Statement by
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Before I begin my formal remarks, let me say that it is with sadness that we learned yesterday of the passing of a cherished colleague and friend, Mårten Grunditz, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations and President of the Executive Board in 2012.

Mårten was a strong voice for gender equality and women’s empowerment and a steadfast advocate for sexual and reproductive health and rights. We at UNFPA will miss him greatly and extend our heartfelt sympathy to the Government of Sweden and to Mårten’s family and friends for their loss.

Let us pause now for a moment of silence in his memory.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

Colleagues and friends,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning! First let me congratulate you, Ambassador Carrera, on your election as President of the Executive Board. I’d also like to welcome the rest of the Bureau, Mr. Sahak Sargsyan of Armenia, Ambassador Hiroshi Minami of Japan, Ambassador Kelebone Maope of Lesotho, and Ambassador Durga Prasad Bhattarai of Nepal.
Let me also take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Peter Thomson of Fiji and the outgoing Bureau for their leadership and partnership over the course of 2014. Your engagement was critical to the successful outcomes of the ICPD review, the UN General Assembly Special Session on the ICPD beyond 2014, as well as to the outcomes of the consultations related to the post-2015 development process.

The Board’s guidance will continue to be critical to our efforts during 2015 – a pivotal year, as we build on the advances of the MDGs and chart a new path forward for sustainable global development in the years ahead. As I embark on my second term, I look forward to continuing our work together.

In 2014, the 20-year review of the ICPD in action revealed what the world can achieve when it focuses on common goals.

We have indeed made significant progress since Cairo. Fewer women are dying in pregnancy and childbirth. More girls are in school. More people are moving out of poverty.

But the review also showed that if our common goals are not directed towards inclusion, are not underpinned by human rights, then grave inequalities emerge.

2015 offers a new opportunity for the world to galvanize around a common and uniting agenda – a promise to and for the future.
Building on the gains made under the framework of the ICPD and the Millennium Development Goals, the world will adopt a new universal sustainable development framework. People and the planet must be at its heart.

2014 was also a trying year. UNFPA and our development partners faced an unprecedented number of complex challenges – from the protracted conflict in Syria to the eruption of conflict in South Sudan...from the Ebola outbreak in West Africa to the epidemic of gender-based violence facing women and girls worldwide. From the brutality of Boko Haram in Nigeria to the viciousness of ISIS in Syria and Iraq... From the streets of Baga to Raqqa to Paris, violent extremists continue to exact a horrific toll.

With human rights and our common humanity in the balance, it is clear that the United Nations is needed now more than ever.

Now more than ever, it is time for global action to uphold human dignity, protect human rights and promote peace and prosperity.

Now more than ever, it is time to invest in the power of people – particularly the world’s 1.8 billion young people, and especially adolescent girls – to create a sustainable world where everybody has equal opportunities.
In Addis Ababa in July, the global community will meet to negotiate a comprehensive financing framework for the Sustainable Development Goals. We hope they will focus not only on who will pay what and why, but also on key investments that must be made in people, particularly in those most in need – smart investments in human capital that can yield enormous returns for improved well-being, poverty eradication, economic growth and sustainable development.

We at UNFPA remain firmly committed to enhancing our efforts, and mobilizing the broadest possible support, to promote the sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights of all people; to ensure that no woman dies giving life; to enable young people to realize their full potential and thereby set the terms by which everyone everywhere can live in dignity and be accorded their human rights.

Towards these ends, we will continue to focus on five priority areas, which provide a powerful platform for significant change. We will:

1. Strengthen our work in the area of the provision of quality reproductive health services, especially as it relates to the attainment of MDGs 5a & b, which includes the provision of family planning by choice not chance. This is all the more important in the year 2015, which is significant for both the end of the MDGs and the evolution of the Sustainable Development Goals;
2. Realize UNFPA’s strategy for young people, with a particular focus on adolescent girls;

3. Facilitate greater South-South cooperation as a platform for greater exchange and better implementation;

4. Establish ourselves as a center of excellence in data for development;

5. Strengthen UNFPA’s humanitarian work, with a focus on gender-based violence.

And in doing so, we will focus on strategies that have proven effective.

