

Statement
Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Director of UN Women
First Regular Session UN Women Executive Board 2013
23 January 2013

Good morning and Happy New Year!

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Colleagues and Friends,

It is great to see all of you and I am happy to be here. As we kick off 2013, I would like to welcome all new Board members and say thank-you to good friends who have been committed to UN-Women during past years.

I express deep appreciation to the outgoing President of the Board, Ambassador Kim Sook of the Republic of Korea, and to the entire bureau for 2012. Thank you to Ms. Pille Kesler (Estonia), Ms. Carmen Arias (Peru), Mr. Fernando Fernandez-Arias (Spain) and Mr. John Gana (Nigeria). I would like to thank them for their extraordinary efforts and dedication.

I would like to welcome the new President, Ambassador Normans Penke of Latvia, and the members of the Bureau, Mr. Vincent Herlihy (Ireland), Mr. Junichi Sumi (Japan), Ms. Janet Karim (Malawi), and Mr. Roberto de Leon (Mexico).

This is a year of high turnover within the Executive Board membership. Please join me in giving a warm welcome to our 18 new members. They are Algeria, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Djibouti, Gabon, Gambia, Ireland, Latvia, Malawi, Maldives, Philippines, the Solomon Islands, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Venezuela. Welcome! We are glad to have you on Board!

All of us in UN Women look forward to close collaboration with you and our Executive Board this year.

Mr. President,

Since we last met, we heard tragic news from India that ignited public outrage in that country, which echoed around the world. I am speaking of the brutal gang rape and death of a 23-year-old student in New Delhi. We also heard of the case of a gang rape of a 16-year-old girl here in the United States, in Steubenville, Ohio, which is going to trial. And we remember the tragic shooting in Pakistan of girls' education activist, Malala. This senseless violence, wherever it takes place, must be condemned and perpetrators must be brought to justice. There is greater

awareness than ever before that violence against women and girls cannot and will not be tolerated.

Violence against women is rampant everywhere, in all countries. And everywhere, women and men are rising up and saying: Enough is enough. UN Women is calling on Governments everywhere to COMMIT to end violence against women and girls. So far, 16 governments have announced new commitments and I encourage all governments to do the same.

UN Women will keep pushing, as a priority, to end violence against women in all its forms. We look forward to the upcoming 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, where this will be a priority theme, as it should be.

Since we last met, I travelled to West Africa, to Senegal, Nigeria and Mali, where I spoke to women in Mali who were displaced by the crisis. They told me about the horrific violence and human rights violations they had endured and witnessed, and pleaded to be fully engaged in efforts to make and build peace in their country.

All over the world, women are standing up and speaking out for their right to live free of fear, discrimination and violence, and to make decisions for themselves, their communities and their nations.

In 2012, significant advances were registered for women and gender equality. In January, Colombia began implementing its law for land restitution and reparations, including for victims of sexual violence. In May, Algeria broke new ground in the Arab world by achieving 30 percent of women in parliament. In July, the Olympic Games witnessed the first time that every sporting event included both men and women. In September, the Philippines ratified the international treaty on domestic workers' rights and it entered into force. In October, we celebrated the first International Day of the Girl Child and called for an end to child marriage. In December, UN Member States adopted the first-ever resolution to ban female genital mutilation. These are just some of the highlights of last year: you can see the entire list, which has been uploaded as part of the PaperSmart initiative.

It has been two years since UN Women became operational and we can say with certainty that women's voices are no longer silenced and women's issues are no longer sidelined as they were before. Women's issues are world issues. As awareness and action rise, indifference is declining.

In a world with climate change, poverty, inequality and conflict, we can no longer afford to hold back the potential of half the world's population. Unleashing the potential of women and girls is no longer an option; it is an urgent necessity if we are to tackle the many challenges that we confront as humanity and strengthen peace, justice and democracy.

Report On Operational Activities

Mr. President,

I am pleased to present my report on our Operational Activities (UNW/2013/1). As you know, we have three main reports that we prepare on our work annually. These are a report on our

normative activities to the Commission on the Status of Women; a report that we provide you, our Executive Board, on implementation of our Strategic Plan; and this report on our operational activities that we provide, through you, to the UN Economic and Social Commission.

