

Check against delivery



Statement by
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Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

Colleagues and friends,

Good morning! A very happy new year to everyone.

First, allow me to congratulate Ambassador Cho Tae-yul of the Republic of Korea on his election as President of the Executive Board. A warm welcome also to the rest of the Bureau, Ambassador Besiana Kadare of Albania, who begins her second year as a Bureau member, Ambassador Walton Webson of Antigua and Barbuda, Ambassador Collen Kelapile of Botswana, and Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason of Ireland. We look forward to working closely with all of you in the year ahead.

And heartfelt thanks to Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul of Mauritius and the outgoing Bureau for their guidance, partnership and trust throughout 2018.

Mr. President,

The new year is a time for reflection, resolution and renewal.

For UNFPA, this year is a significant one. We join the international community in marking 25 years since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. It's also our 50th anniversary, the golden jubilee of UNFPA. So 2019 is a time for stock-taking, for strengthening our resolve and our partnerships, and for ambitious action.

It's a time to reflect on fundamental questions.

Have we done justice to the vision that world leaders articulated nearly 25 years ago in Cairo?

What have we achieved? Where is progress lagging? For whom? And why?

Fewer women around the world are dying in pregnancy and childbirth. More women are using modern contraception. More girls are in school.

Yet, millions of others are still waiting.

The series of five successful regional reviews of the ICPD in 2018 kicked off this process of reflection. They reveal the strong results UNFPA and our partners are achieving across the globe.

In April, the Commission on Population and Development will conduct a full review of the ICPD Programme of Action and its contribution to the 2030 Agenda, based on these regional reviews. This will, in turn, inform the first full review of the 2030 Agenda in the UN General Assembly.

We will also launch *The State of World Population 2019* in the coming months. This year's report documents the challenges women and girls have faced in claiming their rights and choices over the past 50 years, and it demonstrates how UNFPA and others have helped overcome these challenges.

So that is our reflection.

Now for our resolution.

UNFPA is committed to reenergizing and expanding the global movement for rights and choices for all. It's time to make sexual and reproductive health and rights a priority for a new generation whose rights are at stake. This is essential for UNFPA to achieve, together with our partners, our 3 transformative results – zero unmet need for family planning, zero preventable maternal deaths, and zero violence and harmful practices against women and girls. And it is how – together – the world will fulfill the promise of Cairo and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

A series of high-level events commemorating our two milestones this year, and political channels such as the CPD, the High Level Political Forum and the General Assembly, offer an important opportunity for all of us to recommit to fulfilling that promise, to assume shared responsibility and partner like never before to reap the benefits of this transformative agenda.

Young activists are already helping reignite the movement, bringing new ideas and new energy. It is they who will carry the torch in the years to come – and a very intrepid group will carry a symbolic torch from Cairo to Nairobi later this year to raise awareness of the world’s collective journey over the past 25 years.

They will carry it to Nairobi because the capstone event of 2019 will be The Nairobi Summit on ICPD+25: Accelerating the Promise, to be co-convened by UNFPA and the Government of Kenya from 13 to 15 November. This high-level Summit will bring together Heads of State, Ministers, civil society and youth leaders, parliamentarians, public and private sector representatives, and many others. Our aim is to galvanize partnerships, to mobilize political and financial support and to help foster ideas and commitments to fully realize the goals of the ICPD.

In the lead up to the Summit, we will organize a series of regional and national conversations, bringing together ICPD champions and thought leaders across sectors and experiences to stimulate new thinking and solutions applicable to 21st-century realities and regional and national priorities. The outcomes will be presented at the Nairobi Summit in November.

Reflection, resolution, renewal.

Mr. President,

Renewal also relates to the current era of reform. We at UNFPA are renewing ourselves internally, and we are renewing our relationships within the UN system to deliver more and deliver better – together.

