



Check against delivery

**Statement by
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**Second Regular Session of the Executive Board of
UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS**

**31 August 2015
New York**

Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

Colleagues and friends,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Earlier this month, the international community took a huge step forward for people and the planet with a watershed agreement on the path ahead for prosperity and sustainable development over the next 15 years.

In just a few weeks, world leaders will formally approve the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development at the United Nations Summit here in New York.

This is truly a historic moment.

As we celebrate this momentous achievement, the important work begins – how to translate this bold blueprint into bold action to transform the lives of individuals and the trajectory of nations.

We at UNFPA are especially pleased that the post-2015 outcome document and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development reflect the conclusions of the ICPD Beyond 2014 review and reaffirm the Programme of Action's recognition that human beings must be at the center of sustainable development; that women, young people and vulnerable groups must receive priority attention; and that a human rights-based approach is key to ensuring no one is left behind.

These principles are essential building blocks for a more inclusive, sustainable world.

Critical aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals derive from the ICPD Program of Action:

- Goal 3, and its inclusion of universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services, maternal health, AIDS and more;
- Goal 5, with targets on discrimination against women and girls, gender-based violence, harmful practices including child, early and forced marriage and FGM, and of course, universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.

But beyond these two goals, issues central to the ICPD and to UNFPA's mandate are embedded in and across the SDGs:

- In Goal 1, on ending poverty in all its forms everywhere;
- In Goal 4, which speaks to skills and education related to gender equality and human rights;
- In Goal 8, with references to youth employment, which we know is central to the demographic dividend;
- In Goal 10, which speaks broadly to addressing inequalities and discrimination, including for migrants;
- In Goal 11 on inclusive urbanization;
- In Goal 16 on promoting just, peaceful and inclusive societies, with its targets aimed at ensuring participation and safety from violence;
- In Goal 17's call for stronger data systems.

It is clear that the ICPD remains as relevant as ever – a universal agenda that cuts across all aspects of sustainable development – and that UNFPA has a critical role to play in the future development space.

We at UNFPA – and this Executive Board – know that you can't build the wellbeing of individuals, including their health and education, without each individual being free to exercise their rights.

We know that you can't create equitable, inclusive societies by leaving half the population behind. We need the power of women and girls to drive development.

We know that you can't build a better, prosperous future for people and the planet by ignoring the promise of young people.

Young people are not a problem to be solved – they're a solution!

Empowered, educated, employed young men and women exercising their human rights, engaged in decision making and in the economic and social life of their communities will spur inclusive economic growth and sustainable development.

They are the true architects of the future we want.

I was particularly pleased to see reference to the demographic dividend in the post-2015 outcome document, and I would like to commend the Board for your foresight in recognizing the importance of the dividend at our last session.

Investing in the power and potential of young people could not be more relevant as we enter the new development era.

Further to this recognition, we have begun our work in this area. As you know, we are already working with a number of Member States who have requested our support in order to harness the demographic dividend in their countries. This is clearly ahead of the implementation of the SDGs.

UNFPA is strengthening its efforts to ensure we have the tools to provide the support being requested by Member States – and called for by the SDGs. We are putting together evidence that can guide countries to make the right investments, throughout the life cycle, to generate the conditions necessary to seize the opportunity presented by their large youth populations. And we are partnering with key actors to garner the support – both technical and financial – to implement the right programmes where they are most needed.

From the Sahel through all the other regions where we work, we are defining the targeted investments and interventions necessary to build on the potential of young people.

Among the priority investment interventions likely to empower adolescent girls and women are comprehensive sexuality education, access to quality family planning information and services and literacy.

I would like to sincerely thank all donors who are contributing to our work on adolescents overall, and especially to our Action for Adolescent Girls Initiative and to the Global Programme to End Child Marriage. We are seeing tangible results and this is something to be celebrated.

In Niger, for example, adolescents who have participated in the programme are marrying later, and among married adolescents the contraceptive prevalence rate has increased from 18 to 34 percent. I am sure that in partnership with Member States, and with critical partners like UNICEF and others, we will be able to address the first step of building human capital, which is to ensure that all adolescent girls are where they should be – in school – and that they have access to the services they need to be healthy.

