Annual Session of the UN Women Executive Board

Statement by Denmark

Agenda item 2: Annual report of the Executive Director

27 June 2016

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I wish to thank the Executive Director for her statement.

UN Women was established to ensure that gender and gender equality is fully internalised in the work of the United Nations through its triple mandate.

With the 2030 agenda showing the direction for our combined efforts for achieving sustainable development over the next 15 years, UN Women is more important than ever.

Only if UN Women is successful, in cooperation with member states and partner countries, civil society and other stakeholders, in actually delivering results on women’s empowerment, women’s rights, women’s participation and gender equality will we also deliver on the agenda.

That is also why UN Women’s triple mandate is so important. It may be one of the smaller agencies, but its role is exactly to leverage results through coordination and in cooperation with all relevant partners.

Therefore, I would also like to thank UN Women for the report on the progress made on the strategic plan as well as the mid-term review of the plan. The report highlights the successes and challenges in fulfilling the mandate’s three main focus areas: Enhancing the normative framework, help states implement standards and coordinate the UN’s work on gender equality.

I would like to address just a few issues:

On the normative framework: We would like to again acknowledge UN Women’s contribution to enhancing the normative framework for gender equality. Last year we adopted three major agreements that all embodied gender equality and women’s empowerment.

While focus now will very much be on implementation, we wish to see UN Women continue to provide leadership in setting the agenda on gender equality and women’s rights also in the years to come. If we are to deliver on goal five and indeed on the 2030 agenda in its entirety, the normative framework will have to be strengthened even further as we move towards 2030.

On implementation: We notice with concern the gap described in the report between progress on legal frameworks and policies and their implementation. In some areas there has even been regression due to the mobilisation of so called conservative
movements. In our view progress for women and achievement of gender equality is an issue of women’s rights, and therefore not an issue that can be pushed back. There should be only one direction and that is towards achievement of goal 5 – gender equality – not 60, 70 or 80 percent but 100 percent.

Therefore, we strongly encourage UN Women to focus on ensuring that the progress on paper is translated into progress in lives. Only then does it make sense.

**On funding:** It is positive that 146 countries support UN Women financially. While we recognise that not all contributions can be at the same level, financial support is also a statement of political support.

Still UN Women is short of its goal of raising USD 500 million, for which reason we encourage all member states to consider increasing their contributions to UN Women. As we all know, investing in gender equality is not only the right thing to do, it is also a good investment with a very high return. We are looking forward to hearing more on the results in attracting high-quality, soft-earmarked non-core resources through the new Flagship Programming Initiatives, innovative sources of financing and UN pooled funding mechanisms in addition to the core funding that should continue to constitute the major part of countries’ contributions.

In our view, UN Women will have to continue and strengthen its communication on results and its visibility also in donor countries, in order to attract and sustain funding in the future.

**Finally on innovation:** On the 7th of June during the board meetings of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, Denmark organised a side event on innovation in cooperation with UN Women, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, Global Pulse and the secretary-generals Youth Envoy. The purpose of the event was to highlight the work of the innovation facilities in funds and programmes that were established with Danish support and that have as their purpose to foster innovative approaches to achieving the SDGs.

We appreciate the work on innovation conducted in UN Women as described in the report of the Executive Director and encourage UN Women to continue to create an environment conducive to fostering innovation at all levels and in particular through a bottom up process.

Thank you.