UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

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UNITED KINGDOM MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

IN RESPONSE TO THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UN WOMEN,
PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA

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(Check against delivery)
Mr President, I would like to thank you, and the Executive Director, for your opening statements and for this opportunity to look back at the achievements of UN-Women against its first strategic plan.

We think the Executive Director can be proud of the progress achieved in just under a year under her leadership. We are pleased to note the progress reported in building the organisation, particularly through strengthened country and regional presence, and towards delivering high quality programmes at the country level. We welcome UNW's leadership role on gender equality and empowerment of women within the UN System. The second year of implementation of the UN System Wide Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming has shown encouraging progress towards a United Nations that considers the gender dimension in every aspect of its work.

UN-Women has also made a real contribution to the normative work of the United Nations this year. We saw a strong consensus outcome at the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March. The clear call made there by Member States for a stand-alone goal and mainstreaming of gender in the post-2015 development agenda demonstrates our collective will to address the gaps in the MDGs for women and girls and to tackle gender inequality head on. The twenty year review of the Beijing Platform for Action this year presents a timely opportunity to deepen our understanding of progress achieved and challenges that remain. We continue to look to UN-Women to support Member States in our task of crafting a set of future
development goals that can catalyze real progress for women and girls worldwide.

Let us not forget that women and girls around the world continue to face inequality, discrimination and threats to their safety and security. Many women continue to lack economic autonomy and empowerment as well as sufficient voice and representation at all levels of decision-making. And twenty years after the landmark Beijing and Cairo conferences, many still face denial of their sexual and reproductive rights.

We must also make progress on the crucial Women, Peace & Security Agenda. We are beginning to see increased support for women’s involvement in peace processes, but more must be done. It is clear that we must redouble our collective efforts if we are to achieve the tangible results that our commitments under UNSC 1325 and subsequent resolutions demand. We hope the Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict hosted in London last week will support further progress in this area.

UN-Women has a clear role to play in changing these long-standing inequalities. In order to make further progress as an organisation, the United Kingdom believes it essential that: UN-Women set ambitious targets that are formulated transparently, that drive innovation and progress on the ground, and that are measurable; that progress against those targets is properly monitored; and that evaluation is effective and captures as much as possible the impact of UN-Women’s normative activities on development outcomes.
We are very appreciative that UN-Women has made the data companion available again, which very much improves the transparency of reporting.

As UN-Women grows and strengthens, it is essential that it uses its resources wisely and efficiently. We would welcome information on income and expenditure and efficiencies achieved against clear targets. We encourage UN-Women to align reporting procedures with those of other agencies. We also encourage greater focus on human resources management to ensure UN-Women has a strong and effective workforce it needs to maximise its impact. We look forward to the pledging event tomorrow and to welcoming new financial commitments by Member States that match messages of political support. We also look forward to engaging in dialogue around strategic financing and establishing the resource base for sustainably funding UNW over the medium to long-term.

With the World Cup on everyone’s minds, I want to reiterate one of the Executive Director’s wise observations – that “we cannot win with half the team left out of the game”. We urge UN-Women to stay agile, to focus on its key strengths, and enhance its collaboration with the rest of the UN team in order to drive forward gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Mr President, I thank you.