Annual Session of UN-Women Executive Board: Item 2 - Strategic Plan

Statement by Ambassador Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations

Mr. President,

I want to thank you for your statement, as well as for the address of the Executive Director. I take this opportunity to express appreciation of the dedicated work of the UN-Women.

We take note of reports before the current session of the Executive Board, particularly on the progress of implementation of the strategic plan 2014–2017, the annual evaluation function and the internal audit and investigation activities. We recognise and commend the management and the staff for their work and progress made. The progress achieved in systematic strengthening of the evaluation function and the advancement in leading system-wide gender evaluation efforts are welcome. It is notable that during the reporting period, the internal audit and investigation services for UN-Women has been effectively carried out by the respective Office which was able to close more investigation cases and issue more investigation reports than in 2013. We encourage a further strengthening of the evaluation function of the UN-Women, especially through decentralized evaluation and innovative partnerships with national evaluation entities. We understand that traditional donors are the primary providers of the UN Women’s financial resources. At the same time we welcome the efforts of the UN-Women to diversify the donor base. We encourage the Entity to continue their work in this direction to aim at strengthening the funding base by reaching out to a wide range of stakeholders, including the private sector.

Mr. President,

Last year the UN-Women started the implementation of its 2014–2017 Strategic Plan, aiming at the alignment of its programs in a way that it is capable to address new challenges in light of the new Sustainable Development Goals. Despite the progress, multiple challenges remain and much still needs to be done. The vast potential
of women and girls remain untapped and they continue suffering disproportionately from violence, economic downfalls, conflicts, and disasters. A wide gap between legislation and its implementation in priority areas of the Beijing Platform for Action exists. Discrimination towards women remains widespread, negatively affecting women’s access to education and healthcare, active participation in the economy and public life. Women continue to be underrepresented in high-level political positions. Harmful practices persist, and sexual violence especially in armed conflicts continues with impunity.

We believe the UN-Women and the international community at large share the concern that considerable gaps between norms and implementation need to be persistently addressed. In our view, in order to promote effectively the objective of economic empowerment of women, it is important to work closely with the private sector. The concept of corporate social responsibility deserves broad understanding, support and practical implementation, as, amongst other things, it has capacity to contribute to the advancement of employment and improvement of working conditions for women. Equal access to banking for women and girls deserves serious attention. Raising awareness of the Women, Peace and Security agenda is important. Armenia underlines the importance of promoting women’s participation in peace process at all levels. My government has been consistently working towards integration of women and girl refugees and IDPs, forced out of their homes in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a result of the aggression and war unleashed against Armenia. With the collaboration of international partners, we have taken effort to train representatives of these affected groups and women activists on the WPS concept. We are seriously concerned about the reports of continued arrests and vilification of the women peace activists and human rights defenders in our immediate neighbourhood, and urge them to stop such practices without further delay.

Recognising its successful performance, continuous outreach and manifest impact on advancing gender equality and empowerment of women across the world, we are confident that the UN-Women is capable of evolving into a stronger agency within the UN development system. We look forward to furthering the growing partnership with the UN-Women and contributing to its efforts in shaping the gender-related agenda beyond 2015.

Thank you