EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (UN-Women)

ANNUAL SESSION

ITEM 2 – “STRATEGIC PLAN” –

STATEMENT BY

THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ITALY

(NEW YORK, 17 JUNE 2014)

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Thank You Mr. President,

Italy wishes to thank the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, for commenting on the progress report, which completes the 2011-2013 cycle of the Strategic Plan. We take this opportunity to congratulate UN Women on its tireless efforts to meet the needs of the world’s women while advancing gender equality.

Today, in 2014, violence against women is still a problem of epidemic proportions. It occurs with unacceptable frequency (WHO estimates that one in three women worldwide will experience either physical or sexual violence in her life). UN Women represents a real hope to end this grave violation of human rights by defending and advocating for women’s and girl’s rights to live free from violence in all its forms and contexts. We commend its work in advancing the international legal framework, helping countries to adopt and enact legal reforms that meet international standards, and developing dedicated national action plans to prevent and address violence against women.

While only 53% of the target countries have adopted national action plan – which some may have interpreted as a sign of the Entity’s weak capacity in delivering – we agree with UN Women that ambitious targets must be set. However, when these targets are set, the specific context of Countries could perhaps be better calibrated.

It is also crucial to develop comprehensive evidence-based programming that delivers results in empowering women and eliminating violence against women. To do so, we must address gaps in knowledge. Significant work has been done in this area but more is needed. We therefore invite UN Women to continue to compile gender data and collect statistics, as well as to improve evaluation work both at country and corporate levels.

Mr. President,

We are quickly approaching the deadline for the MDGs, which helped focus the attention and channel the efforts of the international community on gender-related challenges. Next year will be crucial as we seek to accelerate the achievement of results and ensure that the Entity will be ready (as the report says “fit for purpose”) to deliver on the challenges of the new post-2015 development agenda. This new agenda will be shaped, to a significant extent, by the review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, twenty years after their adoption. In this context, we congratulate UN Women for its advocacy of a stand-alone goal on gender equality, women’s rights and women’s empowerment to be integrated through targets and indicators into all goals in the new sustainable development framework.
The insightful progress report provides a clear picture, with its baselines and targets, of the development outcomes that UN Women delivers to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment. We appreciate the approach taken to presenting progress and shortfalls of the Strategic Plan as well as in-house efforts to build a stronger result-based framework. We commend the Entity for the impressive results of 80% of indicators of the Strategic Plan achieved. The data companion is a valuable tool for better understanding the positive impact of UN Women in changing women’s lives.

We encourage UN Women to continue to strengthen its commitment to UN Coherence and maximize its impact in the field. Progress has indeed been made toward women’s economic empowerment, but complete success in increasing women’s access to economic empowerment opportunities will also depend on a greater capacity in the field. Positive results were achieved through changes in the regional architecture but further consolidation is required at the country level to ensure greater effectiveness and efficiency.

In closing, Mr. President,

Since its establishment, UN Women has been focused on building a culture of result-based management, reporting and evaluation. We commend the Entity for its work in this area, consistent with the quadrennial policy comprehensive review of operational activities for development.

I assure you of Italy’s continued support of UN Women.