June 18, 2014

Good morning. My name is Grace Richardson and I am a national board member of the US National Committee for UN Women. Today I represent all 15 UN Women national committees in this statement of support for UN Women. We are a network of independent organizations who share the common purpose of building political, financial and public support for UN Women within our respective nations. Most of us began as UNIFEM national committees and many of us remain largely or entirely volunteer organizations, a sign of our dedication not only to gender equality but to UN Women in particular.

As national committees we have worked with our governments to increase core funding for UN Women and financial support for both the UN Women Fund for Gender Equality and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women.

As civil society organizations we join other groups and networks to raise awareness of global women’s issues and advance the cause of gender equality and human and civil rights, both within our countries as well as abroad.

As national charities we work to raise private funds for UN Women. These endeavors include individual donations, grants from foundations, in-kind support, and contributions from the corporate world.

It is this last area that we have been building with the support and encouragement of UN Women. With the addition of staff positions dedicated specifically to private sector outreach, UN Women has in the last 2 years boosted its support, guidance, and resources to the national committees for the specific objective of increasing corporate contributions.

Several national committees, including Australia, Singapore, and the UK, had worked with corporations before UN Women’s outreach. However, their efforts have been reinforced and other national committees, including the US, have commenced this type of resource mobilization. Specific examples include the Australian national committee’s cause-related marketing campaign with the apparel company, Esprit. Many national committees, including New Zealand and Japan, engage companies to sign the Women’s Empowerment Principles. The US works with women’s leadership groups in the banking and retail industries to gain individual and corporate support for UN Women. The UK national committee has formed a corporate advisory group which counts 9 global corporate as its members with the objectives of: gaining commitment to the Women’s Empowerment Principles; developing an
informed and growing influential cross sector senior leadership group; and creating long-term strategic financial or technical partnerships with UN Women.

In addition, many national committees are also working to increase significantly revenue from individuals by emphasizing monthly, automated giving. Iceland and Finland pioneered this approach and, at UN Women’s request, Germany, Australia, and the US have rolled out this approach as well.

The national committees also have an annual meeting with UN Women where we exchange best practices in order to enhance our performance and strengthen our contribution to UN Women. Last year the meeting was held in Rome and this year will take place in Tokyo.

We look forward to continuing our work with UN Women and its new executive director, who in less than a year has significantly raised the voice and profile of UN Women. We remain dedicated to improving the lives of girls and women worldwide by working within our own countries to support UN Women. We thank our governments for their past financial assistance and ask that they increase this support for UN Women.

Thank you very much for your time. Together, we are working toward a world where women and girls live free from violence, poverty and inequality.

The national committees of:

Austria, Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.