UN Women Executive Board, annual session, 17-19 June 2014

Item 3: Evaluation

Statement by Ireland, Italy and Germany

Mr. President

I wish to make this statement on behalf of Italy, Germany and Ireland and to commend the progress detailed in the Report before us today for consideration. We find it practical, realistic and usable.

Although a management response is not strictly speaking necessary, we would find it useful in future years for the management side to provide some commentary to this important report since it includes such a valuable record of key findings and lessons learned.

We also recommend the inclusion, as an introductory section in future reports, of a focus on overarching lessons and challenges for the organisation. Such cumulative reflection and analysis would provide a very useful contribution to our work and build on the good approach already taken in this Report.

We wish to thank the Evaluation Office for its commitment and the work it is doing. A well resourced function is essential, and in this regard, we wish to welcome in particular the decision to upgrade the position of Director. We thank him for his leadership since he assumed office and the further momentum this has already generated.

We would like to comment on four issues:

Independence and quality

We encourage the Executive Director to continue the sound approach, clear from the beginning of the entity, to champion the Evaluation function. This will help sustain the necessary enabling environment in which a healthy and robust culture of evaluation thrives and promotes use, learning and accountability. It also helps underpin the Office’s independence and impartiality.

External assessment has also an important role to play and, in this regard, we welcome the establishment of an Evaluation Advisory Committee and consider its composition to be correct.

The peer review to be carried out this year by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and to be presented to the Board next year will provide another good foundation for sound policy development. We would urge that the context of a recently established organisation, especially its regional presence, be kept in mind during the conduct of the review.

Decentralised evaluations and resources

Since UN Women is a decentralised organisation, and 89% of evaluations are carried out by field offices, priority and increased efforts are needed to ensure that adequate capacity is in place. We agree with the Report’s comment that “much more needs to be done” to strengthen capacity, especially because the opportunity to influence national policies is so important.
For those offices with major programmes dedicated expertise is necessary to ensure the job gets done properly and that staff are in a position to encourage more system wide evaluation at country level in the context of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

We welcome the very good approach taken by the Office, together with other parts of the organisation, to ensure offices have costed evaluation plans, well-aligned with strategic notes, and that approval of monitoring, evaluation and research plans is closely coordinated.

The global accountability and tracking of evaluation use system will be another useful source to improve capacity.

**Supporting national capacity**

We wish to congratulate UN Women for its innovative and catalytic work on leveraging its partnerships and knowledge. The strong network of stakeholders of governments, civil society and other UN entities is an excellent investment which reflects well on the unique mandate of the entity. This “grassroots” movement should be recognised and supported appropriately at UN level.

We are particularly pleased with the initiative EvalPartners are taking to declare 2015 the International Year of Evaluation and the role being played by UN Women (and UNEG) to support this welcome initiative. It fits in well with the call by Member States in the QCPR Resolution to build up national capacity on evaluation and to provide an enabling environment to support the evaluation function.

**Supporting joint evaluations**

We wish to align ourselves with the statement by the Netherlands on the Joint Evaluation of the Joint Gender Programmes. However, apart from action at the corporate level, we would like to add that we are pleased that one quarter of UN Women evaluations were joint evaluations. The position of UN country team task forces on gender and the ability to support evaluations of the UNDAF remain very important at country level.

To conclude, Mr. President, we continue to see the Evaluation Office as having much to offer in support of UN Women’s consolidation, in particular, as it embeds results-based management.

The work done by the Office continues to present the Board with invaluable insights into performance of the organisation.

We welcome all the efforts by the entity to strengthen the evaluation function at corporate and decentralised levels and urge a close monitoring of adequate resources and capacity to the evaluation function.

END