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New York
Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

Colleagues and friends,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning! It’s a pleasure to be here with you once again for this Second Regular Session of the Executive Board.

Let me begin by extending a warm welcome to our new Deputy Executive Director (Programme), Natalia Kanem. Natalia, who served most recently as UNFPA Representative in Tanzania, brings to her new post more than 25 years of strategic leadership experience in the fields of medicine, public health, peace, social justice and philanthropy.

I am thrilled to welcome Natalia to the executive leadership team of UNFPA and look forward to working closely with her and to benefiting from her considerable skills and expertise. Natalia’s trial by fire begins tomorrow when we present to the Board a record-breaking 21 new country programmes documents as well as 9 extensions of ongoing country programmes. I should add that many of these country programme documents benefit from a stronger evidence base than ever before, thanks to the significant improvement in the quality of country programme evaluations in 2015.

I am also pleased to welcome Andrew Saberton as Director of the Division of Management Services and wish him well in this new role.
New Strategic Plan

Mr. President,

This is a critical time for the Fund and the global community. We continue to advance our work supporting countries in implementing the ambitious 2030 Agenda and transition from the MDGs to the Sustainable Development Goals. We shared some examples of this work with the Board during the joint discussion at the Annual Session in June, and we look forward to another engaging dialogue this afternoon on UN system efforts to advance and strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus going forward.

UNFPA is also in the process of developing our new strategic plan, which must respond to the global development and humanitarian landscape and align with and support both the ICPD beyond 2014 and 2030 agendas.

The new strategic plan will be informed by the lessons learned and best practices gained in implementing the previous strategic plan. But as I said when we last met in June, while this may mean doing things differently, it does not mean doing different things. Our focus on the bull's eye and our business model remain relevant. UNFPA has a unique niche and mandate that advances both the ICPD agenda and the SDGs.

We also understand that the UN is stronger when it delivers together, and we remain firmly committed to ensuring coherent implementation, monitoring and reporting, together with our UN sister agencies, in line with the new and more strategic QCPR.
We look forward to sharing where we are in this process during tomorrow’s informal consultation on the strategic plan and count, as always, on the Board’s guidance and feedback.

**Funding situation**

Mr. President,

As we embark on developing our Strategic Plan 2018-2021, funding will be a critical variable. The austerity measures that we put in place earlier in the year continue, and without increased resources, we will continue to have to make choices – and hard ones – with real impacts on the health and lives of the women, girls and young people we serve.

Rest assured, however, that UNFPA is actively exploring all new financing modalities and opportunities. Moreover, we remain committed to ensuring maximum accountability.

I would like to reiterate how deeply grateful UNFPA is to the 133 Member States that contributed resources to the organization in 2015. We hope that even more will make commitments for 2016.

As you are aware, a few of UNFPA’s longstanding donors announced earlier this year that they would be redirecting resources to address other challenges and priorities.

As a result, UNFPA’s current projected revenue for 2016 and 2017 is significantly below the resources needed to implement our strategic plan, falling short of the 2016 and 2017 SP targets by $151 million (14%) and by $142 million (12.%) respectively.
This follows a shortfall in 2015 of $79 million that left revenue at 8% below the strategic plan target. This was largely due to unfavourable exchange rates of key currencies against the US dollar and represented a significant departure from the positive funding situation in 2014.

The decline in our total resources is already affecting our capacity to deliver some of the expected results set out in the current strategic plan. And we are very concerned about the impact this is having at country level, as we shared with you at the Annual Session of the Board and during last week’s informal on UNFPA’s funding situation.

As a result of reduced regular contributions, budgetary ceilings have been significantly lowered in all categories of UNFPA country offices. This has resulted in reductions in planned training of midwives, fewer fistula repairs and reduced access to sexual and reproductive health services for young people, to cite just a few examples. Moreover, this has also impacted UNFPA's normative role, which is so critical as countries begin implementing the SDGs and includes work on national legislation and action plans linked to the ICPD Programme of Action.

