to be in because it demonstrates the high level of collaboration that we have.

We appreciate the Board's recognition that the establishment of robust corporate and oversight services takes time, but we also register your impatience for us to get to a stage where we can provide you with even more accurate and better results.

We will continue to work diligently within our current resource constraints to address the remaining and recurring issues as highlighted in the evaluation and internal audit reports. It is important however to highlight the fact that the internal audit report has recognized that the overall implementation rate of audit recommendations was at 99 per cent last year, and that is nine per cent higher than the 90 per cent target we set for ourselves. Nevertheless, we will not be complacent about the need to increase the coverage of areas that are audited, resources permitting, and also the need to address some of the

systemic problems that keep occurring. At headquarters level in particular we will ensure that we are fit for purpose to service the field even better, and we count on your continued oversight and support.

Several Board members highlighted UN Women's important role in women, peace and security and humanitarian action. We are grateful for this recognition and for your confidence in our ability to ensure that women are at the centre of interventions and responses. We also appreciate the fact that you support us in driving for more resilience in our intervention and ensuring that women and girls that we support in conflict areas emerge out of the conflict even stronger.

You saw the presentation from Mali. I think it speaks for itself about what can be done in conflict, post-conflict, fragile, and least-developed countries with limited resources. We also call on Member States to continue to support us to be well positioned in these areas that have similar and sometimes worse situations than Mali.

I thank Colombia for sharing its experience with the peace agreement reached last week, in which women were essential, and we were humbled to be a small part of supporting the women of Colombia. UN Women is proud to have been able to work alongside the people and the government of Colombia, but also with the UN system, which played a significant role in enabling UN Women to support the women of Colombia.

Some of you highlighted the important links that might be missed between humanitarian and development efforts. We are glad that as UN Women we have highlighted these links continuously, and that in the work that we do in promoting the resilience of women and girls who are affected by humanitarian crisis this has become a critical focal point for us, and increasingly for all other stakeholders.

You have called for UN Women and the UN system to improve cooperation, and we undertake to do so. We ask you also to support us, and to lead, in facilitating this collaboration between the different agencies. You have significant power in your hands, as drivers, and as leaders to ensure that this collaboration between and among agencies and across the UN is enhanced.

I recognize the concerns of some delegations towards growing conservatism in the world. There is a need for gender equality to combat this and preserve the achievements that we have already made. Germany in particular raised the fact that the conservatism and shrinking space for civil society affects women and girls even more profoundly, and this is an area that we hope to continue to work with you and with civil society. Iran also pointed out that these issues are hindering UN Women's universal mandate.

During this session we also saw an emphasis on the growing importance, and possibly even greater role, of UN Women in working with refugees and migrants. We appreciate the support that we have received from you in our role as the Chair of the Global Migration Group, and we hope that the time that is remaining we will be able to do even more, especially in light of the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Refugees and Migrants in September.

I was pleased to see recognition of the importance of the empowerment of women and girl migrants in particular, as it shows that you see the value and the importance of the disaggregated data that we are putting so much emphasis on.

We recognize and support the emphasis you place on strong and wide partnerships, not only between us and our partners in the UN system, but between us and the many outside partners with whom we work. This is a key lesson of the Mid-term Review. We will continue to deepen these partnerships which are even more important in the context of supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Thank you for your support of the Flagship Programmes, which you see as an innovative mechanism to contribute to gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

We have heard your emphasis on the need for coherence to address intersectional challenges. The importance of engaging men and boys, faith based organizations, youth and the private sector were underlined and we note that. As Iran pointed out, awareness raising for men and boys has proven very effective in the efforts to combat violence against women and girls. But we also recognize that we have a long way to go in this regard.

Gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda was highlighted by almost all of you. We thank you for the trust and responsibility given to us in your statements as far as this work is concerned. We were also happy to hear that many of you have started the implementation full steam, for example through an action plan, as was highlighted by Kenya. South Africa, Columbia, and India were also among those who emphasized the importance of national capacity building.

The importance of core and flexible resources was noted. You also reiterated that UN Women should continue to expand the donor base. Believe me we do this day and night! And we note the need to reach out for innovative ways of financing and to non-traditional donors, particularly in the private sector.

One example which maybe we did not discuss is the relationship we have with MasterCard. It [enables women in Nigeria to have an identity card](#) that will increase the possibility for them to experience financial inclusion and access different financial products in the market that they cannot access in the current context. It will also improve the safety with which women are able to receive these services. MasterCard will also collaborate with us to facilitate individual giving and we hope to launch this programme before the end of this year. This will expand public giving to UN Women, which again is a completely new area for us and is highly innovative.

I would like to thank countries for their contributions to UN Women. I want to highlight Italy's increase to core contribution by 50 per cent in 2016. Japan reaffirmed that their contribution in 2016 amounts to USD 30 million, which represents an increase in both core and non-core. Germany doubled its contribution for the budget year 2016. The Netherlands increased from USD 4 million in 2015 to 7 million in 2016. We would like to add to these numbers and increase the trajectory, but also we are concerned with breaking the glass ceiling that still limits our capacity to reach the targets that you have set and supported for us. At the current level, we have a shortfall of USD 170 million, so as we do increase financing we hope that we can break the ceiling so we can ultimately close this gap.

We have therefore enlisted the support of the Boston Consultancy Group to assist us to position ourselves better, particularly on this issue of breaking the glass ceiling, both with Member States and with the private sector and other types of donors. We looking forward to have this initiative take us to a much higher level.

We look forward to meeting you in the Second Regular Session of UN Women, which takes place 1 and 2 September 2016. During the session, we will continue the Structured Dialogue on Financing. The report will provide an up-to-date assessment of UN Women's current level of funding including information on funding gaps. I hope there will be no gap.

We will present the evaluation of UN Women's contribution to UN coordination on gender equality. We will also provide a briefing on innovations to scale up gender equality and the empowerment of women—an issue many of you raised in your statements. There will be a report on the independent and external assessment of the harmonized cost-recovery methodology.

I cannot thank you enough for the decisions that you have approved in this last session. I know it took a lot of work but the decisions are empowering to us, they are facilitative and they are challenging. We know that they will make our work better but they will also increase our capacity to deliver on our mandate.

Thank you again for investing so much time in giving us feedback and for the decisions that you have agreed to. We look forward to engaging with you in September, where we hope that we will be able to break new ground.

Thank you.