Statement by the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations

Mr. Ib Petersen on behalf of the Nordic countries

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Mr./Madam President,

I am honored to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries: Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

Allow me to start by thanking the Executive Director for her statement. We are looking forward to continuing our work with you on The Future We Want for Women by 2030. We thank you and your team for your sustained efforts in this regard. We also thank you for the informative presentation of the Report on Progress made on the UN-Women Strategic Plan. The report is very accessible and readable and we encourage UN Women to continue to develop their reporting in this way.

Mr./Madam President,

The Nordic countries are firmly committed to gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women’s mandate is crucial for achieving this.

It is clear to us that UN Women has been delivering on its mandate and is contributing to the achievement of gender equality across the world. In this way it continues to increasingly demonstrate its added value in the United Nations system.

It is also a credit to the organization and its new Executive Director that the transition of leadership did not affect its delivery in 2013.
This is the last report on the first strategic plan of UN Women and it bears witness to the considerable efforts that have been made to implement the ambitious strategic plan. We are pleased to note that UN Women is engaged in a broad range of activities and initiatives, responding to its comprehensive mandate. We commend UN Women for important progress in many focus areas, many of which have already surpassed targets for 2017.

It also reinforces the success of UN Women's normative, programmatic and coordinating role and how the three can create synergies for strengthened results. It finally lays a strong foundation for the new strategic plan for 2014-2017.

Speaking of UN Women's normative role, we note that UN Women's contribution to the successful conclusion of 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women last year was crucial, on a topic of vital importance to achieving gender equality. Similarly, the preparation and support to the 58th session in March this year was of vital importance. We are also pleased to note the increased emphasis on gender equality in other intergovernmental fora and UN Women's efforts in this regard as gender mainstreaming continues to be a challenge across the UN system.

UN Women has an important normative mandate within peace and security and humanitarian response. We are therefore particularly pleased with UN Women's dedication and support to the Security Council in developing the
normative framework on women, peace and security as we see reflected in this report.

We have also noted and appreciate UN Women’s contribution and role in the Sustainable Development Goal/Post 2015 process. There is resounding support among Member States, articulated both at CSW and in the ongoing SDG discussion in the Open Working Group, for a stand-alone goal on gender equality and integration of gender equality concerns throughout the other priority areas and goals. However, we need to continue our combined efforts to ensure that gender equality is truly mainstreamed throughout the framework. UN Women’s continued engagement in this important agenda is critical and we strongly encourage the Executive Director to continue her and the organization’s efforts in this regard.

We also see coming to fruition the preparation that took place in 2013 for the review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action and the celebration of its 20 year anniversary. It is sobering to see how far we have yet to travel to fulfill our commitments from Beijing while our common successes also need to be celebrated. The Beijing platform is as relevant today as it was in 1995 and we hope the review and appraisal as well as the mobilization campaign will result in increased commitment to its continued implementation.

Turning to UN Women's programmatic role we are pleased to see the great success across all five focus areas of UN Women. Many of the targets have
been met and even exceeded. Do you believe we should be more ambitious and adjust the targets? How does UN Women plan to move ahead with the targets for 2017 that have already been met?

We would like to highlight in this context the importance of the increased country and regional presence of UN Women. We will continue to take a particular interest in UN Women’s implementation of its mandate at country level, and to emphasize the need for country and regional offices to be politically relevant, transparent and coordinated with UN Women headquarters while supporting increased delegation of authority. Effectiveness of UN Women’s country operations is essential to a successful promotion of its mandate.

We would be amiss if we would note the important developments by UN Women in the area of UN coordination. With UN Women’s unique cross-cutting mandate it is key to leverage other UN entities in achieving gender equality. Clearly UN Women has to exercise the leadership accorded to it but we need other agencies, funds and programmes fully and effectively onboard, too. The establishment of UN Women should help other entities of the UN system redouble their resolve and investment in promoting and supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women. It should in no way be used as a reason to reduce the commitment and efforts of other entities in this regard.
We are pleased with the progress across almost all SWAP indicators but are particularly pleased with the increased coordination at the country level and cooperation with the Resident coordinators. The innovative idea of placing senior gender advisors in RC offices as an alternative to full country offices where not feasible is a good example.

In this regard, we encourage UN Women to ensure that regional and country representatives are provided the organizational status and position that will give them the authority to engage in dialogue with national authorities, and enable them to perform the coordinating function with the rest of the UN system on an equal footing.

Mr./Madam President,

UN Women has made very good efforts on mobilizing and leveraging more resources and additional donors and the Nordic countries are proud to have been able to increase their contribution to the organization. We are disappointed that the goals for 2013 were not met but are hopeful that the goal for core contributions will be met in 2014.

However, we continue to be concerned that UN Women remains too dependent upon a few donors. This is neither acceptable, nor sustainable. The Nordic countries urge all member states to contribute financially to UN
Women, at a level commensurate with our political commitment and the ambitious mandate we have collectively given this important organization.

Mr./Madam President,

We continue to believe UN Women is on the right track and has reached a pivotal stage. As Board members and donors, we feel that we have come a long way together. Let us all work together to bring UN Women into the next stage of its development.

Thank you.