As the global community transitions to a more ambitious, integrated development agenda in a difficult funding landscape, we count on your continued partnership and support in advancing UNFPA’s vitally important work.

In this constrained funding environment, there is a risk of losing ground on critical priorities like maternal health and family planning. There is a risk of losing momentum in our efforts to protect and advance the rights of women and young people, particularly adolescent girls, so that they are empowered to fulfil their potential, achieve their aspirations and contribute fully to their communities and countries. These are risks none of us can afford.
UNFPA requires, more than ever, adequate, consistent and predictable financial resources in order to carry out its mandate and ensure that we can build on the considerable progress made over the past two decades and leave no one behind.

As I mentioned, today’s agenda item on funding is also critically important in the context of the development of UNFPA’s next strategic plan, and we look forward to fruitful engagement with the Board on potential steps we can take together to ensure more sustainable funding going forward.

I am pleased to report that UNFPA’s efforts to diversify its funding, as outlined in the Resource Mobilization Strategy approved by the Executive Board last year, are bearing fruit.

The Fund’s top 20 donors for 2015 of combined regular and co-financing contributions include not only traditional bilateral donors, but also two programme countries – Niger and Mali; a private-sector company, Noble Energy; the European Commission; and UN inter-organizational transfers, which includes funding through strategic joint programmes such as those addressing female genital mutilation and child marriage.

We have focused on nurturing key donor partnerships and reaching out to new and emerging donors and important stakeholders. We continue to strengthen our capacity to secure and manage funding and to track and report progress. And we continue to strengthen our capacity to respond effectively in fragile and emergency settings.

We are pleased to report that contributions from programme countries to their own country programmes increased from $34 million in 2014 to $36 million in 2015. United Nations inter-organization transfers increased by $34 million over the same period. And UNFPA humanitarian funding grew from $101 million to $116
million. Moreover, UNFPA approved more than 60 new private sector partnerships in 2015, receiving $10.4 million in financing from the private sector and in-kind support valued at $800,000.

Let me turn now to UNFPA’s thematic funds. We have intensified our resource mobilization activities to increase financial support for UNFPA Supplies, which in 2015 provided modern contraceptives to more than 18 million women in 46 low-income countries with high maternal mortality and high unmet need for family planning. This support is at risk due to a funding gap of about $1 billion for the period 2015-2020.

The Maternal Health Trust Fund remains critically important in supporting Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health and well-being, focusing on reducing maternal and newborn deaths and improving access to reproductive health-care services, as well as SDG 5 on gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

Our ability to accelerate these efforts and continue delivering tangible results requires adequate, sustained funding.

Unrestricted regular resources allow us to plan long-term, respond flexibly to emerging priorities, and to invest in innovation for effective, integrated and scaled-up programme delivery. They also facilitate mobilization of critical complementary co-financing resources. As such, we believe that regular resources are key to sustainability and delivery on UNFPA’s mandate and the 2030 Agenda. That said, we are working to adapt to shifting funding streams and continue to assess all options.
UNFPA continues to prioritize opportunities to join forces and pool resources with our UN sister agencies, as we are doing as a strategic partner in the Global Financing Facility for Every Woman, Every Child.

Effective resource mobilization requires all hands on deck, and all parts of the organization are working together to optimize opportunities, through regional and thematic strategies and country-specific resource mobilization plans and targets focused on innovation and value-for-money.

We continue to be committed to spending resources effectively and efficiently to ensure operational excellence and deliver results, including in humanitarian contexts.

All of these issues are being taken into consideration in the ongoing review of UNFPA that I brought to the attention of the Board in June.

We recognize the current challenging fiscal environment, but hope that countries in a position to do so will maintain and, if possible, increase their voluntary contributions on a multi-year basis, giving priority to regular resources, and to making payments as soon as possible to facilitate programme planning.

