Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS

Annual Session 2015

Statement of
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Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

Colleagues and friends,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning! It’s a pleasure to be here with you once again for the Annual Session of the Executive Board.

I always look forward to this opportunity to share with you the highlights of our work over the preceding year, take stock of the lessons learned and look ahead to future challenges and opportunities.

This year is particularly significant, as we examine the results achieved in 2014, the first year of implementation of our strategic plan 2014-2017. I am happy to report that we have made good progress, achieving the results we set out to achieve in 2014.

This year is also significant because the world stands on the cusp of a new development era. With the clock ticking down until the end of the MDG time frame, the world is on track to achieve a number of targets -- halving extreme poverty, reducing child deaths, increasing primary school attendance and narrowing the gender gap in school enrolment.

But growing inequality threatens the social and economic development gains achieved to date and, if not addressed, will thwart future progress.
One of the challenges of the post-2015 era is to deliver development that delivers for all. Yet, we still know the least about – and do the least for – those we need to reach the most. And that is what we must change to build the more just, inclusive future we all want.

Rooting out inequality and ensuring the human rights, dignity and well-being of every individual is key to bringing the benefits of development to all.

The outcome of the Open Working Group and the negotiations on the post-2015 agenda so far reinforce the conclusion of the ICPD beyond 2014 review that an integrated approach to human rights, resilience, individual capability and opportunity is the basis for transformational, inclusive sustainable development.

That is what delegates understood two decades ago in Cairo, and that is what continues to drive our work at UNFPA to this day.

In communities and countries, we know we have to go that extra mile, to reach the marginalized women and adolescent girls in remote rural communities or dense urban slums; the young people migrating to cities in search of work and opportunities for a better life; the individuals and families affected by humanitarian crises and conflict; internally displaced persons and refugees; older people in need of support or seeking opportunities to continue to contribute their knowledge and experience to their communities.
In our collective efforts to reach the most vulnerable, marginalized and excluded, it is clear that business as usual will not do. Development must take a different path and be tailored to specific country situations. There is no quick-fix, no one-size-fits-all, just the slow hard work of engaging with people, community by community; listening to their needs; designing solutions with them as true partners, taking risks and failing sometimes, but always learning from our mistakes as we pick up and try again.

That is how we will reach those most in need – people lost in traditional data systems and aggregate statistics, people hidden in the “tyranny of averages” – like some of the population groups I just mentioned or like the 10-year-old girl you have heard me speak about so often -- married too early, pregnant too soon, her rights violated, her health and well-being jeopardized, her hopes and dreams stolen from her, her potential squandered.

Yesterday, we saw the success of UNFPA’s advocacy as representatives of governments, the private sector and civil society met here at the United Nations to discuss ways to reach the world’s 1.8 billion young people.

One third of these young people are adolescent girls like that 10-year-old, with unique needs, challenges and hopes for the future.
In many developing countries, the youth population presents both challenges and a one-time ‘demographic dividend’, an opportunity to trigger rapid economic growth and social advancement.

Discussions around the demographic dividend could not be more relevant to the emerging post-2015 development agenda. This universal agenda challenges countries to accelerate progress across multiple sectors simultaneously and achieve rapid, sustainable development and inclusive growth.

The interest in yesterday’s high-level event on Youth Employment and the Demographic Dividend, convened by the President of the General Assembly with support from UNFPA and ILO, showed the importance government and private sector leaders, as well as NGOs and young people, attach to this issue.

This afternoon, we will make a presentation to the Board on the demographic dividend and its impact on nations’ economic prospects. We will also highlight UNFPA’s work to support countries in making the necessary policy and strategic choices to enable them to realize the demographic dividend.

This requires countries to make the right investments at the right time.

- Investments in sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, including family planning and contraceptive services;
• Investments in human capital development – in empowering, educating and employing the largest-ever generation of young people;
• Investments, in adolescent girls in particular, and in advancing gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment;
• And evidenced-based analysis of population trends to seize the opportunities provided by changing demographic structures.

I know these priority actions are familiar to you as members of the Executive Board because they mirror UNFPA’s priorities, as outlined in our strategic plan.

Your support will be critical in positioning the organization to play its role effectively and in ensuring that the investments needed in young people and women, including their right to sexual and reproductive health information and services, are reflected in the post-2015 agenda. These investments have the potential to transform the face of Africa, South Asia and other regions.
Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our strategic plan puts sexual and reproductive health and realization of reproductive rights squarely at the centre of the Fund’s work, particularly targeting women and young people, especially adolescent girls.