Our operational activities are key to the results we achieve and I am happy to have the opportunity to share these with you. At the same time, I would like to emphasize the importance we place on our operational activities being closely aligned with our normative work. This is key to what we do, and to what we have achieved.

Increasingly, as we develop as an organization, we come to appreciate ever more the connectedness between our operational and normative roles, a connectedness that even, at times, makes such a distinction seem merely academic. The General Assembly afforded us a mandate that combines both aspects, which we were pleased to see echoed in the recent resolution of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).

It is our job not only to achieve results, but also to demonstrate a way of working which we hope will bring value to the work of the entire United Nations system. The rollout of the Regional Architecture, with a planned 6 regional offices, 6 multi-country offices and close to 50 country offices, is designed to ensure that we have the presence and the field capacity to deliver against this mandate.

This report on operational activities covers:

- Funding;
- Strategic Partnerships;
- Capacity Development;
- Improved Functioning of the UN System;
- Evaluation; and
- Follow-up to International Conferences.

Allow me to speak briefly to some of these areas.

Funding

When it comes to funding, which I will say more about later, this report shows that, despite our increasing budget, we have not yet met the funding targets set out in our Strategic Plan. At the same time, the increase in the number of Member States that are donors to UN Women, up from 107 in 2010 to 117 in 2011, is positive in terms of resources, and more importantly in terms of the public affirmation of the support that Member States afford us.

Strategic Partnerships

In the area of partnerships, I want to again highlight the first convening of UN Women's new Global Civil Society Advisory Board. This is something to which I attach great importance to

ensure that UN Women works in a supportive and complementary way with the women's movement globally. We also have new partnerships with private sector actors such as Microsoft, Coca Cola and Tag Heuer.

Expanding and strengthening partnerships has been a crucial aspect of our work, including in addressing violence against women. In 2011 and 2012, UN Women partnered with a public private initiative, called "Together with Girls", to end sexual violence against girls in Haiti, Kenya, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Surveys were carried out in all five countries to inform national action plans. We also partner with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts to create educational material and safe spaces for girls to speak out against violence and get the support they need.

Capacity Development

On capacity development, I would like to stress that this is a modus operandi for UN Women that cuts across our five priority areas of operational work. These priorities are to advance women's political participation and leadership, to expand women's economic empowerment, to end violence against women and girls, to increase women's participation in peace-making and peace building, and to support national plans and budgets for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In 58 countries, we supported capacity development on gender sensitive planning and budgeting, contributing to national plans and budgets incorporating national gender equality priorities. In six countries, Bolivia, Ecuador, Mali, Morocco, Nepal and Zimbabwe, this led to increased national resources allocated for gender equality with combined budgetary increases of over \$1.5 billion. UN Women also supported networks of women living with HIV and caregivers in 26 countries to participate in decision-making for an effective HIV response that promotes the rights of women.

In 35 countries, we supported women's leadership and participation, contributing, among other results, to eight countries increasing the number of women elected to office at national and local levels. These countries are Algeria, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Libya, Mexico, Morocco, Nicaragua and Senegal. We also supported laws to enable further progress. In El Salvador, for instance, we supported a joint effort by 22 women's groups, the Parliament and the Supreme Court that led to the passage of a new law that promotes the political participation of women and the integration of gender-specific provisions in all public policies. Another example comes from India, where last October we launched a Regional Centre of Excellence for elected women representatives at the local level. There are 3 million women in the sub-region serving as village council members and leaders. And this virtual network and resource centre will help these women leaders in South Asia to exchange knowledge, learn from each other and help other women to get elected.

To end violence against women and girls, UN Women supported work in 57 countries to strengthen laws and improve service delivery for survivors of violence. As a result, there are new units to address family violence in the Solomon Islands, new gender units led by the Tanzania female police network, and increased access to care in countries including Algeria, Mauritania, Rwanda and Zimbabwe, where one-stop centres now reach more than 1,700 survivors. There is

also increased awareness of sexual harassment and violence in public spaces, something you will hear more about in our presentation tomorrow on our Safe Cities programme.