Last Friday's side event highlighted our work with the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to ensure that the right investments are in place, in a post-conflict context, to build the country's human capital, accelerate its demographic transition and enable it to reap the social and economic benefits of the demographic dividend.

Such investments are also critical for building resilience and peace in a post-conflict context.

All too often, today's young people are depicted as a threat to peace and security, prone to indoctrination, easy prey for militant extremists.

But the truth is the vast majority of young people do not engage in violence, even in conflict settings.

The truth is that millions of young people contribute directly to the rebuilding and resilience of their communities, working for tolerance and against exclusion.

The truth is, young men and women can — and must — be peace builders.

Just over a week ago I was in Amman for the Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security and saw this promise firsthand in the young men and women I met.

Young people like Victor Ochen from Uganda – a child of conflict who chose the path of peace, working to heal trauma and promote youth leadership. Victor and the African Youth Initiative Network he founded have been nominated for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize.

With the determination of young people like Victor, we can build resilience and lasting peace.

With the leadership of young women like Fatima Abdi Ali, a UNFPA Y-Peer fellow and youth activist in Somalia, we can build more inclusive, equitable and just societies.

With the optimism and out-of-the-box thinking of young innovators around the globe, we can turn swords into startups!

Just last month, UNFPA brought young coders from around the world to Kampala, Uganda, to develop mobile app solutions that promote young people's access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

#HackForYouth paired students and youth leaders with technology experts for a three-day coding spree. Together, they developed creative solutions to a range of challenges: from the reporting of sexual harassment... to reaching rural first-time mothers with maternal health information... to addressing young people's confidentiality concerns while accessing sexual and reproductive health care.

The winning app was a quiz that dispels myths and provides accurate information about sexual and reproductive health. By playing the game, users earn points towards free mobile airtime.

The hackathon, sponsored by UNFPA's Innovation Fund, reflects our growing commitment to leveraging information and communication technologies to empower young people so they can be pivotal agents for the health and wealth of society.

We plan, over the coming days and months, to engage within the organization and with Member States and other partners, including CSOs, on the implications of the Post-2015 outcomes for UNFPA's work, including its focus areas, programming, partnerships and resourcing. We also expect to contribute fully to discussions on the most supportive monitoring, review and follow up mechanisms for the Post-2015 agenda, from the vantage point of our universal, cross-cutting mandate.

Humanitarian situation

Mr. President,

Let me turn now to the humanitarian situation.

In 2014 alone, nearly 60 million people were forcibly displaced by conflict, war and persecution – the largest number since the United Nations was created 70 years ago out of the ashes of the Second World War.

Every day we see stories of migrants and refugees escaping violence, discrimination, disaster, massed at often unwelcoming borders, risking their lives in leaky boats on deadly seas for the chance of a better life, a safer life. Like so many of the challenges the world faces, this is a universal problem requiring a collective, coherent response. Because it is more and more clear that we're all in the same boat.

Last year saw more than 400 natural disasters. And the frequency and severity of such disasters will likely continue to increase due to the effects of climate change.

The international community has never been more challenged.

UNFPA is doing its best to respond to these increasing humanitarian crises. We have made significant investment in our internal capacity to be on the ground, on time, and to deliver critical life-saving interventions to those most affected, especially women, adolescent girls and young people.

And now with the SDGs, we have a universal agenda to leave no one behind and build resilience. For UNFPA this means ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. It means ensuring protection from gender-based violence and empowering women and young people in all settings, particularly those who are affected by crises and disasters who are often the hardest to reach. It means ensuring safe birth everywhere, even under the harshest conditions.

To take just one example, a UNFPA clinic in the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan has supported the safe delivery of nearly 4,000 babies to date. Doctors, nurses and midwives perform deliveries around the clock, and also provide a full suite of prenatal and postnatal care services.

In today's complex crises, there are growing demands. Addressing sexual violence in the context of humanitarian crises will be among the issues discussed at a meeting on ending violence against women, convened by UN Women and UNFPA and hosted by the Government of Turkey, in Istanbul in December.