The plan also sets out reforms to improve delivery of results: a strengthened results framework, a new business model and improvements to funding arrangements.

UNFPA continues to lead efforts and carry out interventions to accelerate progress on MDG5, with a particular focus on adolescents and youth, and with increasing emphasis on humanitarian preparedness and response.

In 2014, UNFPA responded to 34 humanitarian crises and five Level 3 emergencies, in Central African Republic, Iraq, the Philippines, South Sudan and Syria.

I just returned from Nigeria, where I saw firsthand our important work to assist women and girls who escaped or were rescued from Boko Haram. We are providing psychosocial support and reproductive health services to them, their families and communities.
All told, our humanitarian response work reached 5.4 million women and girls worldwide with services for health and to prevent and address gender-based violence. If I were to sum up our focus in emergencies, I would say, Safe birth even here…safe from fear.

In the three countries affected by the Ebola outbreak, UNFPA did this and more. We took on the vital work of mobilizing over 8,000 Ebola contact tracers, who monitored more than 90,000 contacts to prevent further transmission.

In Sierra Leone, the Fund supported 450,000 women of reproductive age with reproductive health kits. In Guinea, UNFPA supported 10,000 pregnant and Ebola-cured women with hygiene and solidarity kits. And in Liberia the Fund helped equip 370 health facilities nationwide with supplies and equipment for infection prevention and control and reproductive health.

UNFPA also launched the Mano River Midwifery Initiative with governments and other partners to increase the number of health workers in the three countries so that women and girls of childbearing age stay healthy and safe despite the crisis.

In 2014, we also stepped up implementation of our family planning and adolescent and youth strategies. Further details on this work are available in annexes 8 and 9 of the annual report, which you have before you.
With key partners, we launched the Roadmap to Accelerate achievement of Maternal and Newborn Survival and Reach Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 to encourage greater investments in integrated reproductive, maternal and newborn health.

We made steady progress on 89 percent of the strategic plan outputs, and the performance of the global and regional interventions was also strong – at 79 percent.

Over half of the Fund’s resources – or $501.2 million – were spent on increasing access to SRH services.

Through contraceptive procurement:

- tens of thousands of maternal deaths, over 10 million unintended pregnancies and 3.4 million unsafe abortions were averted;
- nearly 30 million users accessed modern family planning methods; and
- more than 39 million couples were protected for one year from unwanted pregnancies.

Strategic partnerships were key to bringing SRH services to more people.
Through the H4+ partnership, together with UNAIDS, UNICEF, UN-Women, the World Bank Group, and the World Health Organization, we created an inter-agency list of essential medical devices for maternal and newborn health and a policy guide for implementing essential interventions for reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health.

In partnership with IPPF, UNFPA ensured that the most marginalized and vulnerable people benefit from family planning innovations in over 16 priority countries. We used technology to communicate health messages to young people in the Dominican Republic, and to develop youth-friendly models of care in Bolivia, Dominican Republic and Paraguay.

With the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, we are using mobile phones and social media to increase access to reproductive health information and services for young people in Nigeria and Ecuador. And we hope to use this experience to benefit other countries.

Together with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, we are joining forces to address HIV and SRH in key countries.

Through our ‘Choices not Chance’ strategy, we continue to increase capacity for family planning services through the Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security.
Solid progress can be seen in strengthened logistics management, rights-based family planning programmes, and enhanced health communications, outreach and community mobilization, focusing on youth and adolescents.

By 2014, 84 countries had a functional logistic management system, and UNFPA supported procurement of contraceptives worth $124 million in 98 countries.

Involving the private sector for supply chain management and using SMS-based inventory management reduced contraceptive stock-outs. More women and couples had access to family planning.

And 24 countries used the results of emergency obstetric and newborn care needs assessments to scale up maternal and newborn health services.

In leading and expanding the global Campaign to End Fistula, more than 10,000 fistula repair surgeries were conducted in 2014.

By supporting networks of women living with HIV and young people for HIV prevention, a social movement arose to end AIDS by 2030 and to incorporate youth SRH needs and rights into the post-2015 development agenda.
UNFPA remains the largest supplier of both male and female condoms to developing countries, donating over 800,000 male and female condoms in 2014, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa.

We work in times of peace and crisis. In 2014 UNFPA carried forward the new generation humanitarian strategy, which emphasizes preparedness and response capacity. Forty-eight countries now have capacity to implement the minimum initial service package at the onset of crisis. This is a big step forward as we support the rights of women to safe birth everywhere and to be safe from fear.

