U.S. National Statement, UNFPA Executive Board
As delivered by ECOSOC Minister Counselor Stefanie Amadeo
September 6, 2016

Thank you Mr. President, and thank you to Ms. Londen for your statement and your continued strong leadership. Thank you also to UNFPA’s devoted staff for their steadfast commitment to the challenging work of increasing access to reproductive health care services and promoting reproductive rights around the world. We also join others in welcoming the new Deputy Executive Director Natalia Kanem.

Mr. President, the Sustainable Development Goals marked an international recognition of reproductive health and rights, particularly for vulnerable populations where progress on achieving Millennium Development Goal 5 was uneven or not yet achieved.

We recognize the strides UNFPA has made in implementing its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, including revising its indicators to better align with the SDGs that fall within UNFPA’s mandate. UNFPA deserves recognition for its vital role in building the capacity of governments to include sexual and reproductive health policies and programs into national budgets and planning. UNFPA’s strong advocacy for adolescents and youth, and its work to strengthen intergovernmental dialogue on how countries can capitalize on the demographic dividend, is crucial to achieving the 2030 agenda.

The United States continues to value our strong partnership with UNFPA, including our joint work through FP2020 to continue highlighting family planning as a development priority. We recognize UNFPA’s commitment to informing its next strategic plan with the findings of the recent evaluation on UNFPA’s support to family planning from 2008-2013. We support several of the evaluation’s recommendations, including: harnessing relationships with governments to advance family planning; strengthening systems and engaging with policy processes to support domestic resource mobilization and promotion of family planning within the Global Financing Facility; and ensuring family planning is implemented through a human rights-based approach.

Given our longstanding collaboration on UNFPA Supplies, our delegation would also like to welcome Dr. Gifti Addico as Chief of Commodity Security Branch. We look forward to working with Dr. Addico and her team toward our shared goals of expanding method mix and ensuring the consistent availability of a supply of quality-assured contraceptive methods at the country level.

On funding, we share UNFPA’s concerns over the consistent decline in core funding, and support the agency’s continued efforts to diversify its donor funding base. We were pleased that 133 countries contributed to UNFPA’s core resources in 2015, and we encourage countries in a position to do so to consider joining all of us in supporting UNFPA’s important work. We also encourage UNFPA to continue exploring options for mitigating the impact of exchange rate fluctuations.
Mr. President, nearly 25 million people who need humanitarian assistance worldwide are women and girls of reproductive age, and nearly sixty percent of the world’s maternal deaths occur in crisis settings. UNFPA supported over 9 million women and girls in humanitarian settings with reproductive health and services to address gender-based violence in the Syria region, Iraq, Nepal, Nigeria and many other places around the world. We are pleased to provide funding for the UNFPA-supported maternity clinic in Jordan’s Za’atari refugee camp where there have been 5,000 safe births and no maternal deaths since 2012, showing the world that investing in reproductive and maternal health services really does save lives.

The U.S. government applauds UNFPA’s critical role in providing sexual and reproductive health services to those in crisis settings, and we are proud to be UNFPA’s largest humanitarian donor in 2016.

We commend UNFPA for committing to the Grand Bargain at the World Humanitarian Summit. We look forward to learning more about how UNFPA will implement these commitments internally and with other agencies. The U.S. government looks forward to learning which Grand Bargain commitments UNFPA has prioritized, the barriers you have confronted, and how you plan to overcome these challenges. We believe the internal Humanitarian Consultation that UNFPA convened last week is a good start.

And finally, my delegation would like to revisit the concerns we raised at the annual meeting in June regarding UNFPA’s decision not to fully fund the Emergency Response Fund and zero out the Humanitarian Response Reserve, each of which were to receive an allocation of $10 million from core resources as UNFPA requested and the Board approved in 2015. While my government does appreciate the Executive Director’s pledge to provide $1 million to the Reserve Fund, as well as the increase in the Emergency Response Fund from $2 to $4 million, we believe this amount falls short of what is needed to quickly and effectively implement humanitarian programs on the ground. Once again, we urge senior management to devote adequate resources for these two emergency funds.

We applaud UNFPA for prioritizing the needs of women and young people and continuing to deliver sexual and reproductive health services, address gender-based violence, and reduce maternal death and injury. The U.S. government stands in solidarity with your efforts to advance reproductive health and rights.

Thank you.