UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

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IN RESPONSE TO THE UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UN WOMEN,
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Check against delivery
Thank you Mr President, Madam Executive Director, for your opening statements.

There is a lot to celebrate in your annual report. UN Women is making good progress against its strategic plan; it’s clear that the organisation’s structure is fit for its mandate. For the first time in your history, you have met your fundraising target. And through campaigns like HeForShe you are advancing gender equality and the human rights of girls and women - now with even greater support from boys and men.

This progress is well timed. [As you have noted,] 2015 is a vital year for gender equality. This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and the 15th anniversary of Women, Peace and Security - two crucial milestones in the cause for women’s rights. Carrying on the legacy of these agreements is an important part of both the UK’s and UN Women’s shared goals.

Mr President, Madam Executive Director,

The United Kingdom has shared a common purpose with UN Women since its inception in 2011. We have been one of its main funders ever since. It is this pursuit of shared interests that I want to focus on today. There are three areas that I will touch on; the sustainable development goals, national action plans for Women, Peace and Security and ending sexual violence in conflict.

We all know how important the Sustainable Development Goals will be later this year. One of UN Women’s top priorities has to be to identify concrete ways for member states to achieve the goals and targets on gender equality and the human rights of girls and women.

But in order to achieve these goals, we need a transformative financing framework. One that dedicates, and significantly increases, the ambition, scale and scope of resources and investments - from all sources, and at all levels. There’s also room to go further on women’s economic empowerment. Donors and developing countries have been quick to highlight this area as important, but financial commitments remain low compared with other thematic areas on girls and women.

Mr President, Madam Executive Director,

Turning to Women, Peace and Security, I’m pleased that UN Women’s efforts to get more countries to implement their National
The challenge ahead is huge; hundreds of millions face the daily scourge of poverty, child marriage, FGM and cutting.

We believe that UN Women has a primary role in all these issues. It has the crucial responsibility of holding to account the rest of the UN system and Member States on their gender commitments. To continue the success of this work, we want UN Women to build its legitimacy and capacity even further across the world. You cannot afford to curb your ambition.

Thank you.