In the Ebola-affected countries, we were able to rapidly respond by switching programme funds to emergency funds and using the surge roster to get experts on the ground quickly.

In Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan and Syria, 2.7 million women were reached in 2014 with reproductive health services, which included assistance to more than 437,000 deliveries. This gives meaning to “safe birth even here”.

The UNFPA strategy of focusing on priority countries, supported by thematic funds, is building capacity and enabling significant progress in SRH service delivery and prompt humanitarian response.

We also made progress on increasing priority on adolescents, especially very young adolescent girls.
As a result,

- 11.6 million adolescents were reached with SRH services
- 68 per cent of programme countries now have laws and policies that allow adolescents to access SRH services
- In 63 programme countries, all national comprehensive sexuality education curricula are aligned with international standards and
- 41 programme countries have health, social and economic asset-building programmes that reach out to adolescent girls at risk of child marriage

UNFPA remains a strong champion for ending child marriage, working with the African Union on a campaign to end child marriage across the continent.

UNFPA is also the primary partner of a World Bank-funded $170 million project to expand access by women and girls to reproductive, child and maternal health services in five countries in Africa’s Sahel region and the Economic Community of Western African States. The project includes a major component on empowering adolescent girls. We believe in girl power!

2014 saw progress in advancing gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment and reproductive rights.
UNFPA supported civil society organizations, including faith-based groups, to promote reproductive rights and women’s empowerment.

In 30 countries, civil society groups worked to institutionalize programmes for engaging men and boys on gender inequality, SRH and reproductive rights.

Our support means that:

- More than half of programme countries have a gender equality national action plan that includes reproductive rights, with specific targets and national public budget allocations
- More than half have integrated gender-based violence prevention, protection and response in national SRH programmes, and
- 54 per cent of programme countries affected by humanitarian crisis have an inter-agency gender-based violence coordination body as a result of UNFPA guidance and leadership.

Our work in supporting norms and standards is backed by community mobilization to ensure that local leaders lead change that is sustainable.

Success is happening as we work to end female genital mutilation. In 2014, more than 2,000 communities supported by UNFPA declared the abandonment of FGM, and I am pleased to say that my own country, Nigeria, last week enacted a law banning the practice.
Underpinning our work are ongoing efforts to strengthen population and national development policies and international development agendas through integration of evidence-based analysis. I am talking about data for development.

- In the past 10 years, 104 countries have had at least one census of good quality; and 101 countries have collected, analyzed and disseminated national household survey data for estimation of reproductive health indicators
- 252 databases are in place in 74 countries, with population-based data accessible through web-based platforms that facilitate mapping of socioeconomic and demographic inequalities
- 69 per cent of countries have national statistical authorities with the institutional capacity to analyze and use disaggregated data on adolescents and youth.

We are working hard to support countries to identify and reach the poor and marginalized with services.

**Organizational effectiveness and efficiency**

Mr. President,

In 2014, UNFPA continued to enhance programme effectiveness; mobilization, management and alignment of resources; and adaptability.
By developing and implementing the Global Programming System, UNFPA has moved in the right direction, making use of information technologies for more transparent, effective programming, and improved planning and reporting.

[GPS SLIDE]

For the first time, we can analyze in real time programme budgets and expenditures in the context of the expected result (Strategic Plan, Country Programme or donor specific results) and the way programmes are delivered (in line with the business model).

This helps us ensure that the commitments expressed in the documents signed with our implementing partners are backed up by the respective financial provisions. This means that all reported financial figures can be traced back to the relevant programme activities the funds were spent on. This will help improve UNFPA’s performance.

**Funding/Resource mobilization**

Mr. President,

In 2014, UNFPA mobilized the highest contribution revenue in its history, passing the $1 billion mark, and for this we are grateful.
We surpassed the 2014 target for core funding, with $477 million mobilized against a target of $476 million. In co-financing, $525 million was mobilized against a target of $542 million.

Total UNFPA expenses in 2014 amounted to $995.6 million.

Let me thank Member States once again for their continued support, particularly their core contributions, which are so critical to attaining our strategic plan outcomes.

With non-core resources now exceeding core resources, it is vital to ensure that they are harnessed effectively to meet our organizational objectives and managed in accordance with our policies and procedures as well as donor agreements.

I am happy to say that the Non-Core Funds Management Unit, which I announced at our session in January, is now up and running.

