Mr. President, Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

I am delighted to present to you the first UNOPS Annual Report of our Strategic Plan for 2014-2017. It emphasizes the importance of focus, sustainability and excellence.

Our values are firmly grounded in the UN Charter. Our strategy as endorsed by the Board further clarified our mandate and role as a resource for management and implementation capacity for the United Nations system and beyond.

In 2014 we delivered results to development, humanitarian and peacebuilding operations, to serve people in need.

In doing so, we brought international standards of efficiency, effectiveness and transparency to our partners’ operations, contributing to sustainable development around the world.

At the same time we have improved the way we work and consolidated our financial position, to ensure that UNOPS remains accountable and a valued resource to our partners.

UNOPS is an organization built on partnerships. We fulfil our mission to serve people in need by expanding the ability of the UN, governments and other partners to manage projects, infrastructure and procurement in a sustainable manner.
The Executive Board has provided consistent guidance and support to us in this effort, as we strive towards excellence in our core-mandated areas.

Today I will provide you with a snapshot of UNOPS results in 2014; a year of immense humanitarian challenges for the international community. Working together as one, towards common goals, is needed now more than ever if we are to achieve peace and stability.

I will also give you a detailed summary of our services; how we work with and contribute to the important development, humanitarian and peacebuilding goals of our partners can be found in the Annual Report.

Looking ahead, I will also share with you a few reflections in relation to the post-2015 development agenda. In UNOPS, we follow this agenda closely to ensure we remain a relevant and trusted partner for years to come.

First of all I am pleased to report that the demand for our services is stable, our delivery in 2014 reach 1.2 billion US dollars, compared to 1.16 billion US dollars the year before.

We supported over 1,200 projects in more than 80 countries, often in the most challenging environments.

During the year, UNOPS increased support for development work in Afghanistan and Myanmar; mine action services in Mali, Somalia and South Sudan; and humanitarian response activities in Jordan, Syria and Iraq.

Challenging environments are a reality of our world today. And in a world increasingly fragile – our commitments are needed more than ever.

Distinguished members,
The Annual Report provides a detailed account of our contributions. Let me provide you with a few highlights of how UNOPS has expanded the capacity of the UN, governments and other partners last year.

In 2014, we constructed, designed or rehabilitated over 4,500 kilometers of road, 175 bridges, 30 schools, and 18 hospitals and health clinics.

Over 17.8 million medical supplies were handled, including the distribution of approximately 3.6 million diagnostic kits. In total we procured more than 110 million doses of medicine.

Through the projects UNOPS supports, we created more than 3 million days of paid work for local labour.

We supported our partners’ training of more than 84,000 individuals – in topics such as health, human rights, and gender equality.

We provided more than 31,000 days of technical advice, advice which expanded capacity in areas such as urban planning and construction techniques.

I would like to share a few details of some of these projects.

My first example comes from Honduras. Following a state of emergency in Honduras, UNOPS helped the government respond to critical shortages of essential and vital medicines.

Through procuring 44 million units of medicine and 2.1 million medical supplies, our contributions restocked 27 hospitals and 1,600 health care centers across the country.

Another example would be our support to combat the Ebola crisis, working with members of the UN family, as well as the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation.
Through a number of projects we provided both rapid response support, and longer-term recovery assistance. UNOPS helps the Governments of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in rebuilding health infrastructure.

Several projects focused on crisis prevention and peacebuilding.

For example, in support of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in Syria, UNOPS provided safety, security and logistical support for its OPCW’s continuing operations in the Syrian Arab Republic.

And following the devastating floods in Serbia – with funding from the European Union and the governments of Canada, France and Norway – we worked with Serbia to rehabilitate schools, health facilities and private homes, helping to restore access to essential services for people in areas which were hardest hit.

As illustrated, in 2014 UNOPS made a range of tangible contributions to our partners. While doing so we continued mainstreaming development of national capacity and sustainability, both in our approach and in terms of what we leave behind.

The overall share of projects reporting one or more activities supporting these objectives, as set out in our strategic plan, were:

- 60 percent contributed to development of national capacity;
- 48 percent contributed to equitable economic growth;
- 54 percent contributed to social justice and inclusion; and also
- 51 percent contributed to mitigation of environmental impact.

The Annual Report provides many more examples of the specific contributions we made to partners’ sustainable outcomes.
Distinguished members,

In 2014, our work directly on behalf of partners in the United Nations system was stable at around half of our delivery.

Our largest partner was the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, where we provided support to the global peace and security work of the UN Mine Action Service.

The Government of Afghanistan, followed by Peru and Guatemala were our largest government partners in 2014.

Our work supporting governments in developing countries represent a vital contribution to developing national capacity and supporting national ownership.

Through various projects in Myanmar, for example, more than 33,000 local people received training in a range of health initiatives.

Or in Nicaragua, UNOPS provided more than 500 days of advisory services, supporting the construction and equipping the largest hospital in the country.

We have highly valued partnerships across the UN family and beyond; and in our pursuit of excellence it is part of our vision to always satisfy or surpass our partners’ expectations.

Each year we conduct a survey to ascertain their priorities, and we seek feedback on how they perceive our performance.

Their feedback provides focus for our efforts, in order to improve our operations and ensure that our services meet their needs.
I am very pleased to report that in 2014 overall satisfaction among our partners exceeded 75 per cent. More than 80 per cent of them indicated they were “likely” or “very likely” to recommend UNOPS services to others.

Distinguished members,

Of course we could not have achieved such results without the commitment of close to 7,000 people working around the world.