We strongly appeal to Member States to explore all possibilities you have at your disposal to supplement your contributions with possible year-end contributions to offset the projected decreases in our regular resources.
**Humanitarian response**

Mr. President,

Today, more people than ever before are displaced from their homes. Every day people on the move are facing life-threatening journeys and increased risks, particularly women and girls. They have specific needs and human rights concerns that require a coordinated and effective response.

On 19 September, the UN General Assembly will host a high-level meeting to address the large movements of refugees and migrants, with the aim of bringing countries together for a more humane and coordinated approach. At this event and beyond, UNFPA will continue to advocate for protecting the rights and meeting the needs of women and young people, especially adolescent girls.

UNFPA is committed to working with women and young people as leaders and agents of change, as we focus on ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services and preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

We are building on the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit, especially the commitments for women and girls and gender equality, and for young people through the new Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action.

UNFPA is currently responding to humanitarian crises in more than 56 countries around the world. As we speak millions of women, girls and young people are suffering and they need increased support.

Since we last met, UNFPA has delivered life-saving reproductive health supplies across borders, and inside war-torn countries. We have done this as part of UN convoys to hard-to-reach and besieged areas inside Syria, and to Ibb Governate in Yemen, which we had not been able to reach for 15 months. Staff often work
through the night to ensure that supplies are delivered, clinic shelves are stocked, and hospitals have what they need to save the lives of women and newborns.

I would like to pay tribute to the many UNFPA staff and implementing partners working in dangerous and difficult situations, putting their lives at risk in the service of others. This dedication in the face of grave danger was captured in the photo of a brave midwife named Aber helping a woman in South Sudan deliver safely as gunfire surrounded the antenatal clinic in Juba. And this is but one example of the determination and commitment that make UNFPA’s life-saving work possible.

As we deliver supplies, we are also building capacity, training health and protection workers. During the past year, UNFPA has continued to strengthen surge capacity for rapid response to hotspots. So far this year, we have deployed more than 100 surge responders to nearly 20 countries.

Right now UNFPA is scaling up support for people affected by Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria, southeast Niger, northern Cameroon and southern Chad. This includes increasing access to essential sexual and reproductive health services to reduce maternal, newborn and child mortality rates, which have tripled or quadrupled among displaced populations within the Lake Chad basin. We are also working to prevent gender-based violence and provide services to an estimated 35 percent of women and girls who have been subjected to sexual violence in affected communities.

UNFPA has been actively engaged in the response to the Zika outbreak in Latin America and the Caribbean, ensuring that sexual and reproductive health is addressed as part of the response and as an integral part of the prevention and risk communication efforts in affected countries. UNFPA is closely monitoring the
spread of the epidemic, which could have devastating effects on the sexual and reproductive health and the status of women on a global scale.

Last week, we held a global consultation with our colleagues from the field to examine the current status of humanitarian action in UNFPA and discuss the way forward.

These efforts are part of our work to strengthen all phases of humanitarian action from preparedness to risk reduction, to response, recovery and resilience. This requires organization-wide thinking and discussions that span the development-humanitarian continuum. Such consultations will be critical as we develop the next strategic plan.

Support to family planning

Mr. President, Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

As you know, this year we have also been working aggressively to strengthen our support to family planning.

We have revised the UNFPA Supplies strategy so that it is better able to support the global community in reaching our shared Family Planning 2020 and SDG aspirations.

The new governance model designed to operationalize this new strategy includes:

- a more robust country support model, concentrating on those countries that are earliest in their journeys toward sustainability,
- more strategic investment of resources on activities that UNFPA Supplies is uniquely suited to support, such as helping strengthen national supply chains for reproductive health, and
• a more rigorous and systematic approach to managing the Programme’s performance and measuring its overall impact annually.

By changing how we work, the UNFPA Supplies Programme will improve transparency, accountability, and efficacy as we pursue our ambitious goals in partnership with country governments, implementing agencies, and our donors.

In Kenya, UNFPA has supported the Ministry of Health to quantify and forecast commodity needs for the country for 2017 and 2018. Work is now under way to expand this forecasting and quantification to 2020, including through the use of mobile technology to track consumption trends.