In support of the UN development system reform and to best equip UNFPA to deliver on its strategic plan, I am pleased to report that we are moving ahead, as planned, with our comprehensive change process. This will ensure that we have the organizational culture, structure, systems and skills necessary to deliver with our partners on the 2030 Agenda.

The new vision for intergovernmental and interagency affairs has been fully implemented, and the renamed Policy and Strategy Division integrates these functions.

Work is also in progress to ensure that the new Humanitarian Office is fully functioning by the second quarter of 2019. The office will have presence in both Geneva and New York and will bolster UNFPA's capacity in humanitarian settings. Sincere thanks to the Government of Switzerland for its support in this process.

New change initiatives, aligned with key Strategic Plan outputs related to management of resources, programming for results, and advocacy and partnerships, will be implemented in 2019. They include a realignment of Headquarters, Regional and Sub-regional Office functions, a review of the existing Liaison Office architecture, and a look at more coordinated management of core and non-core resources.

We are mindful of the fact that culture change is a necessary condition for all other organizational changes to "stick." We are investing, with support from key partners, in work to analyze our current culture and to design the culture that we want and need.

I will personally lead this initiative, and I am very happy about the potential and opportunity culture change represents for the organization. A strong shared culture creates an environment where staff is engaged, committed and capable of taking the lead, enhancing operational flexibility.

I am very confident that all of these changes will result in an even more agile, integrated, innovative, and results-oriented UNFPA.

UN Reform

As I mentioned, these internal changes are aligned with and aim to support ongoing UN reforms. 2019 is also a critical year for the UN development system and its transformation to better support countries to implement the 2030 Agenda.

As we mark our two milestones of the ICPD+25 and UNFPA at 50, UN Reform comes at the perfect time for accelerating progress across the Sustainable Development Goals and the ICPD Programme of Action.

UNFPA will capitalize on UN reform as an enabler and opportunity to deliver on our Strategic Plan and advance our goal of achieving universal sexual and reproductive health and the realization of reproductive rights.

Expectations are very high because 2030 is around the corner.

Our three transformative results are essential accelerators for the achievement of Agenda 2030, and we are intensifying investments in strategic partnerships to scale up programmes and results along with the rest of the system.

We continue to work on strengthening health systems in collaboration with the H6 health partnership and with Every Woman Every Child. We will build on the momentum created by the movement for universal health coverage to promote universal sexual and reproductive health and rights in all contexts, including in humanitarian settings.

We believe that universal health coverage must include a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health services, and we are working together with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners on the UHC Impact Framework to ensure that sexual and reproductive health targets and indicators are fully included and that progress is measured.

Sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception, are integral to primary health care. This was recognized in the Astana Declaration on Primary Health Care endorsed last year. The Declaration, along with the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-Being for All, will inform the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Care in September.

UNFPA is proud to partner with 11 other global health organizations on the Global Action Plan, which defines collective efforts to deliver more efficient support with countries.

UNFPA, UN Women and UNDP have joined forces with the European Union and other partners to launch the Spotlight Initiative to end all forms of violence against women by 2030. And in our effort to eliminate harmful practices, UNFPA will accelerate our joint programmes with UNICEF on child marriage and to end female genital mutilation.

We continue to bring our long experience in working with and for young people to system-wide efforts in this area, in collaboration with the Secretary-General's Youth Envoy, UNICEF and many other partners. This includes providing guidance and support in the context of the Secretary-General's Youth Strategy; Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security; the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action and other initiatives.

We are now working on a costing of our three transformative results to build sound investment cases, in line with Agenda 2030. We are partnering on this with the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington, Johns Hopkins University, Avenir Health, Victoria University, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and other institutions. The resulting estimates and tools will equip us to build, advocate and fundraise for these investment cases at the global, regional and country level. Moreover, this costing exercise will feed into UN system-wide processes aimed at creating tangible solutions to achieve the SDGs.