I would like to place on record my sincere appreciation to all of them. They have worked tirelessly towards UNOPS mission – to serve people in need.

And our people are a vital asset and we are committed to enhancing their skills.

And last year more than 1,400 personnel took part in UNOPS learning activities.

Over 500 received project management training using the Prince2 methodology. 76 people received training related to our infrastructure discipline, and nearly 200 received training in procurement operations.

In addition to building technical competencies in our core-mandated areas we nurture our management culture and capabilities. Last year we launched the UNOPS Emerging Leaders Programme, and under the umbrella of our talent management framework, the programme aims to identify and develop talented personnel who have the potential to become future leaders within our organization.

We do this for the benefit of our partners. We are committed to quality. We are mindful that the pursuit of excellence is a path of continuous improvement - the empowerment of high-performing people is the bedrock of organizational excellence.

Distinguished members,
We exist because our partners value UNOPS processes, methods and tools. They demand efficient and cost-effective solutions to deliver on their objectives. Therefore, technology and especially innovations in technology are key to our organization.

At the moment, we are in the process of an organization-wide upgrade of our ICT systems. Through this, we will transform the technology that will help UNOPS become a smarter, more agile and better-integrated set of processes, enhancing the global reach of our services.

This should not only improve our levels of efficiency, it will help us with more timely and detailed management information on risks.

As a self-financing organization with a not-for-profit model, risk management is imperative. We have also made progress in this area last year.

An example of this is the timely response to the findings of our internal audit. In 2014, the implementation rate of audit recommendations rose to 97 per cent, an increase from the 93 per cent reported in 2013. And today we only have one internal audit recommendation which has remained open for more than 18 months.

We are conscious that our operations across complex and challenging environments carry an inherent exposure to risk.

While some appetite for risk is necessary, we are continuously working to enhance our systems for management of strategic and operational risks, as well as compliance across the organization.

We are mindful of our responsibility to manage the resources entrusted to us as efficiently and effectively as possible, including the strategic overhead costs of an organization with a global reach. This is a duty not just to our immediate partners,
the taxpayers and others who fund our operations; it is essential to ensure we
contribute the most to the wider community, to the people of the countries where
we operate.

Distinguished members,

2015 will be a defining year for the United Nations.

Member States will make vital decisions that will chart the course of global
development.

The world must strengthen its efforts to support sustainable development.

In support of the UN family, governments and the private sector, we contribute to
greater levels of sustainability and resilience through implementation.

Earlier this year, at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in
Sendai, it was announced that UNOPS would chair the International Recovery
Platform.

To this role we bring 20 years of experience in developing resilient infrastructure.

We aim to help countries "build-back-better" and be more resilient to shocks and
stresses such as cyclones, floods or earthquakes.

At the same time, the UN has a responsibility to show leadership on
sustainability.

The Global Reporting Initiative – developed through the support of the World
Bank and endorsed by UNEP – is one of the world’s leading frameworks for
sustainability reporting.

We are assessing the use of this framework for reporting on our contributions to
sustainability. We are ready to invest in areas of our work where it makes sense
to align, where our engagement can make the greatest impact towards achieving our mission.

We are also changing the way we work to address the challenges of climate change.

As an example, last April, UNOPS became the fourth organization in the world to be awarded a gold certificate in sustainable procurement, from the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply – one of the world’s leading external standards.

Through our centralized procurement platform – which in 2014 supplied goods and services in excess of 650 million US dollars to our partners – we are sharing the benefits of this sustainable approach across the UN family.

Finally, as I mentioned in my speech to the board in January, last year UNOPS also adopted one of the world’s leading standards for occupational health and safety (OHSAS 18001), becoming the first United Nations organization to be certified in its infrastructure practices.

And we will continue to uphold and pursue internationally recognized best practices, combining United Nations values with external standards.

Distinguished members,

The emerging post-2015 development agenda is vast, it puts pressure on all of us to find new ways of working together in broader partnerships and to ensure that scarce resources are utilized for the benefit of people in need.

As an organization, UNOPS stays relevant by adapting to change. It is important that we continually adapt and improve to deliver on our
commitments. And UNOPS stands ready to transfer the knowledge and capability we have in our recognized areas of expertise.

Helping developing countries arrange new kinds of partnerships and access innovative funding sources from non-traditional donors and private investors who are interested in social impact investments, is one means of support.

Our position is unique. We have a clear mandate to work with the UN, governments, intergovernmental institutions, international and regional financial institutions, NGOs, foundations and the private sector. We work at international, national, regional and community levels. And we provide management and implementation capacity.

We have a responsibility to connect the dots, bringing best practice and knowledge from sector-to-sector, from community-to-community.

In the changing landscape of development financing we are now exploring new ways of working with our partners in the private sector. In this regard we are assessing the role that UNOPS potentially could play in the area of impact investment.

For UNOPS to remain fit-for-purpose the only constant is change.

What will it take to serve people in need over the coming years?

How do we need to shape our operations to ensure we remain relevant?

What are the areas where we need to make investments in knowledge and capabilities?

These are the questions we ask today, for the benefit of tomorrow.
And we are grateful for the guidance and support the Board has offered over the years, and look forward to your continued guidance on these matters in the years to come.

For 2014, – as I believe this Annual Report demonstrates our ability to further strengthen our platform. We are financially solid. We have a clear mandate.

UNOPS projections for 2015 are good; we are experiencing stable demand for our services and we continue to contribute to the tangible results of our partners.

We have the tools; we have the processes; and the methods to support Member States’ implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

So we stand ready to support.

Thank you

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