Mr. President,

I thank you for guiding this first regular session of the Executive Board to a successful conclusion. You have said this is a significant year for UN Women. I couldn’t agree more.

We are now an established organization. We move ahead in 2013 with a strengthened field presence as we implement our regional architecture, endorsed last year by the Board.

This year will see a new integrated budget for 2014-2015, and we aim to reach consensus on a harmonized cost-recovery policy, and an updated Strategic Plan for 2014 to 2017.

In June at the annual session, you will look at the progress UN Women has made in carrying out our Strategic Plan. UN Women will have much great news to share that we can build on together.

I congratulate the Board for the decision adopted today on the Operational activities report. We have taken note of all of your comments on this report and will take them into consideration when we draft the Operational activities report for 2014.

Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,
This has been an interactive and open session. On behalf of my colleagues, I thank you for your many expressions of appreciation and support to UN Women. As I have said, we at UN Women, each and every one of us, are proud of what we have accomplished over the last two years — of the organizational foundation built, the partnerships established, and, most importantly, of the results achieved.

Though we can all agree that there is no room for complacency in a world where too many still are excluded, where too many women and girls cannot enjoy that basic, that most fundamental human right — to live free of violence and discrimination.

So let us commit to put even more effort into our shared goal of achieving real equality between women and men, and boys and girls. Great momentum has been built in the past two years and great hopes are bestowed on UN Women so let us work together even more strongly.

Let us all work together to make UN Women a stronger organization that makes a real difference in the lives of women and girls across the globe, by building and strengthening national capacity and partnerships for action.

It has been inspiring to hear your statements highlighting some of the significant achievements made in your nations in such areas as national planning, women’s political participation and south-south cooperation. That is exactly what is needed— that is where we should support you: in your actions!

We have taken note of your specific requests for the establishment of a UN Women presence, and will keep in mind these requests as funds permit. In the meantime, we will continue to provide support through our regional and multi-country offices, working together within the entire UN system to better respond to needs on the ground.

I would now like to say a few words about funding. I hadn’t imagined that so many of you would pick up on the love and fresh air and it is definitely refreshing to hear that you share our concern that UN Women needs to be fully financed to be in a position to deliver on our Strategic Plan. When UN Member States created UN Women, the vision included a firm financial foundation. The hopes were high and they continue to be high among women worldwide.
As we all know, funding is a critical issue for UN Women at this critical time. We are not meeting our funding targets, which have already been reduced, and we need more funding to fulfill our mandate.

I thank all Governments that have contributed to UN Women and for the expressions of support voiced during this session. I know this is a difficult time given the economic crisis and I ask you to prioritize funding for the benefit of women. We will continue to do our part to widen and deepen our donor base. And we look forward to the support of the bureau and the entire Board membership in working with us to mobilize increased funding this year.

I am heartened to see that the new membership of the Board has embraced, like I did, the Papersmart way of doing things. This smooth session is a testimony to that. It delights me to think that with every PaperSmart session, we are together saving tens of thousands of dollars for women in countries. So, we at UN Women do what we can to be efficient and make cost-savings.

I would like to assure you that, in response to your suggestions, I will encourage my team to do further informal briefings, especially for the new members of the Board and new observers, on important issues such as the Rio+20 follow up, the post 2015- agenda, the Strategic plan, and the implementation of the QCPR. We aim to present a conference paper on the Strategic Plan at the annual session of the Board.

As we look ahead, UN Women looks forward to your support, Mr. President and the support of the bureau this year, to prepare very well for next year’s Joint Field Visit and the Joint Meeting of the Boards. As you know, UN Women has been nominated the coordinating agency for these two very significant inter-agency efforts. This will be the first time for us to carry out such an exercise, and we very much look forward to your support and guidance for optimal coordination.

Once again, I welcome the new members of the UN Women Executive Board for 2013. All of us in UN Women look forward to continued close collaboration to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women worldwide. We move forward guided by a vision of women and girls living free of the fear of violence, able to make their full contribution to peace, justice and democracy.