In 38 countries, we worked for women's economic empowerment, contributing to the reform of labour laws, greater awareness of women on their economic rights including strengthened inheritance rights, and improved entrepreneurial skills. Support has especially targeted the most vulnerable women, including rural women, indigenous women and migrant women workers. In Rwanda, for instance, a mobile network of paralegals was established to empower 100,000 rural women to claim their inheritance and land ownership rights. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, women's centres have reached an estimated 28,000 women in the West Bank with training on leadership and income generation projects. In Guatemala, service centres for women entrepreneurs enabled more than 10,000 indigenous women to gain access to technical and financial services to improve their livelihoods. And similar centres have been established in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.

UN Women supported 21 countries to place women at the heart of peace and security. This resulted in strengthened capacities for developing national action plans for Security Council Resolution 1325 in Georgia, Indonesia, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Pacific region, and also to more women trained in mediation. To reduce sexual violence in conflict, peacekeepers were trained in several countries, and army officials were trained to promote women's security and rights in Mali, Nepal and Rwanda.

We have focused efforts on capacity development through South-South cooperation. This is an area where we are getting better, even if we are still not playing the role I hope we will in the future. As you know, strengthening our capacity as a facilitator of South-South cooperation was one of the principles behind our new regional architecture. Our recent review of country-level activities last month suggests that we are already making significant progress in this regard. I look forward to sharing with you the fruits of these efforts at subsequent sessions, and in particular in my Annual Report on implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Improved functioning of the UN system

Mr. President,

We have made progress on supporting gender equality at a UN system-wide level with accountability. This has included the Chief Executive Board's endorsement of the UN System-Wide Action Plan, progress towards a gender marker, strengthening of UN Development Assistance Frameworks, and the increased coordination of work at the country level through gender theme groups and joint programmes.

UN Women has led the rollout and implementation of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. We prepared and shared a communication package with all UN entities for their own adoption on communication networks. Nearly a dozen UN entities have sought UN Women assistance in developing UN SWAP-aligned gender policies. Furthermore, UN Women is developing guidance to promote the alignment in gender equality policies across the UN system.

Under the leadership of UN Women's Training Centre in Santo Domingo, an introductory gender-training module for all staff is being developed. And I can tell you that partnering with others in the system on specific performance indicators has been essential. The first reporting by the UN system entities will take place at ECOSOC this year, and it will form the baseline, from which to track further progress.

I am pleased to report that UN Women is making increased use of information technology-based tools to foster better analysis, accountability and information gathering/sharing. As many of you know, we are working with the UN Statistics Division and other partners on the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality, or EDGE, initiative to have comparable gender indicators on health, education and employment. We are also working on the Knowledge Gateway, an online platform under development to mobilize capacity among partners to act on the trends and drivers of change for women's economic empowerment.

We look forward to your comments arising from the report on operational activities, as part of a discussion on our work that will continue when I present my report on implementation of our Strategic Plan at the Annual Session.

Strategic Plan

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

UN Women's Strategic Plan was formulated after extensive consultations with the broadest range of our stakeholders. It was adopted merely eighteen months ago in line with the 2008 QCPR resolution. The plan envisaged a time horizon to 2017 and it lays out the priorities of the organization for achieving these goals up to 2017.

Events over the past eighteen months from the Arab Spring to ever-growing voices for policy and action for gender equality in both the public and private sectors, to strong movements to eradicate violence against women, fully validate the scope of our plan. The plan is relevant.

It was a remarkable achievement by a newly created Board to adopt such a solid strategic plan which provides relevancy and high value-added to the mission and work of UN Women.

Now as we move forward, with a view to harmonize with other agencies for the period of 2014 to 2017 as you requested, UN Women is taking an approach to the Strategic Plan based on three over-arching principles.