Enhanced UN system collaboration and coordination will also help us to more comprehensively address demographic changes and population dynamics related to youth, migration, urbanization, ageing and harnessing the demographic dividend. And the UNDP / UNICEF / UN Women and UNFPA Common Chapter of our Strategic Plans will help us to increase coverage, resources, visibility and the results-driven impact that we all wish to see.

UNFPA's policy and normative support to countries remains critically important, responding to Member States requests. This work continues to be a priority for UNFPA, and an essential contribution to integrated UN system support at the country level.

As discussed during our informal session last week, UNFPA executive management has been entrusted to coordinate two important processes that are critical to enabling change on the ground and to maximizing opportunities offered by the reform: 1) the UN Sustainable Development Group's Strategic Financing Results Group (SFRG), together with UNCTAD, and 2) the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) re-design, with UNESCO.

The new generation of UNDAFs will focus on national ownership and implementation of Agenda 2030, stronger alignment with programming instruments and improvement of analytical components. I am pleased to report that this process is moving along quite well.

The Strategic Financing Results Group, which I co-chair together with the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, is also making significant steps forward. The Group is developing principles of engagement and a system-wide data standard to enable comparable reporting and analysis of financial data across all agencies. Work is also under way to create an interactive platform for knowledge management, expand the financing tool box and train UN staff to ensure the necessary financial literacy.

UNFPA fully embraces the reform. Because in the end, it is about delivering more efficiently and effectively for the people we serve – for every woman and girl, everywhere. We are committed to sharing our experience and expertise, and we will continue working to strengthen collaboration for development, humanitarian action and peace, so that work in each area reinforces overall progress and improves living standards for more and more people around the world.

PSEA and sexual harassment

We also continue to collaborate with our partners in the UN system and beyond on coordinated actions to end sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. This remains a key priority for UNFPA.

We work closely with the Office of the Special Coordinator, the Victim Rights Advocate as well as the Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) and actively support and contribute to inter-agency reform initiatives at all levels.

Internally, UNFPA has strengthened our structure for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse at country and regional levels. We have put in place a harmonized Focal Point system with clear roles and responsibilities across the organization.

We have also strengthened management accountability by introducing a compliance certification on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse for managers at every level.

UNFPA recently initiated a mapping exercise of services available to survivors of gender-based violence in humanitarian settings so that this information can be made available to and used by our partners working to support victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

And in December 2018, we issued a revised policy on Prohibition of Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Abuse of Authority and Discrimination. Aligned with the CEB Model Policy on Sexual Harassment, it reflects a system-wide approach to support victims of sexual harassment and other abusive conduct and to ensure those who engage in such conduct are held fully accountable.

Evaluation

UNFPA has a long history of working to address gender-based violence. These efforts have accelerated in recent years, including through partnerships like the Spotlight Initiative. Our current strategic plan features a dedicated output on gender based violence and, for the first time, one capturing the harmful practices of child marriage, female genital mutilation, and son preference.

You have before you the first-ever evaluation of UNFPA support to the prevention of, response to and elimination of GBV and harmful practices. It provides critical evidence to enhance UNFPA's capacity to deliver results in this area of work. This will be discussed, along with the revised UNFPA evaluation policy, during the evaluation segment this afternoon.

As we strive to reach our 3 zeroes, evaluation helps us zero in on and clearly understand what works, and why. The revised evaluation policy provides clear direction for the scope of, and

approaches to, evaluation at UNFPA, and it has the full support of UNFPA senior management and leadership across all levels of the organization.

I thank the Board for your guidance and feedback throughout the revision process. We look forward to working with you to make the evaluation function at UNFPA even more relevant and effective for a stronger UNFPA and stronger results for women and girls.

Knowledge management is also key to enhancing programme impact. Our new UNFPA Knowledge Management Strategy, which we shared with staff last week, aims to improve and effectively use the broad range of knowledge available at UNFPA, from the explicit knowledge found in documentation to the implicit knowledge stemming from staff experience and skills. We are deeply committed to making UNFPA a learning organization.