The resulting market analysis will help project how different market segments will contribute to growth in the use of family planning and future sustainability.

In Myanmar, UNFPA and its partners, have been assisting the Ministry of Health to improve supply chain performance and product availability by strengthening human resources at different levels of the health system and bringing staff together to solve challenges.

In Nigeria, we are now supporting the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with other partners, to operationalize an “informed push model” of integrated last mile delivery for family planning and other commodities at the state level. This will reduce stock-outs and help ensure that even the most marginalized women and adolescent girls can access their choice of method. As the country reaps the benefits of increased use of family planning, it will, in turn, be better poised to harness a demographic dividend.
We need to keep making the case, not just with ministries of health, but also with finance and trade sectors, that family planning is a particular ‘best buy’ for sustainable development.

UNFPA, through our Supplies Programme and related interventions, will support countries undergoing economic transition and becoming less donor dependent to build their supply chain capacity and find additional domestic resources to fund an increased share of the reproductive health commodities needed by their populations.

Thirty-nine countries have now made commitments to FP2020, and many have pledged to increase national budgets for reproductive health. This is vital if we are to meet our collective goals.

The Board has before it the report on the evaluation of UNFPA support to family planning (2008-2013), along with our management response. We look forward to discussing our reflections on the findings and the efforts being taken to address them during the item on evaluation tomorrow.

Our activities in the area of contraception and family planning not only align with our mandate and desire to empower women and girls, improve maternal health, engage young people, and help countries capture a demographic dividend – they are also vital to realizing the transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda. Women who are able to control their reproductive health are better able to control their lives, to seek and keep better jobs, enjoy higher self-esteem and contribute to the prosperity of their families and communities. And, critically, their children are more likely to receive better education and nutrition, triggering a cycle of prosperity that will carry into the next generation.
Countries are increasingly recognizing this, particularly, but not only, in Africa, where the demographic window of opportunity is opening for many countries.

This is why we are particularly proud of our contribution to the significant commitment demonstrated by African leaders to seize this unprecedented opportunity to empower women and put young people first.

Harnessing the demographic dividend was also the subject of a high-level meeting during the recent TICAD conference in Nairobi. And we welcome and offer our full support to the African Union as it focuses on this issue during 2017.

Building on the outcomes of the recent high-level symposium we organized in Dakar, and as part of our ongoing advocacy and policy dialogue efforts, on 19 September, UNFPA will host a side event on the margins of the General Assembly to provide a platform for African leaders to share experiences and engage with member states and other partners to advance the implementation of a continental initiative on the demographic dividend.

Our collaboration with the World Bank and other UN agencies to tangibly advance programming on the demographic dividend across the Sahel shows promise as a blueprint for other regions.

Mr. President,

The 2030 Agenda explicitly commits countries to leaving no one behind on the path to sustainable development. Investing in the health, education, empowerment and employment opportunities of adolescent girls, who are often among the furthest behind, is crucial.
Ensuring that girls are able to enjoy their human rights and make a safe, healthy transition through adolescence to a productive, autonomous adulthood is not only good for girls, it’s good for all of us.

I have said it before and I will say it again: a 10-year-old girl’s life trajectory will be the true test of the success or failure of the 2030 agenda. The next State of World Population report, which we will launch in October, will examine how our common future depends on a girl at this pivotal age, profiling ten 10-year-old girls from around the world and their aspirations for the future.

I would like to conclude with a question posed to us by Susmita, a slightly older teenage girl in Odisha, India. Susmita has never gone to school. She tends the few animals her family owns and attends to household chores. Like more than one in three girls in her community, she may be married before turning 18. She dreams about going to school – even just for one day.

When we interviewed her, she asked, “Is anyone out there even thinking of improving our lives?”

What the world will look like in 15 years, whether we realize the transformative potential of the 2030 Agenda and succeed in leaving no one behind, will depend on how we answer that question – and whether we put our money where our mouth is.

Thank you.