First, the continued relevancy of the vision and objectives of the Strategic Plan. Second, a number of subsequent significant events, including the 2012 QCPR, the Rio+20 Conference, UN Women joining in partnership with UNAIDS and the H4+, getting the SWAP adopted, and the ongoing post-2015 development framework and SDG discussions should now be reflected in the Plan. Third, the results framework of the plan should be streamlined to provide for strong management of results.

Therefore, UN Women proposes to update the narrative of the plan to capture developments since the plan's adoption eighteen months ago and to streamline the development results framework in close consultation with the Board.

This mirrors, and is in line with, the approach taken by the Executive Boards of a number of funds and programmes in extending their Strategic Plan to harmonise with the comprehensive policy review.

We look forward to consulting with all of you in the weeks to come to present an updated plan at the September session of the Board.

Mr. President,

As the Executive Board, you have always placed great importance on the operational, normative and coordination role of UN Women. In this light, I would like to share with you some information on upcoming events and ongoing processes.

Given the severity of the problem of violence against women, it is essential to have a strong outcome at the upcoming 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. I say this because a strong outcome at the global level provides a key opportunity for governments at the national level, especially for gender equality ministries, to initiate new action and galvanize political commitment from heads of state and government and from cabinets. A strong outcome can foster commitments from a range of ministries to incorporate steps to end violence against women within their policy areas. It also provides an opportunity to advocate for greater allocation of resources within national budgets, and build new and deepen existing coalitions and partnerships with a range of stakeholders at all levels.

A strong outcome is valuable to civil society organizations to perform their many roles including those of advocacy, acting as change agents that demand accountability from political leaders, and as service providers that work with survivors. And finally, a strong outcome provides a road map for the UN system to support Member States. I have no doubt that CSW will live up to expectations and produce a strong and forward-looking outcome with recommendations for action that are practical, action-oriented, and thus make a significant contribution to ending violence against women.

At UN Women, we are preparing effectively and systematically. Our expert group meeting last September provided solid inputs on the question of prevention. We have completed the documentation for the session, and I am confident that the recommendations in the reports will be a solid starting point for Member States' negotiations. We are working with the entities of the UN system to ensure that all the evidence, expertise and experience, especially also from the ground, is channelled into the session. We are supporting and encouraging dialogue and interaction among Member States in the lead-up to the session to identify key areas for progress in ending violence against women. Regional consultations are underway. A meeting was recently held in Addis Ababa with the participation of dozens of Ministers. We are also supporting the Bureau of CSW in guiding inter-governmental preparations.

A clear message from the Stakeholders' Forum that UN-Women convened in mid-December was that not having agreed conclusions is not an option. I look forward to the active and constructive involvement of all delegations towards such an outcome.

I also look forward to the prioritization of gender equality and women's empowerment within the post-2015 development agenda, and would now like to update you on recent developments. Given the importance of wide consultations among all stakeholders in this process, UN Women organized a first briefing for civil society organizations on 12 September here in New York. We have been working and will continue to work closely with civil society advisory groups. At the country level, UN Women representatives have been tasked to ensure that women's civil society organizations have a voice and engage in post-2015 country consultations. UN Women is also working with other UN agencies to ensure women's groups engage in all the thematic consultations, including the one on inequalities that we are co-leading with UNICEF. We are encouraging civil society partners to participate in online dialogues.

UN Women is making a strong case for the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the future post-2015 framework. We are advocating a stand-alone gender equality goal and for mainstreaming a gender perspective throughout all areas of any new framework. The Expert Group meeting held by UN Women and partner UN agencies on gender equality in the post-2015 agenda late last year outlined a vision for a world in which all forms of discrimination are eliminated and women's rights are fully realized, based on principles of human rights, universality, sustainability, equality, inclusiveness and accountability.

Our country offices are closely engaging with Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams to ensure women's voices and concerns are heard in the country consultations. Gender equality and violence against women have been highlighted in the Inequalities Consultation, including in many of the papers received and in the online consultations. We will also be engaging closely in the Technical Task Team established to support the Open Working Group to ensure gender equality is integrated into the Sustainable Development Goals.

Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review

Mr. President,

I would now like to speak about the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, and its importance for UN Women and all UN Member States.

UN Women is delighted that the QCPR resolution (A/RES/67/226) provides unprecedented emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment as central to the UN operational activities and fundamental to development. We also welcome the resolution's reaffirmation of UN Women's system-wide role.

The resolution clearly requests the UN development system to substantially increase the investment in, and focus on, gender equality and women's empowerment. Indeed the creation of UN Women should never serve as an excuse to reduce the UN system's investments in gender

equality and the empowerment of women. Instead, it should strengthen the resolve and the investment in gender equality and women's empowerment within the UN system and enhance the coherence and effectiveness of its work. In this regard, we are particularly pleased that the resolution places strong emphasis on accountability, welcoming the development of the System-wide Action Plan, calling for its implementation and by calling for the use of UNCT Performance Indicators on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (the Scorecard) and gender markers by the UN System.

We also welcome the strong emphasis given by the QCPR to ensuring system-wide coherence for gender equality and the empowerment of women. In this respect, UN Women represents the future of the UN system, and we are proud to be at the cutting edge of UN reform. We will work with our sister UN entities to further support the Resident Coordinator system, Delivering as One and the simplification and harmonization of business practices.

We are very pleased to see the emphasis given in the QCPR to the preparation of Common Country Programme Documents in Delivering as One countries, as well as on common system-wide results reporting, and common support services at the country level. Each of these elements is critical to ensure greater coherence and coordination of the work of UN agencies, and represents an opportunity to further strengthen coordination on gender equality and women's empowerment.

UN Women is committed to undertaking common country programming, and strengthening joint programming approaches through the UNDAF, in Delivering as One countries, self-starters and beyond. Our role in the UN Country Team and in gender theme groups in countries where we have a presence is explicitly designed to promote a coherent and joined up approach to programme and policy initiatives on gender equality and women's empowerment in line with national priorities. We very much look forward to the finalization of the Standard Operational Procedures for Delivering as One in this regard.

Mr. President,

Allow me now to say a few words about our 2013 funding situation. A colleague of mine compared the commitment to fund UN Women to the commitment of partners in marriage: "you either do it or you don't" or as some say, "you cannot just live on love and fresh air".

It gives me pleasure to confirm that many Member States have decided to do it and increase funding to UN Women. Others are considering it and very few stayed away. Non-traditional donors such as India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Mexico and the United Arab Emirates continued their much-appreciated substantial financial support.

In 2012, we received core contributions from 111 Member States. And many countries gave us significant core increases last year, including Australia, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, and Switzerland, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.

These increases were encouraging. Yet they were also badly needed because some other donors were severely affected by the economic crisis and reduced their contributions. While the final and official figures are not in yet, we know that the approximate core result will be around \$120 million which is approximately \$10 million lower than for 2011. Regarding non-core, we expect approximately \$95 million, which is also slightly below the 2011 results.

We continue to count on the support of all of you as we carry on our unwavering efforts to widen, deepen and diversify our donor base, including through the private sector. The work with the National Committees and private sector takes some time to develop but our partnerships with the Global Compact, Coca Cola, Microsoft, Tag Heuer and various foundations are beginning to bear fruit.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

We sincerely hope that 2013 will bring us better funding as Member States realize the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We are in a critical situation and doing our best with limited funding; we are achieving results. But we will not be able to achieve the results expected of us in our strategic plan, unless we are entrusted with the requisite funding. It is essential that UN Women meet the funding targets, and received increased funding, so that we can carry out our mandate.

We really need your support.

Closing

My friends,

The world has finally woken up to ACTION, aware of the need to end discrimination and violence against women and girls. Women's issues are world issues – and there is no time to waste.

UN Women counts on members of the Board, and civil society partners, to be Ambassadors for gender equality and looks forward to strong partnership and success throughout the year.

Together we will keep pushing forward to create the future we want, a future of peace and justice and sustainability, where men and women and boys and girls enjoy equal rights, equal opportunities and equal participation.