In all humanitarian crises, UNFPA is working with partners to strengthen capacity and resilience, supporting local and national actors in immediate response and long-term recovery. We are actively engaged in the lead-up to the World Humanitarian Summit next year to ensure that humanitarian action becomes more effective, and reinforces achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

As I have mentioned in previous Executive Board sessions, given the new post-2015 landscape, UNFPA has commissioned an independent review analyzing humanitarian trends as they relate to UNFPA's mandate. The aim is to spark discussion within UNFPA around its strategic focus over the next 15 years, and we look forward to engaging with the Board on these issues moving forward.

The assessment recommends that UNFPA use the forthcoming mid-term review of the strategic plan in 2016 to align with the SDGs and include a broader humanitarian strategy with a more robust results framework.

I hope you will join us today at 1:15 in Conference Room 1 to discuss UNFPA humanitarian action post-2015.

Staff security

One area where we have made sustained progress over the past five years is in the safety and security of our personnel.

We are equipping humanitarian surge staff with the skills needed to work in high-risk duty stations and have made significant improvements in emergency preparedness and response.

Unfortunately, in recent months we have had to relocate some international staff for security reasons, and many national staff and their families have been forced to leave their homes for safe areas.

But despite these challenges, our staff continue to deliver on our mandate with dedication, professionalism and passion. And I'd like to take this time to commend UNFPA staff for their service, even in the face of these unprecedented challenges and danger.

Our Country Representative in Yemen, Lene Christiansen, and her team are an example of the tremendous dedication of UNFPA staff. Despite the enormous challenges facing the team in Sana'a, they continue to work with national counterparts to reach the most affected populations and ensure that the needs of women and girls are not forgotten during the ongoing crisis.

Operating in very high-risk duty stations also comes with a high price, including significant costs to implement blast mitigation measures. We are integrating these direct security costs into new programmes and will seek donors' support accordingly. Staff also pay a high price in such situations and we are working with our UN partners to strengthen our capacity to provide needed psychosocial support.

Staff changes

UNFPA staff are indeed our greatest asset. And for the past three years, we at UNFPA, and I personally, have been privileged to work with a truly outstanding leader – Anne-Birgitte Albrechtsen. AB has been a tremendous asset to UNFPA and an exceptionally supportive and dedicated Deputy to me, leading many of the reforms and advances we have made to steer the organization in the right direction.

I know Board members and UNFPA colleagues join me in wishing her all the best as she takes up her new role as CEO of Plan International. I will miss her wise counsel, support, and unparalleled drive and her considerable contributions towards making UNFPA fit for purpose.

The recruitment process is currently under way for her successor, and we hope to be able to conclude this process shortly and share the results with you soon.

We will also be saying goodbye in the coming months to another long-serving member of the UNFPA family, Mohamed Abdel-Ahad, Regional Director for the Arab States, after 22 years of dedicated service to the organization. I would like to wish Mohamed the very best in the years ahead.

As we say goodbye to Anne-Birgitte and Mohamed, let us welcome Yoriko Yasukawa, as the new Regional Director for the Asia and Pacific region. Yoriko brings over 30 years of experience within the UN system and strong leadership skills that I am confident will be a huge asset to our work in the region.

Enterprise Risk Management/Audit

Mr. President,

I am pleased to report that UNFPA launched its Enterprise Risk Management strategy in June and that 12 top corporate risk areas have been identified, along with the risk owners, operating with the guidance and oversight of the Executive Committee.

All UNFPA business units are currently undertaking online risk assessments, which will be followed by the development of mitigation strategies. UNFPA leadership will discuss and approve an updated ERM strategy annually each June to ensure continued its relevance over time.

I am also happy to report that UNFPA received an unqualified audit report from the UN Board of Auditors, which recognized satisfactory progress on the implementation of their recommendations.

We are also encouraged by the Office of Audit and Investigation Services draft report on the follow-up review of our efforts to address issues raised in the 2013 audit of the Global and Regional Programme.

