Remarks by Mr Margus Kolga
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Estonia
At the UN Women Regular Session 2015

I would like to thank Ms. Madame Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director for her opening statement and for the presentation of the Report on progress made on the UN- Women strategic plan, 2014-2017, including operational activities in 2014.

Estonia has always been a great supporter of UN Women. In fact, I am always proud to mention that my predecessor, the former Estonian ambassador to the UN was one of the facilitators of the resolution that created UN Women. Therefore we are especially glad to learn from the report presented today that UN-Women has seen progress across almost all outcome indicators in the strategic plan.

This year is a very important year as to the realization of all human rights by women and girls. We would like to especially commend UN-Women on the extensive and professional work that you have undergone in connection with the 20th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The first priority for Estonian delegation as to the promotion of human rights in the frames of UN, (here in NYC) was in the last year and beginning of this year, certainly the preparation of the 59th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. We were very glad to participate in facilitating the celebration and reaffirmation of one of the most important framework documents in the field of women’s human rights, gender equality and empowerment of women - the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We know that 20 years after the adoption of this landmark document, still no country has achieved gender
equality and full enjoyment of human rights by women and girls. Despite the still remaining
differences on the concrete wording of our commitments, we think that we have made a lot of
success lately and the work of UN-Women has been essential in this. We would like to once
more commend your work for all the comprehensive programme activities for renewing the
political impetus around gender equality and women’s empowerment and for initiating the
reporting process which culminated in 167 Member States submitting national reports on
progress made in this regard. The fact that so many countries reported and participated actively
in CSW only confirms that we are on the right track, although a lot still needs to be done.

It is first and foremost the task of each member state to transform the words of commitment
into action. On the same time we especially value the programme support that UN Women is
providing. As we read from the report - UN –Women has provided this kind of support in
2014 to an impressive number of states – namely in 86 countries, with its country
programmes incorporating a total of 513 country programme outcomes and we hope that this
work gains even more impetus this year.

As to the specific fields, we would like to mention the women, peace and security and
violence against women. The facts that one in three women has been a victim of physical
and/or sexual intimate partner violence and that women are almost completely absent from
peace negotiations are deeply deplorable and we wish you success in your valuable work on
these issues. As to the violence against women, we see that UN- Women was not able to third
outcome indicator and hope that this will be durable in the future.

As we are approaching the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, let me also
mention our appreciation for UN-Women in advocating for keeping gender equality and the
empowerment of women central to the post-2015 development agenda and by supporting the
inclusion of a stand-alone goal and gender-sensitive targets in the sustainable development
goals.

Mister President,

We are glad to know that UN Women has increased its donor base, however the targets set are
not met. Estonia has supported UN Women financially since its creation and we are
committed to support it also in the future. I am proud to say that Estonia will contribute to
UN-Women with at least 80,000 euros in 2016. Thereby we are considering to earmark a part of it for the Santo Domingo Global Learning Centre Virtual Campus.

We are glad to learn that electronic courses on gender equality developed by the Santo Domingo Learning Center have been made available for all the UN staff. We recommend to promote these courses even more actively, so that also people outside the UN could further benefit from these. After all, everything starts with the education and knowledge sharing. Regrettably many decisions that are taken without keeping in mind the gender perspective result from lack of basic knowledge.

Mr President,

Lastly, I would like to commend UN-Women for transforming the so-called “women’s issues” into the issues of all the population. The He for She campaign has done exactly that and it is of fundamental importance in advancing the agenda. After all - the simple fact is that women cannot access more power and be equal with men if men don’t take a step into the same direction, not only by allowing women to gain a more prominent role in decision making in all fields but also in actually contributing to it.

Thank you