



## UN-Women Executive Board Annual Session 2017

### Remarks by Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations

27 June 2017

Distinguished delegates, special guests, I am very pleased to welcome you to the Annual Session 2017 of the UN Women Executive Board.

Please allow me to acknowledge and welcome the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women, Madame Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

I would also like to welcome UN Women Deputy Executive Director, Mr. Yannick Glemarec, the Director of the Programme Division, Ms. Maria-Noel Vaeza, the Director of the Policy Division, Ms. Purna Sen, as well as the Secretary of the Executive Board, Mr. Jean-Luc Bories.

I would like to begin by speaking in my national capacity. As a supporter of UN Women since its founding, the UAE understands the critical role that UN Women plays in leading global efforts on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

The strong partnership between the UAE and UN Women culminated last year in the launch of a UN Women Liaison Office in Abu Dhabi under the patronage of our First Lady, Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak. This is the first office of its kind in our region. Through this office, we hope to strengthen UN Women's work in accelerating efforts to deliver for women and girls around the world.

I would also like to highlight the High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, where Her Excellency Sheikha Lubna bint Khalid Al Qasimi, the UAE Minister of State for Tolerance, served as a member. The panel was set up in January 2016 by the former Secretary-General and released a ground breaking report in March 2017.

While the panel has now completed its mandate, it is of utmost importance to ensure that its recommendations are implemented. Costa Rica and the United Kingdom have taken the first step in bringing together champions of women's economic empowerment to ensure that this work continues here at the UN. The panel's aim was to accelerate the achievement of the SDG's by placing women's economic empowerment – a critical aspect of achieving the Global Goals – at the top of the international agenda. The report laid out concrete actions for accelerating progress towards women's full and equal economic participation. Further, it acknowledged that gender inequalities remain stubborn around the world, but can be overcome by removing systemic barriers.

UN Women has demonstrated its ability to leverage its unique and effective tripartite mandate by delivering on norms, providing an operational response at country-level, and coordinating the UN system on gender equality. During the joint and individual field visits to Nepal and India, respectively, I saw firsthand how UN Women's normative intergovernmental work in New York is implemented

at an operational level on the ground. I also saw how this operational experience is fed back to inform the cycle of developing norms, refining policy, and improving operational response through UN Women's internal thought leadership process.

To see the entire 'life cycle' of women's empowerment conducted through a single entity – agile, responsive, truly alive to the experiences of women in all our varied contexts throughout the world in this way, is – in my view – a particular strength of UN Women.

The UAE believes in UN Women's ability to drive progress on gender equality and women's empowerment. We remain steadfastly committed to supporting UN Women in championing the rights of women and girls everywhere.

I would now like to speak to the unique relationship between UN Women and its Executive Board, which is based on trust and partnerships. The atmosphere is quite exceptional.

As the President of the Executive Board, I can assure you of my commitment to further strengthen coordination, transparency, and collaboration. I am meeting regularly with the Presidents of the Executive Boards of UNFPA/UNDP/UNOPS, UNICEF, and WFP to discuss common approaches of these Executive Boards that represent the operational arm of the UN system.

I am also leading an informal process to ensure effective and strengthened cooperation between these Executive Boards, as recommended by the QCPR. We all agree that to be more effective, the UN System needs to be more coherent, less fragmented

As you may have noticed from the frequency and the intensity of our informal briefings and workshops throughout the spring, this year is an important one for the Executive Board. We will adopt a new four-year Strategic Plan for UN Women at the Second Regular Session, and the discussion on the draft will continue today.

Since its inception, UN Women has taken its place in the UN System and demonstrated its added value. The new Strategic Plan is firmly built upon the lessons learned from the current Strategic Plan. It is grounded in the normative developments of recent years, particularly Agenda 2030, and it emphasizes the interconnected and indivisible nature of UN Women's tripartite mandate of normative, operational, and coordination work.

The Strategic plan considers the direction provided by Member States in the QCPR, and contains the strategic direction and priorities that we commonly strive for. It is important to highlight that UN Women, as a "UN reform organization", is already ahead of the curve in terms of implementing the spirit of the new QCPR.

The process of developing the Strategic Plan has been the most collaborative and consultative exercise that UN Women has undertaken since its creation. Altogether, UN Women held five informal briefings with members and observers of the Board, including two workshops, and a special discussion on the Strategic Plan with the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Directors.

UN Women has also consulted with civil society, government agencies, academia, and private sector companies at both headquarters and field levels. At Headquarters alone, UN Women consulted with seventeen representatives of civil society organizations, with the private sector through National

Committees, and with other UN Agencies through the Inter-Agency Network on Gender equality and the Empowerment of Women.

I would like to thank UN Women for this transparent and engaging process and for seeing the benefits of collaboration.

We are in a good position with the first draft of the Strategic Plan, and we are on track to adopt it in September. I look forward to today's discussion.

Finally, I would like to remind all of you – my fellow Members of the Board – not to leave the discussion on gender equality in this room. I encourage you to act as champions of gender equality in important intergovernmental processes. It is our opportunity and our obligation to stand as advocates and positive voices for UN Women, for gender equality, and for women's empowerment.