

Closing remarks by Aparna MEHROTRA, UN System Coordination Division of UN-Women, on behalf of Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Under Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women

Thursday, 20th June 2019

General thank you

- I would like to **thank Madame President Penelope Beckles** for leading us through this session so effectively.
- I would also like to thank the Vice-Presidents for their work.
- And I thank the delegations for all their engagement over the past three days, that have contributed to a rich exploration of views.
- UN Women's relationship with the Executive Board is a resource we truly value. Whether in this room, at informal sessions, or during field visits, we know that we have real dialogue with you.
- This relationship is a critical asset, as we continue to adapt to UN reform, our change management process and the high demands of the Beijing+25 events amidst a challenging context.

What came up in the statements

- We heard opening statements from **30 Member States** and there was a good level of interaction during this session, which we appreciate.
- We heard from you about the implications of the multiple milestones that we will reach in **2020**, including UN Women's ten-year anniversary and the review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at its 25th anniversary (Beijing+25). We thank you for your support and engagement in these critical processes.

- We thank **Germany, Norway and other Member States** for their positive comments UN Women’s comprehensive **change management** process. We are committed to keeping the Board informed on progress on all aspects of this process and we will be proactive in this regard.
- We note the encouragement for further communication efforts to raise awareness and **increase visibility for UN-Women’s activities**. And we have heard the call from **Nepal, Denmark, the Republic of Korea, and Germany and others** for measures to promote general **transparency, efficiency, and accountability** of our organizational and Executive Board activity.
- We also heard your asks for **intensified resource mobilization efforts** and the diversification of UN-Women’s funding sources, including through increasing engagement with the private sector. We call on you to be strong advocates for UN Women’s funding, including with each other and with decision-makers in your capitals.
- UN Women is strongly committed to the Funding Compact. We hope that Board members will also lead by example by keeping and even surpassing their commitments. This is especially true on the need to ensure a good balance between core and non-core resources.
- We very much appreciated our discussion on the Integrated Budget yesterday. We are taking your guidance on board to finetune our proposals ahead of the next session and the ACABQ hearing.
- We also call on the Board to support a realistically ambitious budget for UN Women in 2020-2021. As you know, we have presented a zero-growth budget – that’s the realistic part – but we believe we can close the current resource gap – that’s the ambitious part. The political significance of bringing UN Women to its expected level of resources in 2020 is very strong and we count on you to use it and amplify it.
- An adequate budget is critical to ensure adequate resources for all our functions, including **Independent Evaluation and Audit Service (IEAS)** as well as investigations, as many of you have highlighted.

- At the same time, we are putting in place contingency plans to ensure that all critical functions can operate if funding targets are not met. This is also a consideration of the change management process.
- Approving the proposed budget is also critical for the full implementation and the integrity of our Strategic Plan.
- We thank you for commending our work in the first year and the high level of performance. We noted the concerns over **data collection** in relation to indicators for evaluating progress towards implementing the 2030 Agenda and achieving its Sustainable Development Goals and we will redouble efforts ahead of next year's report.
- Many of you have also emphasized the importance of leaving no one behind. We will work to heed the call for greater mainstreaming of issues related to **disability and accessibility**. As well as the need for UN-Women to mainstream **climate change** issues.
- We appreciate and share the enthusiasm that some of you have mentioned for UN Women's flagship report, **Progress of the World's Women**, focusing on Families in a Changing World, which will be launched next week. And we look forward to working together to implement the report's proposed policy agenda to advance women's rights and ensure that all families can flourish.
- We share the concern expressed by **Norway, Finland, Ireland and Ghana** about the **current pushback against gender equality** and women's empowerment and their affirmation of UN-Women's role in standing strong against this pushback. And we appreciate the emphasis by **China** on the important role of UN-Women at this time when **multilateralism** is under being challenged. Addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in a decisive manner is an important part of countering this pushback.
- We will continue to engage in **UN reform processes** to ensure that these reforms deliver for gender equality. And we will continue to make adaptations to strengthen the RC system and the new generation of UNCTs. Our country-level strategic notes are already fully aligned to

UNDAFs/Cooperation Frameworks and we are glad that the Board's guidance emphasized the importance of this.

- We heard the report of the **Office of Internal Oversight (OIOS)** focusing on investigations into allegations of sexual harassment and cases of abuse of authority and other abuse cases in UN Women. We appreciate your support as we work to increase transparency in handling disciplinary measures and misconduct, as well as the need to focus on improving management accountability and workload.
- We also appreciate your feedback on **the findings of the independent victim-centered review of UN-Women's policies and processes on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, presented by the Deloitte**. We have heard your call for the need to take a victim-centered approach in our policies, including through an emphasis on reporting and a 'speak out' culture, and investigations, particularly for those on short-term contracts who are especially vulnerable to abuse and harassment. Our commitment in this area is very strong, not just for UN Women but the entire UN system.

Concluding points

- Distinguished delegates, we have important events ahead of us: The **HLPF** in July and an important high-level week during the General Assembly, with the **SG's Climate Action Summit**, the SDG Summit, and high-level meetings on financing for development and on universal health coverage. These are important opportunities for Member States to make concrete commitments to address growing inequalities, take urgent climate action and strengthen institutions for inclusive, just and peaceful societies. This requires urgent actions from all stakeholders for sustainable change, action that integrates gender perspectives at all stages of planning, budgeting and implementation to achieve progress for women and girls.
- UN-Women is a product of UN System Reform. We were established, with a mandate from Member States, to support the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment around the world. We remain committed to leverage all parts of our mandate – from the normative and

policy work; to our coordination efforts and the leveraging partnerships, to our operational work and the delivery of impactful programming on the ground in order to deliver transformational change in the lives of the women and girls, men and boys that we serve around the world. We remain committed to serving as a partner / agent for change, in alignment with Member States to continue to deliver on this important mandate, amidst push back but most importantly, taking advantage of the exciting times and opportunities ahead. I look forward to continuing our discussion as we convene for the next official session, Second regular session, 9–10 September 2019.

- In closing, I would like to thank the President and the Bureau again. I would also like to extend sincere appreciation and thanks to the many presenters whom we have heard over the past 3 days. I would also like to thank and recognize the Secretary of the Executive Board and its effective team that once again delivered on a successful Board session as well as the interpreters and all the staff of the Conference management services and technicians of the UN Secretariat whose support has been invaluable.
- Thank you.