Today’s unprecedented cohort of young people presents an enormous opportunity to transform the future for the better. But they can do so only if they have the education and skills they need, health and real choices in life.

Investing in the human capital of young people, especially adolescent girls, can help countries reap a demographic dividend that can lift millions out of poverty, raise living standards and establish a foundation for sustained and resilient development.

That is the story of East Asia’s prosperity, and we believe that the same sort of targeted investments in young people could help countries in sub-Saharan Africa and other regions spark their own economic miracles.
UNFPA’s experience in engaging with and empowering young people and our work to help countries realize their demographic dividends will be more important than ever in the new development era.

We are currently applying this expertise in the Sahel, in partnership with the World Bank Group and others. These countries have some of the highest fertility rates in the world. As a result, they are furthest behind in the demographic transition needed to realize the social and economic benefits of the dividend.

Informed choices are central to human rights, human dignity and human empowerment. We need to ensure that the most marginalized women and adolescent girls are afforded choices that enable them to lead dignified, productive lives – not least the choice to plan the number, timing and spacing of their children.

We know that access to comprehensive reproductive health services, including contraceptives and voluntary family planning, saves lives, protects women’s health and helps unleash the power of women to contribute to their societies and drive sustainable economic growth.

In 2014, UNFPA’s Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security supplied approximately $100 million worth of contraceptives, averting an estimated 7.8 million unintended pregnancies.
The Programme continues to provide quality, life-saving maternal health medicines, strengthen health systems and support countries facing humanitarian crises.

In the Ebola affected countries, for example, funds from the Global Programme were promptly reprogrammed to address health system disruptions and provide continued access to reproductive health services.

Stable funding is essential to continue this essential work in all of the 46 countries the Programme supports.

Data is another priority area for UNFPA and a powerful tool for development. Data is essential to make evidence-based decisions and drive accountability. It can indicate whether our investments are making meaningful, measurable change in the lives of the most vulnerable. It can strengthen communities’ understanding of their own needs and assist people in holding decision makers accountable.

This year UNFPA will focus on strengthening its strategic direction, internal capacity and key partnerships for data for development.

Currently, the world knows the least about people who have the least — in other words, the very people we need most to reach. The data revolution and the promise of big data have particular resonance for our work to promote equity and human rights and ensure that all women, adolescent girls and young people everywhere are able to achieve their full potential.
Finally, as we have seen in recent years, the number and scope of humanitarian crises worldwide is increasing. UNFPA will continue to strengthen our efforts as a trusted humanitarian partner capable of delivering effectively in a range of emergency settings. This includes particular focus on preventing and addressing the impacts of gender-based violence, which is magnified in crisis situations.

So those are our priorities for the next three years. Now I'd like to speak to you about some of the actions we are taking to strengthen the organization and reinforce our work in these key focus areas.

Mr. President,

Over the past four years, UNFPA has enhanced its operations and sharpened its strategic vision. Building on this foundation and what we have learned from the ICPD review, the Open Working Group process and ongoing negotiations around the post-2015 agenda, we feel an urgent need to reposition our organization to be able to engage more proactively in the changing development and financial landscape.

We have noted the concerns of the Board in this regard, and we continue to rely on you to guide us through this process.

Our challenge now is to accelerate our efforts to deliver on our Strategic Plan and to achieve the MDGs.
The Fit for Purpose process and the post-2015 agenda offer opportunities for UNFPA. However, the changing environment and competition for scarce resources requires us to be more dynamic and strategic in advocating for our issues with Member States and our various partners.

To facilitate our engagement with governments and the development of strategic partnerships, and enhance our communication, resource mobilization and outreach, we will establish a new Division for Governance and Multilateral Affairs.

