Executive Board UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS
First regular session 2014

28 January 2014

Agenda Item 6:
Evaluation of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

President,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Finland, Luxemburg, Japan, Sweden, the United Kingdom and my own country, Norway.

Let me start by congratulating UNFPA and UNICEF for the positive evaluation of the Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation. We strongly support the global movement to eliminate the harmful practice of FGM. Gender equality and human rights, including the fundamental right to decide over one’s own body and sexuality is the basic principle underlying this policy.

We are very pleased to learn that the evaluation of the Joint Programme confirms that we are on the right track and that we are achieving results. There has been significant progress in strengthening national policies and in local level commitment. The use of a variety of complementary approaches enhances the chances of influencing collective change. This is indeed promising and a good basis for the next phase of the programme.

President,

Any programme, regardless of its technical brilliance, can never achieve sustainable results on its own. Eliminating FGM is about changing deeply rooted social and gender norms. The real driving forces, and those who can ensure sustainability, are the women and girls, men and boys at community level. There is already strong African leadership towards ending FGM, and together with traditional, faith based and community leaders, members of the local community must take the lead to end this harmful traditional

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practice. We are confident that the Joint Programme will continue to support this collective action.

The UN General Assembly resolution from 2012 declares that Governments will take the lead to abolish FGM in their countries. Our efforts will be monitored as we stand accountable to the estimated 8000 girls whose health and human rights are at stake every day. The final responsibility to eliminate FGM lies with governments and must be reflected in our legal and policy frameworks. Education is crucial in raising awareness. We trust that the UNFPA will continue to play a central role in supporting these efforts.

President,

The next phase of the Joint Programme must fully use the momentum for change that is created at local, national and global levels. We appreciate that UNFPA and UNICEF work closely together to sustain the gains and in follow up the recommendations of the evaluation. We would like to hear the view of UNFPA and UNICEF on how the Programme also could benefit from the competence of UN Women. We appreciate that the catalytic nature of the programme will be maintained when deciding on programmatic approaches and when choosing national partners.

The evaluation has highlighted the problems that current funding modalities have caused for partner organizations, and we urge UNFPA to address this by investigating the possibility to enter into multiyear funding arrangements.

We stress the importance of having a robust and evidence based results framework, indicators and evaluation plans in place. We expect to see the final results framework for the Joint Programme by June this year. We also would underline the need for effective mainstreaming of the issue of FGM in relevant country programmes and addressing cross border challenges in eliminating the practice.

President,

Finally, as a procedural remark, we encourage UNFPA, together with other Funds and Programmes, to develop common guidance for the Executive Boards' discussion of future joint evaluations.

Thank you.