Innovation and data

Mr. President,

The world has made much progress in advancing rights and choices over the past 25 years; however, we know that too many women and girls continue to be left behind.

UNFPA has set bold objectives to achieve by 2030 in order to change current trends.

Yet, ending unmet demand for family planning, ending preventable maternal mortality, and ending gender-based violence and harmful practices will require a radical step change.

It also requires ending the invisibility of the most vulnerable. We speak of the poorest women and girls, those who may live with disabilities and others facing stigma and discrimination. Their vulnerability is often magnified by their invisibility in data systems. This is why our work on population data is so important.

UNFPA continues to prioritize innovation to create and scale-up data-driven, sustainable, open solutions to bring about transformative change for women, adolescents and youth.

We have made a lot of progress, in no small part thanks to the Governments of Denmark and Finland, key supporters of UNFPA's Innovation Fund.

One initiative made possible by this support is our Population Data Platform, which we presented to you last week. This will allow planners to identify and map where needs are greatest and where interventions need to focus to reach those furthest behind. By allowing us to combine different sources of data, such as census and surveys, the Population Data Platform can help highlight, for example, which districts in a country have the highest rates of child marriage, or where demand for contraceptives outstrips supply.

More than 95 SDG indicators demand population data for their measurement. So while the platform is designed to advance UNFPA's work with governments in key areas of our mandate, we believe it offers value for shared UN system work and planning in countries, including as a contribution to the Common Country Assessments.

UNFPA is also co-leading, together with WHO, work on data and digital health – one of the cross-cutting “accelerators” under the Global Action Plan for SDG3. This includes how to invest in technological advances in collecting, storing, processing and using data to make informed decisions and monitor progress so that no one is left behind.

Funding and strategic partnerships

Mr. President,

As a voluntarily funded organization, UNFPA continues to be vulnerable to external developments and global financial and political trends.

Strategic partnerships bring resources, brainpower and visibility that are helping position UNFPA as a leader on our three transformative results. Last year we signed nearly 60 new partnerships, including with the private sector, bringing our total partnerships to 184.

To cite just one example, our Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office celebrated a strategic partnership with the Special Olympics to collaborate on reproductive health for young people with intellectual disabilities.

Moreover, our collaborations with parliamentarians and civil society organizations continue to create a conducive environment for accelerating action. Their role has been critical to the concrete achievements that we have made together since Cairo 25 years ago. And their commitment remains strong. We saw at the International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, held in Ottawa in October.

We also rolled out an Individual Giving Strategy and implemented successful campaigns for Bangladesh and Yemen in 2018, and we will build on these promising results during the coming year.

We recognize that every contribution to UNFPA is an expression of support for the ICPD Programme of Action and for UNFPA's mandate and work.

I am therefore delighted that overall in 2018 UNFPA received support significantly above our funding targets for both core and non-core resources.

We have not yet quite closed the books for 2018, but we expect that last year's revenue will mark an all-time high.

Yet, while we are grateful for the increased volume of support, we are concerned that the number of governments giving support has declined. We appeal to more governments to support UNFPA during this special year. With your help I hope that by the end of 2019 we can firmly say that UNFPA is stronger than ever – and that the ICPD has garnered more champions than ever!

I am very happy to note that several key donors significantly increased support for core funding in 2018, which is foundational to our work. I wish to thank, in particular, the Governments of Sweden, Norway, New Zealand, Ireland, Italy, Japan, and China.

Through the Strategic Funding dialogue, real strides have also been made towards multi-year core funding. Sweden and Egypt continue as champions, and a number of countries have committed to this mission-critical, strategic multi-year funding, including Belgium, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland.

We also expect non-core support in 2018 to be significantly above our target. We hope that support for our three thematic funds: UNFPA Supplies; the Maternal Health Thematic Fund; and new the Humanitarian Action Thematic Fund, will increase further in 2019.