The Unit will ensure non-core funds are allocated to countries with the greatest needs and used effectively. This will facilitate an integrated approach to core and non-core resources, with distinct reporting to donors on the added value of non-core resources in the context of UNFPA’s overall work.
We continue to diversify our resource base and have strengthened our engagement with non-traditional partners and donors, including international financial institutions, regional banks, civil society and the private sector.

These efforts have been strengthened by our regional resource mobilization advisors and regional and country offices. As a result, contributions from programme country governments have almost tripled – from $12 million in 2013 to $34 million in 2014.

We welcome the favorable ratings of a number of major donor assessments, including MOPAN, which we believe reflects the improvements we have made in mobilization and alignment of resources and increasing value for money.

On Thursday we will have another informal on UNFPA’s Resource Mobilization Strategy, and I know that my colleagues look forward to engaging with you on these issues.

As part of the broader discussions on UN fitness-for-purpose and QCPR implementation, UNFPA will continue to engage in discussions with Executive Board members and our partner UN agencies on funding of our respective strategic plans for 2014-2017 and the implications of the post-2015 agenda for the Funds and Programmes going forward.

The exchange rate fluctuations and strong US dollar continue to pose challenges and it is clear that we cannot continue to do business as usual.
We have already implemented and are currently in the process of exploring additional austerity measures.

Mr. President,

In January I announced a set of organizational changes to facilitate our engagement with governments and the development of strategic partnerships, and to enhance our communication, resource mobilization and outreach.

These changes took effect on April 1 and I am pleased to report that they are starting to pay off.

Please join me in welcoming Kwabena Osei-Danquah as Director of the new Division for Governance and Multilateral Affairs. This Division will enhance UNFPA’s partnership with Member States and the Executive Board and strengthen our collective work to advance the ICPD agenda in the new development era.

Let me also welcome Arthur Erken as Director of the new Communication and Strategic Partnerships Division. This Division will strengthen UNFPA’s work with partners, help us better tell our stories and advocate for our issues, and mobilize support from our traditional donors while tapping new sources of funding.
Marcela Suazo is heading UNFPA’s new corporate project on South-South cooperation, and I have called on Bruce Campbell to lead our work on data for development. We are fortunate to have Marcela and Bruce’s skills and political acumen to help us advance our work in these important areas going forward.

Benoit Kalasa joins us at Headquarters as Director of the Technical Division. He brings his long field experience and deep technical expertise to the role.

Mabingue Ngom has replaced Benoit as Regional Director for West and Central Africa. His extensive knowledge of the region will be a tremendous asset.

Finally, Ramiz Alakbarov has taken over the reins as Director of Programme Division. I am confident that his considerable field experience in a wide range of countries will be an enormous asset to the organization in this new function.

We are also in the process of recruiting new Directors for the Latin America and Caribbean Region as well as the Asia and Pacific Region. I believe the changes we are undertaking will make us more fit for purpose as we enter the post-2015 development arena. We’re off to a good start.
We anticipate that, at the end of the post-2015 process and discussions around the indicator and monitoring framework, the United Nations will have an agenda and a core set of priority indicators that might have implications for our Strategic Plan and its further implementation.

We look forward to engaging the Board on the way forward in the coming months. This includes seeking your guidance on whether to proceed with the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan as planned or whether to undertake a somewhat limited review based on technical assessments of implementation, while focusing on bigger substantive matters once the monitoring framework is complete.

We also hope to engage other funds and programmes and Member States on possibilities for making country programmes more dynamic and responsive to changing development needs in the field.

Within the Fund, I have established an internal working group of senior colleagues to suggest long-term measures to ensure that UNFPA’s role is fully relevant in the new development agenda. The group will engage all staff before providing its conclusions for the consideration of the Executive Committee and the Executive Board.

In partnership with you, our Executive Board members, we are building the UNFPA we need to build the future we want.
Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

This year, more than 59 million girls will turn 10 years of age. That's 59 million chances to do it right, to catalyze the dramatic transformations they – and we – so desperately need.

If we get it right, in 2030 we won’t be talking about reaching 99 percent of our strategic plan targets or deliberating over outputs and indicators.

If we get it right, today’s 59 million 10-year-old girls will be 25-year-olds living with their brothers in dignity, equality, health and well-being.

If we get it right, we will be celebrating 59 million empowered, educated, employed young women, freely exercising their human rights, and driving economic growth and sustainable development in their countries and for the world.

We have to get it right. And I am confident that we will. All of us at UNFPA look forward to working with you to create the future we want. Thank you.