UK STATEMENT: UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD

Mr President, Mr Executive Director,

Thank you for your statement and update on UNFPA’s funding situation.

The UK is a proud supporter of UNFPA. The agency has already demonstrated it can achieve impressive results with our support. In 2015 the modern contraceptives procured through UNFPA supplies had the potential to avert 9 million unintended pregnancies; 3.2 million abortions, nearly all of which would have been unsafe. This averted 26,000 deaths of women and girls in pregnancy and 170,000 child deaths. In Eastern and Southern Africa alone, the UK-UNFPA joint 10-country-regional Family Planning programme in East and Southern Africa is on track to provide over 3m users with Family Planning services by 2018.

Yet we are not yet on course to achieve the Agenda 2030 goal to provide universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights by 2030. The UK believes it is our collective responsibility as Board Members and donors of UNFPA, to help UNFPA reach its full potential and provide countries with the necessary assistance they need to reach our collective goal.

Mr President, Mr Executive Director,

In the last Executive Board session in June we set out our priorities for UNFPA moving forward. These are still valid, and we believe that making progress on these will greatly contribute to achieving our goal:

- First, UNFPA needs to continue leading the way on sexual and reproductive health and rights, assisting countries in tackling unsafe abortion and meeting family planning needs, including in emergency settings and throughout protracted crises. In Sierra Leone for example, we urge UNFPA, to support the President’s Recovery Plan priorities and deliver sustainable changes to the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents in a fragile and fast pace environment;

- Second, UNFPA needs to press ahead with the reforms of UNFPA Supplies to improve financial sustainability; supply chain management and in-country last mile delivery. These should ensure UNFPA Supplies remains the most cost effective arrangement for delivering essential reproductive medicines to the most in need.

Mr President, Mr Executive Director,

Particularly when resources are scarce, we'll also want UNFPA, along with the rest of the UN system, to demonstrate it is making the best use of funds spent. This means working as an accountable, transparent and results-focused organisation; adapting UNFPA’s offer to country context, focusing its efforts to ensure no one is left behind; playing its part to make the system coordinated and avoid duplication. The upcoming Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review is an opportunity to advance this agenda, reposition the UN System to respond to Agenda 2030 and ensure it can respond effectively to current and future challenges. UNFPA has a big role to play in advancing these reforms.

Transparency and accountability of the UN Development System in particular is vital for donors to have confidence in what their funding is being used for. They also need reassurance that any misconduct or fraud is dealt with swiftly and robustly wherever it is found. With that in mind, we strongly encourage UNFPA to put together a clear, action-oriented response to the recent report on
fraud prevention of the Joint Inspection Unit, which can be shared with donors. The UK, and I am sure many others, will be looking carefully at this response when we make future funding decisions.

Mr President, Mr Executive Director,

We hope we’ll soon be in a position to confirm our core funding to UNFPA. But it is already clear that we’ll want our funding to assist in realising the reforms above, and hope this will help UNFPA in its efforts to improve the lives of women and girls.

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