6. UNFPA funding issues

Thank you Mr. President,

And thank you Deputy Executive Director Laura Londén for your excellent presentation and UNFPA staff for compiling the report on UNFPA funding.

I am pleased to deliver this statement on UNFPA funding on behalf of Norway and my own country, Sweden.

In line with QCPR, the executive boards of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women separately took decisions in 2014 to organise structured financing dialogues on an annual basis.

The dialogues are becoming increasingly important. Programme countries want ownership over implementation. Donors are making difficult priorities. Secretariats struggle to secure and predict support for our common causes.

The UN Secretary General underlined the importance of the financing dialogues in his QCPR report recently. We agree with the SG that the structured financing dialogues should be strengthened and institutionalized.

Critical to achieving this is making funding streams and budget allocations more transparent and financial gaps more visible. In this regard, Sweden and Norway would have welcomed a more thorough analysis by UNFPA of the funding gaps and challenges and how those
affect the implementation of all focus areas in the UNFPA Strategic Plan. With that information, donors could adjust, optimise and redefine financial commitments and priorities, taking into account the priorities of others. We would also have welcomed a more elaborated risk analysis of unmet financial needs, for example in the light of current exchange rate fluctuations and decreasing core support ratios.

UNFPA must prove its relevance in the SDG era. Resources will be geared towards actors that efficiently help nations implement Agenda 2030. We firmly believe that UNFPA needs to mobilize resources together with other members of the UNDS and combine capacities for maximum impact.

One of UNFPA’s most important values added in securing safe childbirth and fulfilling young people’s potential is to apply a Rights Based Approach. We would welcome information about UNFPA’s work with marginalized groups and how RBA is being integrated into the work on family planning.

UNFPA’s ambition to increase resource mobilization efforts also at regional and country level should involve a cost-benefit analysis and be assessed from an aid effectiveness perspective. Tying resources to many small projects makes it difficult for programme countries to keep an overview, retain ownership and lead national development. In general, comprehensive country programmes and global thematic funds are more cost effective than individual projects. Pooled funds and joint programmes will inevitably pave the way forward in the SDG era.

Mr. President,

Structured funding dialogues should be adapted to each particular organization’s needs and objectives. We should also learn from other UN agencies, and use synergies where possible. For future dialogues, we would also suggest tailor-made documentation as well as preparatory informals well ahead of the board sessions.
UNFPA’s online system visualizes data on expenditures and donor contributions as well as on how funds are allocated and spent. This web portal is a crucial instrument that could be developed further. We see great potential in coordinating UNFPA’s effort in this regard with sister organisations such as UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women.

Norway and Sweden note with concern that individual programs often fail to cover their own direct and indirect costs. Regular resources cover up for shortcomings. This needs to stop and we would request further details on cost recovery in future reports to ensure transparency in the allocation of regular resources. The work on cost recovery should be guided by the QCPR recommendation of a simple, transparent and harmonized methodology, providing incentives to increase predictable, flexible and less earmarked contributions. We urge UNFPA to work closely with the other New York–based Funds and Programmes to develop such a methodology.

Mr. President,

Norway and Sweden are anxious to engage in a sincere dialogue with other members of the Board and organisations on which financial contributions each one of us is able and willing to make in order to fully finance the agreed Strategic Plan. To hold such a dialogue is what we have agreed in QCPR and the 2014 board decision.

If a genuine financing dialogue were to take place in the near future, and if other governments would reciprocate our effort, the Governments of Norway and Sweden would be prepared to consider further increases in core support to reinforce UNFPA, we would try to adjust our substantial programme support to optimize the quality of incomes and we could explore other ways of increasing budget predictability.

Sweden and Norway will continue to give priority to core support and soft ear-marked support to UNFPA. Sweden and Norway are the two largest core contributors to UNFPA, and accounting for around 28,4 percent of UNFPA’s core support in 2015. In 2016 Sweden increased its core contribution to UNFPA to 504 MSEK, approximately 59 MUSD.
We encourage all member states to give priority to core support and other forms of flexible funding, in order to ensure effective programming to the benefit of women, girls and young people’s sexual and reproductive health and rights everywhere.

I thank you.