Fiji national statement at the UNFPA segment of the first regular session of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS Executive Board, 28 January 2014.

Mr. President,

The Fiji delegation wishes to thank Dr. Osotimehin for his statement outlining the priorities for UNFPA in 2014, building on the work already done in 2013. As with UNDP, it is clear that the elaboration of the post-2015 development framework will loom large in UNFPA’s work, as will the follow up on the outcomes of the ICPD beyond 2014 review.

Mr. President,

With 66.5% of Fiji’s population under the age of 30, and an 8.6% rate of unemployment as at the last census in Fiji, up from 3.7% in the previous census, Fiji is grappling with questions relating to population dynamics, and how to meet the economic, social and developmental needs of its populace. The very Mission of UNFPA, that of "delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, every young person’s potential is fulfilled" is therefore one that resonates strongly in the developmental aspirations and priorities of Fiji.

Such concerns resonate also among the Pacific Small Island Developing States, and Fiji will as their representative on the Board participate actively in matters relating to UNFPA’s work in the region, where UNFPA has a strong presence. Fiji will also participate in the ICPD beyond 2014 process that has been highlighted by the Executive Director in his statement, not just in the work of this Board but also through the Commission on Population and Development, and the Special Session on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development to be held on 22 September 2014.
Fiji also looks forward to working within the Board on matters relating to the implementation of the new Strategic Plan for UNFPA, and on implementation of decisions taken by the board last year. In this respect, Mr. President, we wish to congratulate UNFPA through the Executive Director for appointing a new Director for Evaluation in the person of Ms. Andrea Cook, in line with Decision 2013/21 of the Board on the revised UNFPA Evaluation Policy. Importantly, the revised policy highlighted the norms of independence and impartiality in guiding the work of the Evaluation Office. We look forward to the approval of the transitional biennial budgeted evaluation plan during this session, and to the implementation of this plan under the revised policy. Finally, we would encourage UNFPA to keep this policy under review so that lessons learned during the implementation of the plan under discussion can be built into the work of the Evaluation Office in the future.

I thank you Mr. President.