



***Closing remarks of Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women***

UN Women Executive Board  
First Regular Session 2015

*Date: 9 February 2015  
[as delivered]*

Mr. President, Excellencies,

Thank you very much, and thank you also to the bureau and to the Executive Board for their hard work today. I did not see anyone falling asleep; that means, we've all been intensely engaged with the agenda.

We welcome your shared embrace of our mandate, which was evident throughout the discussion today: the strong vision that you have for us, the support that we feel, the appreciation for our work, and the constructive criticism that you always give us. So our constant asking for money must never give the impression that we underestimate and we do not appreciate the investments that you make for the running of this organization and institution. I also feel (and I hope that I am not putting words in your mouths) that you are with us in reaching 2030 in a completely different world for women and girls, and that the Planet 50-50 by 2030 is just as close to your hearts as it is to ours. By 2020 we will show if we're on the right track or not, so that we can know quickly if we have to go back to the drawing board.

This propels us to work even harder. We have noticed some of the critical comments that you have made in the discussions. For example, the importance of our evaluation and the importance that we heed the recommendations that come out of the evaluation. We also heard your appreciation for the road that we've travelled as far as the evaluation practice is concerned.

We appreciate your reference to the importance of building a national capacity in the functioning of our country programmes, which are critical for us to make a difference for women on the ground.

A number of you highlighted the importance of women's economic empowerment and ending violence against women. Again, we couldn't agree with you more as far as that is concerned.

We appreciate your response to the audits and we commit that next time the reports will go further in implementing the audit recommendations.

We welcome the robust debates on men and boys and He-For-She, as well as the highlight of the discourse that still remains there and the need for us to continue to clarify what is the “end game”. We noted the comments on the problematic activities that may arise out of this campaign. It is a Member State-driven initiative we are all participating.

I have to say though, I really would like to see more numbers of men who are signing up in your different countries. Every day I go to the map and I check all the countries (how many men registered today), and on some of those days I’m phoning the PRs and telling them, “only one man registered in your country today. There are still countries that are in two digits. Now surely...” So there is really room for improvement.

On the He-For-She website we have a donate button. It’s interesting that a lot of the people who are donating are the younger people, the boys. To date in the four months since launch people have given us \$15,200, which is not a lot but it’s indicative of what could happen. Maybe we could work out the deficit if you just “donate, donate, donate, register, register, register” the numbers.

We also noted the discussion around the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Beijing +20 review, which is full of anticipation. We are appreciative to learn that many of your delegations will meet at the ministerial level, as well as the focus in some of your interventions on the important post-2015 deliberations and the negotiations. As we emphasized, we need to pay attention to these, as there is much that still needs to be protected in those negotiations. We also want you to protect a bold agenda, not just an agenda. So, this is not business as usual in negotiations.

We are pleased that you appreciate our work on Ebola, which has to continue, because we are an integral part of the reconstruction in all of the countries affected.

The debate on structured financing dialogue has been very healthy. We welcome the opportunity to have this discussion. We appreciate the diversity of the countries that are participating. Those that are making small contributions and those that are in the “club of 6”. We think this number has to multiply and multiply and multiply. We thank you and ask you to double, no matter which base you are starting from. And of course, the increase that we yearn for - and the push that we make in that regard - has to do with the fact that right at the start, we had a low base and therefore the jump has to be big. We think that this is the moment to “bite the bullet” and make the big jump with those countries that can do that. We also, however, like the fact that

we are in the company of so many countries that are doing what they can to support us.

We are aware of the fact that this will require a political will and lobbying on your part. You are our leadership and our spokespersons in your capitals and we rely on you to take our message further. We appreciate, also, the work that has been done by some of our staff in finding innovative ways of fundraising; whether it is the “donate” button in He-For-She, the private sector initiatives that we are looking at, and the fact that we have asked the Secretary-General to intervene.

We will meet next time after the Commission on the Status of Women. In the meantime, you will also be involved in a lot of work on post-2015 preparations. We are available in any way and at any point to support that work and we look forward to an active participation in all of the events that will be part of the Commission.

I want to remind you of some of the iconic events surrounding the Commission in the celebration of Beijing+20, which will continue until September. We are not demobilizing you after the CSW.

On 6 March the president of the General Assembly will host a debate that we urge all of you to support and to attend.

On 8 March we and the City of New York will hold a march in New York with civil society and the thousands of women that will be in New York for the Commission. We urge you to participate with everybody; children, brothers, sisters, members, who believes in gender equality.

On 9 March it will be the opening of the Commission on the Status of Women where the Secretary-General will present the synthesis report that is based on the 164 countries that submitted their reports. These have been synthesized with recommendations by the Secretary-General. Of course we look forward to the adoption of the Declaration that we are so thankful to you for driving.

On the evening of 9 March the City of New York will host a reception for the delegates and Heads of Delegation, the first of its kind. This is also part of the Memorandum of Understanding that we have signed with the City of New York. Again, it is the first time that we have had a UN agency sign such a relationship with the City. So for us, as people who are always looking for partners, (we see partners anywhere) we are glad that this partnership is paying off in this collaboration in March. The collaboration also with the City really welcoming and celebrating Beijing +20 with all of you.

On 10 March we will have an intergenerational celebration of Beijing, where we will try to have some of the starters in Beijing, the generation after them, and the

generation to come, together to make sure that we strengthen each generation that is needed for us to get to 2030 in the manner in which we want to get to in reaching 50:50. It will be a really pleasant night so we urge you to make yourself available to be there with us and to display to the world how far we've come. But we also ask you to encourage your countries, your capitals, your cities, to have their own celebrations wherever they are so that we will also be able, where we can, to incorporate their celebrations to the global celebration we're having here. We'll be celebrating; we will also be fundraising at the same time. There will be a donation situation that will be happening through the evening. Not just for the people who are in New York but people all over the world. We'll be reaching out to them and asking them to contribute and to fund gender equality.

So, we have a packed agenda ahead of us and we also would like to encourage you to participate actively in the side events. Some of your ministers have signed and we are looking forward to seeing them participating while we are here.

We see all of these events as yet another opportunity to broaden the forces that are standing up for gender equality. We want to make sure that women are not standing alone, and we want to delegate upwards, to heads of states, to CEOs of top companies, to PRs, and to anyone who has authority to be in the forefront of this struggle, in solidarity with women.

We thank you for the excellent board meeting, and welcome the bureau who is with us today. Thank you.