

Closing Remarks by UN-Women Executive-Director

Sima Bahous to the Executive Board

June 20, 2024

Thank you, Madame President.

Excellencies, partners, and dear guests,

Let me start by expressing UN Women's unwavering commitment to women and girl refugees, and to creating a world where they can enjoy their fundamental rights as we mark the World Refugee Day today.

I would like to further express my utmost gratitude to H.E. Markova Concepción Jaramillo, president of the Executive Board, for her steadfast leadership. Taking this opportunity to recognize her invaluable contribution and unwavering commitment to our mission.

I further express my appreciation to the Vice Presidents of the Executive Board, whose skilful negotiations led to our adoption of seven substantive decisions this session.

My thanks also to the Experts, Ms. Clara Brandt, Ms. Marie-Eve Castonguay, Mr. Michel Kouakou, Ms. Iwona Lula, Mr. Mohammed Smesem, and Mr. Golibjon Gulov, and Ms. Marilyn Thompson. You can trust that we will implement the decisions with urgency and dedication.

To my UN Women team here in the room and elsewhere – fighting the hardest battles, winning the most cherished victories, bringing meaningful change in the lives of women and girls – from the hardest-to-reach areas to here at headquarters, I say it again, you are our greatest asset.

I also thank Jean-Luc Bories, the Secretary of the Executive Board, and his entire remarkable team – my deep appreciation always – for their support and facilitation. I know you share this gratitude.

And finally, to all of you here in the room, I thank you all, not only for being here these past days, but especially for your commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, and for your investment in our work, and for your trust.

Excellencies,

We are taking note of the 7 critical decisions that the Executive Board has negotiated, I understand until late last night, and the constructive spirit demonstrated by all delegations in the pursuit of consensus building. We have some new language and requests from member states around organizational culture, diversity, inclusion and equity, some discussions around racial discrimination and racism in the UN system and around the implementation of our triple mandate at country level. We will make sure that the Executive Board is kept abreast of all these important issues in the next sessions, as requested by member states.

You rightfully noted the global pushback on women's rights and commended UN-Women's continued actions and programmes in the face of challenging global contexts.

Allow me to reiterate how much we value your strong commitment to our unified triple mandate and your encouragement to fully utilize our comparative advantages within the United Nations system and across our extensive network of partners and allies.

This is essential for our impact, the importance of SDG5, the overall gender equality ecosystem, and our capacity to drive accelerated progress towards 2030.

We will continue to invest in this area, particularly by enhancing our focus on our coordination mandate.

Excellencies,

We have all said this time and again – gender equality is where we need to channel our actions and invest our resources as the only way to achieve the ambition of the 2030 agenda.

UN Women has been making a difference and will continue to do so. The results from our annual report speak for themselves. We drive legislation that changes the course of the lives of women and girls, we work with women's rights organizations to reach women and girls where no one else does, we use technology and innovation to support women and girls lead the change they want to see in the world.

The gender lens that UN Women brings to crises is lifesaving, and I was pleased to hear you also share this belief. Our work in this area will grow, and you have my

unwavering commitment that we will continue to work towards peace wherever it is needed – from Afghanistan to Gaza, Sudan, Haiti and elsewhere.

You heard this also first-hand yesterday with results from the largest region, Asia, and the Pacific.

From the women’s civil organizations, we are partnering with in Afghanistan to the innovative partnership we are leading with the private sector on the economy of care, if we look at the work of this region, we can prove that we truly mean it when we say we support women and girls when and where they need us the most.

Following discussions on critical areas for our work like stepping up our role in humanitarian contexts, increased funding on core programmatic functions like women’s economic empowerment or addressing the role of technology in gender-based violence, I would like to stress once again my commitment to allocate time and resources to ensure UN Women 2.0 remains agile and fit for the purpose of our global realities. I look forward to continuing our discussions on this, and on the process of pivoting to the field.

We remain dedicated to supporting women's empowerment and gender equality across all levels,

advancing the rights of women in all their diversity, and leveraging our unique position to provide leadership and technical support, including in humanitarian contexts.

Excellencies, for the next months, the world will watch in the hopes that all stakeholders embrace their respective accountability, recommit to the vision of the Beijing Platform for Action and SDG5 and put forward tangible actions and the necessary resources to achieve this vision.

Young people, especially young women and girls are at the heart of our endeavours. Their dynamism and voices will be the cornerstone of our content and decision-making processes, ensuring that our actions resonate with the future they envision and deserve.

I already look forward to our next session together, as the Second Regular Session will continue important discussions around the review of governance and oversight of the Executive Boards, while also considering

the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) Management and Administration Review.

In the lead-up to the Second Regular Session, we will also commence discussions and consultations around UN-Women's next Strategic Plan roadmap, which will inform UN-Women's path forward.

Excellencies,

We are ambitious, and we are best placed to make a meaningful impact in the lives of women and girls; we are uniquely mandated by the General Assembly to do so.

But, as I said on Tuesday, we cannot do it alone.

We count on all of you. Together, we can make a difference. And I have the full confidence that we will.

I thank you.
