

**Closing remarks by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women and the Second Regular Session of the UN Women Executive Board**

*Wednesday, 16 September 2020*

[As delivered]

Thank you, Mr. President, for leading us through us the Second Regular Session of 2020 so efficiently. Thank you for presiding over the session that brought to the meeting the founding Godmothers of UN Women and the many, many people who were responsible for the creation of UN Women. I would like to say, Mr. President, that you have become a Godfather of UN Women in your own right and thank you for playing that role.

I would also like to thank the Vice-Presidents for their contributions and for their skillful facilitation of the adoption of the draft decisions. It was seamless and smooth. Thank you so much for this effective way of working.

I want to thank the delegations without whom we could not have made this progress. Thank you for your cooperation and collaboration.

This session allowed for fruitful dialogue as well as for marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN-Women. This is not a small number. We may be little girl of ten, but we know that in today's world the young people are the ones that will make our future brighter. So, we belong to that group of people in the world that will make the world even brighter and better.

UN Women is also very appreciative of the extraordinary trust and confidence that has been built over the years between the Executive Board and UN Women. Having been in this position for some years now it's been a pleasure to see how we have moved from Board to Board strengthening trust every time.

We have also been appreciative of the quality of openness our discussions continue to enjoy with the Board and with the Staff Council, as you have seen. This relationship is even more crucial as we respond to the COVID-19 crisis and together, moving in waters that have never been charted before.

We welcome the opening statements from 21 Member States with high-level participation and engagement.

We share your concerns on the decline of core-resources below 30 per cent and look forward to working together to reach a better balance between core funds and non-core funds. I think everything that has happened in these past months has demonstrated the importance of having a well-established UN Women and many of the programme countries testified to the importance of the services we deliver.

We are aware that the COVID-19 crisis will impact our resource mobilization, because no country has been left untouched by the financial crisis created by this pandemic. Mitigating the associated

risks will have our undivided attention in the time ahead and we count on your support in this regard.

I want to thank those Member States who, in the intervening period, have given to us generously, enabling us to move with agility. I recognize Germany for their generous contribution of US\$5 million and Japan for disbursing US\$22.3 million in 2020, which has been very essential in this time.

We will continue our efforts to diversify our funding resources and expand our partnerships, including the partnerships we are establishing with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). We heard you very clearly. We heard your call for us to do more to diversify our resources. We are also asking you, as Member States within many of these financial institutions, to please speak on our behalf and to “soften the ground for us”.

UN Women remains fully committed to increasing our resource mobilization efforts and outreach to the private sector, raising both financial resources, but also non-financial support which averts very significant expenses.

Just to give you an example, Mr. President, Google’s contribution has enabled us to have 72,000 clicks directed to our website, particularly people looking for materials on gender-based violence, and we have been able to have these adverts in different languages at a cost that we could never afford on our own. But of course, we will continue to raise funds as well because we do incur other expenses.

I also want to assure you that we remain fully committed to the implementation of the commitments of the funding compact. This is an opportunity to improve and to act on the issues that have been raised.

On the cost-recovery policy, we agree with Germany and other Member States that the policy will greatly improve harmonization, transparency and collaboration, and we appreciate that you see UN Women as a front-runner on this. We will continue to pave the way for this policy in the UN system, building on our coordination role.

We agree with the statement delivered by the UK on the effective implementation of the UN reform and its cornerstones, including the funding compact. We note the key areas where more concerted effort is needed, including intensifying our engagement with the development of UNSDSF as part of gender mainstreaming work.

We appreciate the positive comments made by several Member States on UN Women’s response to the COVID-19 crisis, and appreciate the flexibility demonstrated by our donors that made this agile response possible.

We will continue to work closely with the UN System to make sure that the COVID-19 response as well as the recovery efforts are gender-responsive.

The Multi-partner Trust Fund has been an important instrument in this regard and UN-Women has succeeded in centre-staging gender here, including through a dedicated gender marker, but we do not want to be complacent and we are asking you not to be complacent as well. Please keep on asking questions in order to make sure that this gender marker works effectively as long as the Multi-partner Trust Fund exists.

We are thankful for the encouragement on the progress UN Women has made on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, as highlighted in the mid-term review. We agree with Member States that the roadmap for the next Strategic Plan will include extensive consultations on multiple levels. We value the consultations that we have had with you and the input that we derive from that as well as the consultations that we have with other stakeholders, including our grassroots partners in women's organizations and increasingly the young people as well.

The current Strategic Plan came together through a very consultative process and we have committed that the process for the Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 will be even more consultative and inclusive.

Several Member States also highlighted the importance of gender-disaggregated data and data-driven programming. This is an effort that we focus greatly on and work jointly with other UN agencies to ensure, as was explained yesterday by Sarah Hendriks.

We also duly note your recommendations on the evaluation function and the meta-synthesis of evaluations and intend to continue being ambitious in ensuring accountability and learning from everything we glean from the process. We will continue to maximize impact inside the organization as well as ensure gender-mainstreaming in evaluations systemwide.

We appreciate your support in moving forward the proposed reforms of the working methods of the Executive Boards. UN Women, which is itself the outcome of UN reforms, is always keen to push the envelope on harmonization and increased cooperation, and we will continue to champion this issue in the years to come with our sister agencies.

We have seen the benefits and the importance of reforms. One thing that is certain is change itself, and reforms are part of the change that is inevitable in our type of work.

Distinguished delegates, despite the magnitude of challenges we are undergoing this year, UN Women is keeping up the momentum on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and we look forward to marking this on October 1 as well as through the Generation Equality Forum and its outcome in the following year. We are asking you please to mobilize your capitals and your heads of state to participate in these events as actively as they can and to be with us in making bold statements as well as commitments that will move us forward and avert some of the predictions that we spoke about during this meeting, which would affect girls and women negatively.

I hope to see you at the high-level event on gender-based violence and COVID-19 on 29<sup>th</sup> September that the Secretary-General has called for and we hope that this too will be something

that you discuss with your capitals. And tomorrow, we look forward to seeing you at “Women Leaders for Generation Equality”.

I’d like to thank you, Mr. President, along with your Bureau, the rest of the Executive Board, my staff for their tireless work, and our Secretary for always being cool and making sure that everything moves seamlessly. And I would like to extend my sincere appreciation and thanks for the presentations made during these two days of virtual engagement and the appreciation expressed at our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

And last but not least, I would like to make sure that Jean-Luc Bories and his team are strengthened by seeing that the good work that they do gives us seamless Board meetings every time.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.