

**Statement delivered by Assistant Secretary-General, Ms. Anita Bhatia
during the Second Regular Session 2021 of the UN-Women Executive Board**

**Agenda item 2: Strategic Plan
14 September 2021**

Thank you very much Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates.

Dear colleagues, greetings to all of you. I am speaking to you today from Geneva, where I attended yesterday the Secretary General's High Level Ministerial Meeting on Afghanistan, which was yet again, a reminder of the importance of UN Women, at this time, in the world.

It is in this context and with enormous pleasure that I present to you today UN Women's Strategic Plan 2022 to 2025, and I am speaking on behalf of myself and my colleague Asa Regner who is unable to join us today for medical reasons.

It is over a year ago that we began the journey of developing our next Strategic Plan together. We have had numerous consultations with you, our Executive Board, and other key stakeholders, including civil society. And we have listened deeply and widely, especially to all of you, Member States.

We have carefully reviewed the evidence base from a host of independent reviews evaluations and assessments, and along with the economic, political, social, and demographic trends that we see will impact gender equality over the next five to ten years.

Out of all of this, we have designed a balanced, nuanced, bold and ambitious Strategic Plan, representing feedback from all Members States and responding to the urgent and the deep-rooted challenges that women and girls continue to face across the world.

Of course, the real litmus test for a Strategic Plan is the extent to which it is actually implemented. And here, I would like to reiterate that our Strategic Plan is a global framework document and an operational tool for UN Women to implement its mandate at the global, regional, and country levels. It is broad enough in scope to be adapted to all country contexts and bold enough in its vision to lay the foundations for meaningful change. Ultimately, our Strategic Plan will be implemented through country's Strategic Notes in full alignment with national priorities and heavily consulted with respective governments, and in line with the UN Reform, fully coherent with the Sustainable Cooperation Development Frameworks.

We are all fully aware of the evolving global landscape - the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts, earthquakes, floods, political crises among others - and its impact on women and girls all over the world. Recent events in Afghanistan and the discussions we had at the Humanitarian Summit yesterday remind us over and over again of the fragility of the gains that we have made with and for women. Our new Strategic Plan 2022 to 2025 is informed by this changing global context and the emerging trends, and it builds on our proven expertise in the last 10 years. It ensures that we are fit

for purpose and that we remain agile, flexible and adaptable to support countries to respond to the challenges that continue to emerge.

One of the most important lessons that we have learned from our first 10 years and from the COVID-19 pandemic is that we must put those who are most vulnerable first. The *leave no one behind* principle, the foundational principle of the 2030 agenda, is therefore the cross-guiding principle of our new Plan.

We are confident that this Plan represents the essence of our collective aspirations and that any differences between Member States can be reconciled through agreements in the language of the Strategic Plan Executive Board decision.

In brief, our Strategic Plan will aim for much greater impact at scale by seeking to:

- First, tackle the root causes of gender inequality, including by addressing harmful social norms.
- Maintain our focus on our four key thematic areas, namely Governance and Participation in Public Life, Economic Empowerment and Resilience, Ending Violence Against Women, Women Peace, Security, Humanitarian and Disaster Risk Reduction.
- We are clearly considering pressing global challenges such as climate change mitigation and digitalization by highlighting the gender dimensions and ensuring that the needs of women and girls are prioritized in these areas in line with our mandate.
- We will leverage our unique composite mandate in a more integrated way in this Plan. We have seven systemic outcomes that cut across the four thematic areas mentioned above, and this will enable more impactful and more holistic interventions. These systemic outcomes are:
 - o Strengthened global normative frameworks and gender responsive laws, policies and institutions.
 - o Gender equality advanced through gender-responsive financing policies strategies and instruments.
 - o Positive social norms promoted, including through engaging men and boys.
 - o Women having equitable access to public goods, services and resources that are responsive to their needs.
 - o More women and girls exercising their voice, leadership, and agency, including through an enabling environment that supports women's and youth organizations.
 - o Gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data and knowledge produced, analyzed and used to inform policy making and accountability.
 - o And finally, much stronger UN system coordination for gender equality.
- We also seek to expand financing for gender equality, which has been chronically under-resourced to date, including by expanding partnerships with International Financial Institutions and the private sector.
- Building on the work of the last year, moving towards larger programmes geared towards achieving impact at scale is also a critical impact element of this Plan.
- We seek to deepen and broaden our coordination and partnerships work with a whole-of-UN system and whole-of society approach to drive transformative results.

- Here, it is important to note that we have worked with our UN system partners in a fairly unprecedented way in the design of this Plan, which has resulted in common and complementary indicators, being distributed throughout the Plan, capturing our joint work towards the achievement of global goals.
 - o We will work even more across generations with men and boys, and with non-traditional partners to dramatically expand the constituency for gender equality.
 - o And we will mobilize partners, towards the full effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), and other international legal and policy frameworks for gender equality and women's empowerment.
- And finally, to implement this ambitious Plan, we will continue the work that we began in the last year and a half to optimize our internal structures and processes, transforming into UN Women 2.0, so that it is an agile, committed development organization that is fit for purpose to translate the ambitions of this Plan into tangible and lasting results.

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, UN Women is putting forward the Strategic Plan 2022 to 2025, which we truly believe will enable our organization to implement its mandate for the next four crucial years in this Decade of Action. We believe the document is a balanced and nuanced narrative, inspired by and reflective of all the rich comments we have received from the membership and beyond. We understand the different constituencies may have different views on what UN Women should be doing, and in this regard, we want to reiterate that we have listened carefully to all Member States, and trust that you will agree that this document is a good reflection of what UN Women stands for and where we can make the biggest difference in the lives of women and girls. This final version, therefore, represents in the eyes of UN Women, the best document that we have come up with to effectively implement our mandate.

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, we want to thank you for your continued engagement throughout the journey of the Strategic Plan development. In this respect, I would like to offer my thanks and join SRSG Pattern and other members of the UN team in thanking Ambassador H.E. Alie Kabba for his leadership and thanking Ambassador H.E. Victoria Sulimani for her leadership in the interim and in welcoming Ambassador H.E. Mr. Alhaji Fanday Turay to the Presidency of our Board.

We thank you for your feedback and guidance, and we count on your support in making this collective vision a reality for all women and girls.

Back to you, Chair, and, as you mentioned earlier, I am joined on the podium by two Directors who have played a critical role in the shaping of this Plan, Mrs. Sarah Hendricks and Mrs. Anna-Karin Jatfors, and they are available, along with other members of our team, to answer questions and to provide additional information, should it be needed.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and back to you.