Thank you Mr. President,

Mr. President, honorable members of the Executive Board

At the outset please allow me to warmly welcome the appointments of Ms. Natalia Kanem, UNFPA Deputy Executive Director for Programme, and Ms. Alanna Armitage, UNFPA Regional Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and wish them every success in their assignments.

The Permanent Mission of Albania takes this opportunity to thank United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for its continuous assistance and developing the forth Country Programme for the period 2017-2021. The Government of Albania acknowledges that the new Country Programme Document was developed in close collaboration with the Government and key stakeholders, civil society organisations and development partners.

The Government of Albania recognize that the Country Programme is aligned with national priorities (National Strategy for Development and Integration II), United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2017-2021), 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and our aspiration for European integration.

We realize the importance of the UNFPA cooperation and support for significant achievements, just to mention a few: in developing and supporting implementation of Health and Reproductive Strategies and Action Plans, in developing and improving Reproductive Health related protocols and guidelines; in strengthening the role of civil society capacities; in working closely with the Parliamentary Commission on Population and Health to address population related issues to the highest level; in developing the National Action Plan for Youth 2015-2020; in rolling
out the Comprehensive Sexuality Education in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Sports within the framework of the curriculum reform; in supporting young people and the most marginalized to ensure that everyone in Albania has access to quality services and exercises their human rights.

We also appreciate the great support to develop and analyze population related data and raise awareness about the demographic trends that could affect the country and the assistance given to address these new demographic trends by developing evidence and data for policy formulation.

The Government supports and strongly encourages that forth Country Programme of UNFPA continues to focus its strategic plan in two main outcome areas: Sexual and reproductive health and Adolescents and youth.

We strongly believe that the 2017-2021 Programme will support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and with direct focus on SDG 3, 4, 5, 10, 16 and 17. The Government of Albania through its Permanent Mission greatly appreciates the strong support to implementation of International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) beyond 2014 issues including human rights and gender equality in the context of universal access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and youth participation.

We would like to assure the Executive Board for the continuous engagement of the Government of Albania to further strengthen the collaboration with UNFPA in the framework of Deliver as One, to ensure that critical issues such as demographic dividend, the rights of young people for Comprehensive Sexuality Education and friendly and quality health services, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and quality data continue to be prioritized within Sustainable Development Goals’ nationalization process.

Thank you