Mr. President, Executive Director, Dear colleagues,

Allow me to begin by thanking you, Madam Executive Director, for your statement and for the first Report on the progress made on the implementation of the new Strategic Plan.

We wish to express our unwavering support to the work of UN-Women and its staff. The mandate of UN Women in leading global efforts for gender equality and the empowerment of women is ever more crucial during this exceptionally important year.

With a new Government in place, gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and full realization of their human rights continues to be a key priority in Finland’s foreign and development policy. We remain committed to promoting gender equality and gender mainstreaming, also within the wider UN system.

Mr. President,

Let me now turn to the Report before us.

Finland pays particular attention to four priority impact areas in UN Women’s work: ending violence against women and girls, women’s increased leadership in peace and security and humanitarian response, women’s economic empowerment and women’s leadership and participation. The first three areas are also included in the HeforShe Impact Champion commitments of the President of the Republic of Finland Mr. Sauli Niinistö, who has supported the HeForShe movement from early on. In addition, we continue to stress the importance of addressing multiple forms of discrimination and mainstreaming disability into the gender equality agenda.

To highlight one of these themes, this is a pivotal year for the women, peace and security agenda to take stock of progress and achievements made and to enhance the implementation of the Security Council resolutions in the future. The world has its share of insecurity and we need to make it possible for women to have the power and resources needed to contribute to a peaceful and secure future.

We commend UN Women for making progress across almost all outcome indicators in the Strategic Plan. We are pleased to learn that the overall implementation rate of budgeted
activities was high and UN Women was able to increasingly link normative, operational and coordination roles in practice. We encourage UN-Women to continue these efforts. Taking into account the upcoming midterm review of the Plan, we would be interested in hearing more about the needs to review some of the current targets.

UN-Women has demonstrated ability to deliver results but work towards improved **effectiveness** must continue. Strengthening overall efficiency, UN-Women’s system-wide coordination role and its evaluation function are essential. Further measures are needed to reinforce the effectiveness, sustainability and capacity of UN-Women’s country level operations. Securing sufficient funding and resources is critical for UN Women to be able to carry out its mandate and to deliver strong results.

To date, no country has achieved gender equality and the progress remains unacceptably slow. We have all made a pledge to fully implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. **We have a unique opportunity to** ensure that gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the realization of their human rights are central to the Sustainable Development Agenda and in the discussions on financing for development. With committed and coherent actions **we can achieve gender equality by 2030**.

Mr. President,

Let me once again reiterate Finland’s full support and commitment to the work of UN-Women and its continuous efforts to further enhance its ability to deliver on its mandate.

Thank you.