Agenda item 2: Swedish statement on the strategic plan

Mr. President,

Let me begin by thanking the Executive Director for her presentation on progress made on the Strategic Plan for 2014-2017. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is a matter of human rights, economic development and poverty eradication. Gender equality is at the heart of Sweden’s feminist foreign policy and we have been strong supporters of UN Women from the start. As one of many examples of Sweden’s support of UN Women, the Swedish Prime Minister recently engaged at a personal level by signing up as an impact champion in the HeForShe campaign during the Executive Director’s visit to Sweden two weeks ago.

Despite constrained financial resources, UN Women has established itself as a key player for the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women on a
global, regional and national level. This is an achievement of extraordinary importance.

Sweden strongly welcomes the efforts made by UN Women in leading, guiding and coordinating the UN system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women and encourages other agencies, funds and programmes to fully get on board in this process.

Sweden would like to thank UN Women for the first report on the progress made on the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. It is clear that UN Women is delivering on its mandate and continues to prove its added value to the UN system. Together with the data companion, the report provides a clear overview of progress made. Results in relation to targets and indicators, as set out in the results framework, are reported in an illustrative manner and we are pleased to note that UN Women is on track in relation to the majority of the indicators in the Strategic Plan. In this context, we would welcome a discussion on how to address the targets that have already been, or almost been, met well before the deadline of 2017. The mid-term review of the Strategic Plan offers one such opportunity.
As in previous years, Sweden see room for UN Women to further elaborate on challenges met and lessons learned throughout the year in the report. Taking into account results from evaluations and audits is of great importance. We also encourage UN Women to make further efforts to explain how activities, outputs and outcomes contribute to the achievement of impact and real changes for women and men.

Mr. President,

The progress report displays good progress in building a stronger and more transparent organization, getting in place a more robust regional architecture and delivering high quality programmes at country level. To a large extent, the results presented in the report are in line with Sweden’s experience of UN Women in the field.

We believe that we have seen changes towards a more strategic management and leadership at UN Women’s country offices, resulting in a more results oriented organisation. However, needs at country level are vast and place large demands on country offices. Further increasing the capacities of country offices will thus be crucial to even
further support the coordinating role of UN Women as well as to implement the offices’ strategic notes and the strategic plan. We encourage UN Women to keep advocating for a clearer division of labour as well as accountability on gender equality between different UN agencies at country level.

Mr. President,

Sweden has noted and greatly appreciated UN Women’s contribution to ensuring a stand-alone goal on gender equality and integration of gender equality concerns throughout the Sustainable Development Goals process. UN Women’s continued emphasis on mainstreaming and on implementing the agenda will be critical.

We also welcome that UN Women has increased its focus on humanitarian action and begun the work of putting the appropriate architecture in place. The coexistence and relation between humanitarian action and development is a major challenge for the development community, and we believe UN Women will have an important role to play also in this context.

Mr. President,
Sweden has underlined many times the critical role of UN Women in the promotion of investments in gender equality throughout the UN system. Sweden and other member states thus hold a responsibility to help fill UN Women’s funding gap. Sweden welcomes UN Women’s efforts to widen and deepen its donor base. However, in 2014, the six top donors of core resources contributed with approximately 60 percent of total core resources. Sweden urges all member states to acknowledge the progress demonstrated by UN Women and increase their financial contributions to support UN Women to fulfil its mandate and deliver on the priorities which we have jointly decided on.

In this context, we would like to highlight the strategic importance of structured financing dialogues as a strategy for UN Women to overcome the funding gap and unpredictable situations that affect the organization’s performance. These dialogues aim to openly demonstrate how development results, as agreed in the strategic plan, are to be financed, with a view to making non-core resources more predictable and less earmarked and improving the adequacy and predictability of total resource flows. In line with the decision of the Executive Board in September 2014,
we look forward to the dialogue at the second regular session in September this year and encourage UN Women and Member States to prepare appropriately for this agenda item. Collaboration on this matter will lead to considerable and important synergies.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me once again assure you of Sweden’s continued political and financial support to UN Women. We look forward to our continued collaboration and stand ready to work together for our common goals.

Thank you.