UNFPA's flagship Supplies programme reached record annual funding of around \$170 million with the support of 16 donors. While time does not allow me mention all 16, the global leadership on family planning of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands has been critical in this effort, and we thank all 16 donors.

On maternal health, sustained leadership by Sweden, Germany and Luxembourg has played a vital role.

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome the increasing participation of programme country governments in funding projects and programmes, including in Latin America. Domestic resources will become an increasingly strategic component of funding and financing in middle-income countries.

Humanitarian Action

As you know, 2018 was another challenging year for millions of women and girls whose lives have been upended by conflict, hazards, pandemics and displacement.

UNFPA and its partners reached an estimated 18 million people in over 55 countries with humanitarian assistance. This included the implementation and coordination of the Minimum Initial Service Package for reproductive health to ensure that women and girls affected by humanitarian crisis have their needs addressed in line with humanitarian and human rights principles and priorities.

We expect comparable challenges this year, with nearly 132 million in need of humanitarian assistance and protection globally. UNFPA aims to reach about 35 million women, girls and young people with life-saving sexual and reproductive health services, supplies and information, as well as interventions to prevent gender-based violence and to respond to the needs of survivors.

We continue to push to ensure that the health, rights and needs of women and girls are at the forefront of humanitarian action. Tomorrow morning, we will officially launch our humanitarian appeal for 2019.

UNFPA continues to strengthen our ability to respond quickly in emergencies. We have scaled up our roving team and augmented our surge mechanism, while strengthening support for staff serving in high-risk duty stations. Surge deployments increased by 50 percent over the past two years and our turnaround time was up 33 percent.

They say that teamwork makes the dream work, and UNFPA's global staff is truly a dream team. I salute, in particular, our colleagues serving on the frontlines of our humanitarian work, who deliver day in and day out in some of the most difficult and dangerous settings.

While financial resources are crucial to our work, they would be useless without our people, who remain the most valuable asset of UNFPA. On that note, I am pleased to welcome Josephine Mbithi as the new Director of Human Resources. Josephine brings to UNFPA a long, distinguished track record of international human resources experience in both the private and public sector, and we look forward to her contributions to enhancing UNFPA's incredibly dedicated workforce in more than 150 countries around the world.

Mr. President,

I had the good fortune to be in Cairo nearly 25 years ago. I still remember the excitement, the sense of purpose and of being witness to something truly extraordinary – countries from all regions of the world committing to enabling people to make informed choices about their

sexual and reproductive health as a matter of fundamental human rights and as a foundation for individual and collective well-being.

The Programme of Action is remarkable. It promoted a vision of integrated development that foreshadowed Agenda 2030. It emphasized principles that underpin today's Sustainable Development Goals – non-discrimination and universality; the centrality of health, education and women's empowerment to sustainable development; and the collective need to ensure environmental sustainability.

But its first principle is people. At its core, ICPD is about recognizing that people's rights, their choices, and their well-being are the path to sustainable development. Twenty-five years of evidence and practice continue to support this consensus.

As I speak, somewhere in the world, a young woman is in labour. She might be in Cairo...or Nairobi...or New York. Will she face complications? If so, will they endanger her life, and that of the child she carries?

Does she have access to a doctor or midwife? Do they have the training and skills to help her deliver safely?

Will she survive? Will she hear the first cry of her newborn?

If she does survive, will she have access to the services and information she needs to decide whether, when, with whom to have any future children?

If the health system works, yes.

If her reproductive rights are upheld, yes.

We want this for every woman and girl, everywhere. Access to quality respectful information and health services. The ability to exercise her right to decide freely whether or when to have children. Freedom from violence and harmful practices.

Let's make these rights and choices a reality for all. Together, we can do this. If we persist and persevere, I am optimistic that we shall prevail. There's no going back! I hope you will join us. Let's keep moving forward.