The draft report, to which we are currently replying, indicates that in the design and first year of implementation of the Global and Regional Interventions 2014-17, the GRP successor, UNFPA made progress, in varying degree, in addressing the issues raised previously. We will continue to pursue these efforts in the coming years of implementation of the GRI.

We have made good progress in strengthening the evaluation function and are happy to present the quadrennial budgeted evaluation plan for the period 2016-2019 during this board session. We welcome your continued strong support and your endorsement of the plan, which sets out a wider range of evaluation approaches to meet our needs and the necessary investments in human and financial resources required to implement the plan.

Financial situation/resource mobilization

Mr. President,

I have spoken about our human resources, so let me now turn to our financial resources.

The sustainability of resources is critical to our ability to keep pace with the growing demands for our services in the countries we serve. It is key to fully integrating the ICPD agenda into national development strategies and frameworks and to supporting countries in achieving the internationally agreed development goals and advancing the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

We are extremely grateful to Member States for your continued strong political and financial support.

That said, unfortunately we project a sharp decrease in our resources in 2015, to a large extent exacerbated by unfavourable exchange rates for a number of major currencies.

As reported in the Updated Integrated Resource Plan for 2014-2017 that we have submitted for your consideration, this year we introduced a series of austerity measures on all of the Integrated Budget components in order to align spending and remain financially sustainable.

As a result, the updated use of resources reflects reduced spending plans, in line with available income. This will undoubtedly and unfortunately have consequences for our ability to support programmes in the countries we serve.

Needless to say, we continue to work with our partners to overcome these challenges and hopefully reverse these trends. The good news is that our donor base remains strong, with 102 donors as of 1 August 2015, of which 26 have given multi-year commitments to core resources.

Within the context of the sustainable development goals, the UN Fit-for-Purpose process and the evolving financial landscape, and at your request, UNFPA has developed a comprehensive and integrated resource mobilization strategy.

The new strategy emphasizes the unwavering commitment of the Fund to exploring all avenues to raise the necessary resources, with a strong focus on the delivery of development results by the whole organization.

The presentation on the new Resource Mobilization Strategy and Funding Commitments report will take place later this morning, and we look forward to an engaging and open dialogue as we work together to address the important goal of increasing core resources and achieving a stable, predictable and diversified resource base for UNFPA.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I finish, there is an issue that I must draw your attention to.

As I have said many times, family planning is a human right. And yet, an estimated 225 million women around the world who want to avoid pregnancy do not have access to effective contraceptive methods! An absolutely staggering figure, mind-boggling in this day and age.

Since 2007, UNFPA's Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security – the only United Nations programme specifically focused on delivering family planning and reproductive health commodity security, including in humanitarian situations – has helped address this injustice.

Contraceptives procured by the Global Programme have saved 774,000 lives and potentially averted an estimated 47 million unintended pregnancies and 18 million abortions.

Because of its impact on the ground, the Global Programme is critical to meet the unmet needs of an additional 120 million women – the goal set at the London Summit in 2012.

Yet today millions of poor women around the world face the risk that these family planning and contraceptive services may not be available, wiping out progress that has been made and stopping us from reaching those hardest to reach.

The Programme now faces a serious financial gap of approximately \$1 billion over the next five years.

This means that 1 million mothers and newborns could die; it means 80 million unintended pregnancies.

Mr. President, Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

I appeal to you and your governments – as key partners in shaping the new development agenda – to please support the Global Programme and, through it, millions of women and girls around the world.

I have received strong personal support from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on this matter, and I will continue to work with him in urging more and more governments to pledge their support to the Programme.

This includes active participation in a Pledging Meeting, to be hosted by the Government of the Netherlands in The Hague on 3 November 2015. Together with Mr. Ban, I urge your Governments to participate in this important event and take the opportunity to announce commitments to the Global Programme.

Now is the time to do so. The Sustainable Development Goals – notably targets 3.7 and 5.6 – call on all of us to take action to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.

Millions of women and girls around the world count on us. We – the international community – cannot let them down. We have a moral obligation to do whatever we can. Their lives depend on it.

I thank you.