Annual Session of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

June 30-July 3, 2015

Item 2, Report of the Executive Director on progress made on the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, including operational activities in 2014

Statement by Canada

Thank you Mr. President,

To begin, my delegation would like to acknowledge what has been a landmark year for UN Women on the international policy level, including the review of the Beijing Platform for Action, and all the work associated with the Post-2015 Summit and the Financing for Development conference. UN Women has made a significant contribution to these processes. In particular, we were pleased to see UN Women take an active role in the negotiations on the Financing for Development outcome document. We recognize UN Women’s efforts to include language that re-commits signatories to adopt transformative actions for the promotion of gender equality in various paragraphs throughout the document. We would also like to thank UN Women for its support for Canada’s effort to secure language urging countries to track and report resource allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment in the paragraph in the Outcome Document on using ODA effectively.

We would like to highlight what we consider to be some of the key achievements of UN Women over the past year, and to offer some comments specific to the Report on progress made on the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

First, we would like to commend UN Women on the significant progress it has made towards strengthening its organizational capacities. This progress is supported by the positive reviews received in 2014, from both MOPAN and through the Development Effectiveness Review, as well as from the UN Board of Auditors. These positive reviews are welcome, and we view them as an indication of UN Women’s commitment to becoming an efficient and effective organization.

Second, Canada considers the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment to be an important contribution to achieving gender equality objectives within the UN system. We recognize UN Women’s efforts in the implementation of the SWAP, including all of the technical support that has been provided to participating entities. We believe that implementation of the SWAP has strengthened the accountability and incentives for integrating gender equality into the operations of UN entities. We maintain, however, that the SWAP needs to be fully transparent, and that the individual scores for each of the participating entities need to be shared and hope UN Women will continue to advocate for this best practice. We would like to see additional funding allocated within the system to the implementation of the SWAP, in order to strengthen its quality assurance process. Additionally, in the next iteration of the SWAP, we would like to see stronger indicators related to reporting on gender equality results.
With respect to the Report on Progress in the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, while we are pleased to see the progress that has been reported, it is our view that this report is not yet a results-based report and we therefore encourage UN Women to improve the quality of its results-based reporting. The provision of actual data in the Data Companion on each indicator in the Strategic Plan is welcome, and can, in fact, be seen as ‘best practice’. This data, however, should also be used as evidence in the narrative reporting on progress on or toward the achievement of the expected results identified in the Strategic Plan, in the Report on Progress.

We were surprised to see in the Report that there are several indicators (for example, on women’s political participation) where progress looks to be quite far off the expected targets. The Report provides no discussion or analysis of whether extra work is needed and/or possible for UN Women to ensure the achievement of results in these areas. We would appreciate additional information from UN Women on how they are planning to address this issue.

Mr. President,

Over the course of the past year, UN Women has continued to demonstrate improvements in its performance, and we believe it is on-track to solidifying its role as the key partner in the UN development system for the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment. In this regard, we will be looking to UN Women to continue its engagement and leadership in ensuring that gender equality considerations are fully integrated into the post-2015 development agenda, as well as in its implementation.

Let me close by saying that Canada continues to value its strategic partnership with UN Women, as gender equality and women’s empowerment remain central to delivering on many of our international priorities, including maternal, newborn and child health, and efforts to end child, early and forced marriage.

Thank you.