

## Outline of Executive Board Annual Session 2021 statement by UN-Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka

### Salutations and Introduction

- Acknowledgements and thanks to the President and Bureau.
- Acknowledgement of close of tenure and thanks.

### Update on the COVID-19 response

- **Situation:**
  - The pandemic continues to disproportionately affect women with economic and social fallout yet they are excluded from pandemic response planning and decision-making structures, and the main focus remains on addressing violence against women and girls.
  - Responses fall short of addressing job losses and rising income insecurity among women, and to ignore unpaid care. As of March 2021 only 13% of the 2,280 fiscal, social protection and labour market measures taken in response to COVID-19 target women's economic security.
  - US\$11.7 trillion, or close to 12 per cent of global GDP has been poured into the global fiscal response, but it has been largely concentrated in high-income countries.
- **UN Women activity highlights:**
  - With UN Women support, 65 per cent of funding in the second call of the COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund went to proposals with gender equality as the principal objective,
  - Accurate sex-disaggregated data and guidance was provided on the gendered impacts of COVID-19,
  - A series of global policy briefs were produced (including leadership in drafting the UN policy brief *The Impact of COVID-19 on Women*),
  - Rapid gender assessments documenting the health, employment and poverty impacts of the pandemic were supported,
  - A Global COVID-19 Gender Response Tracker was launched in 2020 in collaboration with UNDP featuring over 3000 policy measures across 219 countries and territories, which revealed gender-blind policy responses. The March 2021 update provides sex-disaggregated data for a total of 334 taskforces across 187 countries and adds over 600 new measures taken in response to the pandemic. Some 64% of all gender-sensitive measures focus on preventing and/or responding to Violence against women and girls (832 across 149 countries),
  - Women's rights organizations were supported to address increased levels of violence against women (the "shadow pandemic"), including through the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women which supported over 150 grantees in 71 countries and territories,
  - The Corporate evaluation of UN-Women's United Nations system coordination and broader convening role in ending violence against women found that the COVID-19 response strongly illustrated the power of a coordinated UN system and established UN Women's credentials in a system-wide coordination role, bringing out elements of

thought leadership, expeditious mobilization of evidence, and strong and cohesive advocacy for action.

- Systematic engagement was undertaken with International Financial Institutions, advocating for a gender lens in stimulus packages.

### **Update on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development (QCPR)**

- The 2020 QCPR has a comprehensive and important mandate on gender equality, including a standalone focus on gender equality in Cooperation Frameworks. This aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals' twin track approach. We welcome the new provisions on ending violence against women and prevention of sexual exploration and abuse.
- The 2020 QCPR has informed the development of UN Women's new Strategic Plan and the QCPR monitoring framework will be fully embedded in UN Women's results framework.
- Example of operational activities: Through its Gender Accountability Framework, UN-Women monitored adherence to gender commitments in 30 crisis-contexts. In countries with UN-Women presence, 86 per cent of humanitarian cluster systems had gender expertise through UN-Women. In 38 countries, UN-Women built the self-reliance of crisis-affected women and girls by addressing food insecurity, gender-based violence, and supporting women's livelihoods, leadership and access to education.

### **Executive Director's Annual Report**

- UN Women's 2020 report, commemorating its ten-year anniversary, demonstrates the vital contributions of the Entity to achieving real change in the lives of women and girls over the past decade.
- Key lessons from this strategic plan feed into the content and direction of the next, including leveraging partnerships for results; youth engagement and public engagement through campaigns.
- In the penultimate year of its implementation, despite the pandemic context, UN Women is on track to achieve the results envisioned under its current Strategic Plan.
- UN Women leveraged its triple mandate to highlight the gender dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic and mobilize the whole of the UN system towards a gender-sensitive response to the pandemic.
- **Key highlights** include:
  - More than 1.3 million women and girls in humanitarian settings benefited from support on livelihoods and protection since 2018. Significant progress has been made establishing the Elsie Initiative fund, deepening our partnership with PBSO and the Office of Counter-Terrorism and supporting constituencies for peace around the world,

- In 41 countries UN-Women contributed to gender-responsive disaster risk reduction legislation, strategies, plans, and assessments, covering more than 400 million people since 2018 through new gender-responsive policies and assessments.
- 89 countries, home to 3 billion women and girls, have stronger legal protection through over 700 legal reforms, half of which eliminated discriminatory laws,
- 75 countries, home to 2.6 billion women and girls, have a stronger legal, regulatory and policy environment on women's economic empowerment,
- 96 countries, home to 2.9 billion women and girls, have strengthened legal and policy frameworks to prevent and respond to violence against women,
- 95 countries or territories had adopted National Action Plans on women, peace and security.

### **Funding**

- In 2020, UN Women achieved its highest ever total revenue of \$563.9 million.
- Appreciation to funding partners including 91 governments for prioritizing UN Women last year, with significant increase in regular resources despite competing priorities on resources.

### **Looking ahead**

- Debt relief, greater financing through special drawing rights and increased levels of overseas development aid will all be important in preventing major regression in gender equality caused by COVID-19.
- Beyond the immediate crisis, the pandemic requires governments to 'build back better' for women and girls, through policies that prioritize gender equality as well as social justice, and environmental sustainability.
- UN Women's new Strategic Plan will build on the lessons of the previous Plan and respond to the unprecedented challenges of these times by addressing the structural barriers and root causes of gender inequality, in partnership with a broadened constituency. This will set the stage for achieving impact at scale, securing transformational and sustainable change and realizing the rights of all women and girls.
- Generation Equality seeks to pursue the unfinished business of the Beijing Platform for Action, in full alignment with the new Strategic Plan, and with the engagement of the vital constituency of youth.