

**Closing remarks by the President of the Executive Board of UN-
Women, H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima, Ambassador and Permanent
Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations
Annual Session of the UN-Women Executive Board 2022**

Wednesday, 22 June 2022, 3:00 - 6:00p.m.

Conference Room 3, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Excellencies, Madame Executive Director, Distinguished Friends and
Colleagues,

We have come nearly to the end of this year's annual session of the UN Women
Executive Board. Allow me to make a final statement.

I thank all members of the Board for their active engagement and support for
ensuring a very productive session. My special thanks to the Vice Presidents –
Ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya, Ambassador María del Carmen Squeff,
Ambassador Jörundur Valtýsson, and Ambassador Alhajji Fanday Turay, and
their experts for their excellent support all throughout. This has truly been a
team effort.

I also wish to thank the UN-Women leadership - the Executive Director
Ambassador Sima Bahous, the Deputy Executive Directors, and other members
of the Secretariat for their support. I wish to thank in particular, the Secretary
of our Board, Jean-Luc Bories and his able team for their tireless efforts and

smiling support to the Bureau. We are aware of the amount of work that goes in to ensure a smooth session. Thank you!

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

We have managed to accomplish much in our first in-person meeting of the Board in 2 years. You will all agree that there's no substitute to meeting in person to have interactive discussions.

I congratulate you for the consensus adoption of the 4 decisions, namely:

- Annual Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director;
- Report on the evaluation function;
- Report on internal audit and investigation activities, and
- On the repositioning of the United Nations Development System.

I thank the delegations of Argentina, Iceland, the Republic of Korea and Sierra Leone for their very skillful facilitation of these important decisions. The experts deserve our sincere appreciation for their tireless work over the past weeks. I am aware that this was no easy feat, and your hard work is truly appreciated. I also thank all Member States for their constructive engagement and flexibility. Thank you!

Excellencies,

At the opening of the session, the Executive Director presented the results that UN-Women was able to achieve during 2021. She stressed the importance of close collaboration with sister agencies and the need for UN-Women to not just participate in UN reform processes, but lead from within. I couldn't agree more with her. UN-Women has a critical, central role to play in ensuring that a gender perspective is mainstreamed in all our work, policies and actions.

Madam Executive Director, we welcome your commitment to continue strengthening UN-Women's financial management, risk management, and ethics functions. We particularly appreciate your announcement to establish a dedicated ethics function within UN-Women. You will have the full support of the Board in your important initiatives. The women of the world need a strong and impactful UN-Women.

Distinguished Colleagues,

At yesterday's opening segment, we heard interventions from 33 Member States, including regional and other cross-regional group statements. The presence of a high number of ambassadors shows the importance they attach to UN-Women, and their strong support to the organization, especially for the implementation of the current Strategic Plan. This is very reassuring. We also heard member states emphasize the importance and value of UN-Women's coordination mandate, especially in the field and reiterated their call for multi-

stakeholder partnership in tackling the ongoing challenges to women's rights and gender equality.

We heard about the challenges that lie ahead in meeting the SDGs; and that women continue to face injustice and discrimination globally, worsened now by the triple-C crises of conflict, climate and the COVID 19-pandemic.

In situations of ongoing conflicts and humanitarian emergencies, we call for UN Women's stronger leadership in implementing the WPS agenda. The upcoming Transforming Education Summit will also offer an opportunity to address existing gender gaps in education and digital inclusion.

We also heard strong support for UN Women's efforts to broaden the base of funding and partnership. In all such efforts, it is important that the organization is mindful of national priorities and ownership. **As we emphasize on more gender actions, we must match that gender financing.**

Excellencies,

I am aware of the critical role that UN-Women colleagues at the frontline play. I pay my tribute to them – for their courage, conviction and commitment, often working under challenging situations – they are the true gender champions. Thank you!

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,

This is likely to be the last formal session that I will attend as the President of the UN-Women Executive Board. As you are aware, I expect to soon assume the position of the High Representative of the UN Secretary General for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs. I am deeply touched by your warm wishes and kind words of appreciation on my appointment.

It has been an absolute honour and privilege for me to lead the UN-Women Executive Board since January this year; and to be able to play my humble part to support UN-Women's mission to ensure "*Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*" across the world. As a self-declared 'gender champion and activist', this experience will always be very special; it will remain an inspiration for me to continue to pursue an agenda for more dignified, and more empowered, lives and livelihoods for women everywhere, especially for those who are the furthest behind.

I wish to take this opportunity to say that it was such a pleasure to work with the new Executive Director, my dear friend Sima – we started this journey with UN-Women together. Within a very short period of time, she has brought in so much energy and dynamism to the work of UN-Women. I am certain that under her leadership, UN-Women will see transformative changes on the ground in the days ahead.

My best wishes to you, Madam ED, and the members of your team as you move on with your relentless pursuit towards that end.

I also thank the DEDs Anita Bhatia and Asa Regner, and all members of the UN Women for their extraordinary support to me and the entire Executive Board in fulfilling its mandate.

I am also grateful to the Vice-Presidents, Ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya, Ambassador María del Carmen Squeff, Ambassador Jörundur Valtýsson, and Ambassador Alhajji Fanday Turay, for their invaluable support and cooperation. In them, I had friends and partners who shared the same vision and aspiration to make a difference, and it was a privilege to have this opportunity to work so closely with you. I thank our experts who are the engine that keep us going. Thank you!

And last but not the least, my special thanks to my own small team in the Mission who have supported me day in and out – thank you Monica, Mahmud!

Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,

As someone who has been dealing with women's issues for the most part of her professional life – I was also part of the diehard Beijing experts from here - I can say that we have made a lot of progress to place women's issues high on the multilateral and national agendas. Yet we are still far from creating a world where women and men have equal opportunities in every sphere of their lives. There are still many artificial glass ceilings, socio-economic bottlenecks, and

gender-stereotypical attitudes both within and across our societies, which comes in the way of realizing women's full potentials—both politically and economically.

And here, UN-Women has such an important role to play to help to overcome these challenges and carry forward a transformative journey to create equal opportunities and futures for all women and girls. It needs to champion innovative and real-time solutions to the most pressing challenges facing women –from women's political and economic empowerment and equal rights to eliminating gender divides.

Although I am leaving the presidency of the UN-Women Executive Board, I will be very much in the system. So, I will keep looking for ways to work with UN-Women, especially in tackling the unique challenges faced by women in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs.

On that note, I would like to rest it here.

I once again thank you all for your cooperation, collaboration and support in making this session a success! And I thank you for your support to me in discharging my responsibility.

I thank you.

I declare close the Annual Session of the UN-Women Executive Board.