Statement by
M. Nurul Alam
Permanent Observer
Partners in Population and Development (PPD)

First Regular Session of the Executive Board,
of the United Nations Development Programme,
The United Nations Population Fund and
The United Nations Office of Project Services
(Agenda item - Statement by the Executive Director)

Mr. President
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I join the speakers before me in offering you our congratulations on your election as President of the Board and wish you all success in your leadership role in the coming year.

I wish to thank the Executive Director for his usual comprehensive inaugural statement and for his dedicated leadership, vision and commitment to set new standards of performance for the organization. I would also like to record PPD’s warm appreciation to the UNFPA team for the hard work and accomplishments in 2013 with excellent cooperation and services extended to the member countries and institutions.

The year 2014 stands at a critical juncture when the post-2015 development agenda would soon be unveiled and adopted. This seminal year also completes twenty years of the ICPD work and a global programme of action beyond 2014 on ‘Population and Development’, would be tabled for adoption by member countries. UNFPA has provided crucially important contribution in this process and will continue to have a significant role in moving the agenda forward through its programmes nationally, regionally and globally in the coming years.

Mr. President,

This year is also important as the new UNFPA Strategic Plan comes into force. We appreciated the participatory and consultative process that UNFPA followed in leading up to the approval and adoption of the Strategic Plan. It also provides a sharper focus for the organization and will facilitate the programme countries to achieve stronger and tangible results through specific organizational efforts or working with other partners. It is our hope that core normative values of human rights and gender equality embodied in the ‘bulls eye’ strategy of UNFPA along with the depth of its focus on women, adolescents and youth with concrete activities in the member countries will drive the organizations work this year and in the years to come.

The Strategic Plan emphasizes that its work at the country level represents UNFPA’s core strength and the business model touches upon the issue of delegating more responsibility of partnership building to country operations with a variety of stakeholders. At the regional and country level the organization intends to deepen partnership with a wider set of stakeholders like the regional organizations, advocacy groups and the emerging intergovernmental organizations. This is indeed a welcome focus which supports the capacity development intent of the organization. We sincerely hope that the partnerships strategy in the Strategic Plan will be followed up with more systematic programmatic support in 2013-14. Strengthening such partner institutions not only creates capacities at local and regional level, it also provides the development partner like UNFPA a strong leverage for delivering sustainable results on the ground with affordable investment. The intrinsic commitment the regional intergovernmental organizations draw from its member governments provides a platform to implement norms, standards and values that UNFPA stand for.
Mr. President,

As an inter-governmental organization PPD has been working in its 25 member countries in support of the implementation of the ICPD PoA and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The main areas of PPD focus are the issues of reproductive health and rights, population dynamics, family planning services, gender equality, ageing and commodity security. The focus of PPD activities is to build national capacity through training, knowledge sharing through documenting of innovative practices and through information exchange, policy dialogue and advocacy for population and development. The PPD’s areas of focus are fully consistent with UNFPA’s strategic plan, direction, outcomes. PPD looks forward to partner in some specific activities within the broader realm of UNFPA’s work in 2013.

Through its consistent country level work and periodic ministerial events, PPD enhances dialogue among policy makers including ministers and senior policy makers on themes relating to integration of broader ICPD PoA into national strategies and plans. The recent intergovernmental ministerial thematic dialogue entitled ‘ICPD Beyond 2014 and South South Cooperation’ was held on 22-24 October in Beijing, co-hosted by the Government of China. PPD thanks UNFPA for its participation at the highest level. At the conclusion of the meeting, the twenty five member countries adopted the Beijing Declaration.

The Beijing Declaration confirmed the members’ commitment to strengthen South-South Cooperation, as recommended in the ICPD, by sharing knowledge, best practice and experience, leveraging technologies, building professional and institutional capacities, and serving as a platform for advocacy and strategic policy dialogue. They also confirmed their resolve to accelerate progress and sustainable development through four pathways: Integrating population dynamics into global and national development plans and processes; Achieving universal access to family planning, sexual and reproductive health services; Promoting gender equity and realizing women’s rights; and Strengthening the capacity of communities, families and individuals to respond to demographic changes.

Mr. President,

My last point is on the transitional evaluation plan and budget. We very much appreciate the emphasis accorded to the enhancement of programme quality and on monitoring and evaluation in the Strategic Plan. In a fast moving dynamic environment, monitoring and evaluation feedback provide the essential ingredients of a knowledge-based learning organization. In that context we find the transitional evaluation plan and budget well formulated addressing the much required substantive accountability and learning dimension of the organization. It is important is to create and support an evaluative culture in the management environment which can constructively draw and apply lessons emanating from the evaluations. With a new evaluation policy in place with strong independence and accountability and sufficient budget, the expectations from the Executive Board and stakeholders are certainly high for the Evaluation Office’s performance. We look forward to the first generation of evaluations in 2013-14 from the Evaluation Office under the new policy.

I thank you for your kind attention.