This will further the work of the Executive Board branch, the post-2015 team and the Liaison Offices in Geneva and Addis Ababa to strengthen UNFPA’s engagement with Member States.

The inclusion of environmental scanning and the two Liaison Offices in this division will ensure a deepened and consistent dialogue with governments, furthering the organization’s efforts to implement the ICPD Programme of Action and contribute to sustainable development.

A new division for Communication and Strategic Partnerships will also be created, comprising the work undertaken today by the Media and Communication and Resource Mobilization branches. It will also include a Strategic Partnerships Branch, which will include UNFPA’s work with parliamentarians and CSOs.
The Liaison Offices in Copenhagen, Brussels and Tokyo and Washington DC will be part of this Division.

In addition to strengthening UNFPA’s work to build strategic partnerships, it will also help us better tell our success stories, advocate for our issues and redefine our resource mobilization work to maintain support from our traditional donors while tapping new sources of funding, as the Board has challenged us to do.

These two divisions will replace the current IERD structure, and internal recruitment is under way for directors to head them.

The importance of this holistic approach to engagement really hit home for me during a recent trip to a programme country that I won’t name but which had opposed some of the strong positions we took last year. I was pleasantly surprised to find in our meetings that when we broke down the issues, the government was actually on board with us.

During the visit, we also met with potential new partners in the private sector, especially within the media industry, who were very excited about the prospect of working with us.

So telling our story effectively and thinking outside the box is critically important to mobilize new resources and partners. And we hope the changes we are putting in place will facilitate this.
Mr. President,

Let me take this time to thank all our donors for their support, particularly their contributions to core resources.

On the subject of resources, I’d also like to mention an additional challenge we currently face – the volatility of exchange rates in global markets.

Given the current situation, UNFPA encourages all donors to pay their contributions early in 2015 in order to help us better plan our activities.

I will come back to you at our Annual Session when we have been able to better analyze any implications for UNFPA in view of the strong US dollar.

As non-core resources have started to exceed core resources, it is increasingly important to ensure that they are harnessed effectively to meet our organizational objectives and are managed in accordance with our policies and procedures as well as donor agreements.

To this end, we have established a Non-core Funds Management Unit, which will ensure non-core funds are allocated to countries with the greatest needs and that they are used effectively. The Unit will bring a much-needed integrated approach to core and non-core resources, with distinct reporting to donors on the added value of non-core resources but in the context of UNFPA’s overall work.
We know that resource mobilization depends on performance and demonstrating value for money – on accountability and on results.

UNFPA sincerely appreciates the 2014 MOPAN Common Approach Assessment Report, and we are very pleased with the positive findings of the report overall, which rates UNFPA’s performance under the majority of dimensions as 'adequate' or 'strong'. Moreover, we welcome the unified efforts of the 19 donor governments in producing this increasingly recognized joint assessment instrument.

We at UNFPA are closely following discussions in the General Assembly leading up to the Addis meeting on financing for development.

We understand that while ODA is essential, it is not nearly enough to implement such an ambitious development agenda. Domestic resource mobilization, private sector investment, loans and other instruments will be critical.

UNFPA needs to be able to take advantage of various opportunities – not only to mobilize financial resources, but also technical cooperation and expertise – from Member States on the ground where we work.

In response to the growing importance of South-South Cooperation as a means of implementation for sustainable development, UNFPA is stepping up its efforts in this area. We know that some of the best development solutions come from countries facing similar challenges.
Our new coordination efforts for South-South cooperation bring together all UNFPA's experience and expertise on the subject, led by very senior management equipped with the skills and political acumen to advance our work in this area.

Delivering effectively requires that we have the right people – with appropriate skills sets, strengths and expertise – in the right place.

As I have already mentioned, data for development is another of our corporate priorities for 2015 and beyond. Measuring progress towards the new Sustainable Development Goals will require a steady flow of high-quality, timely, authoritative, and accessible data.

UNFPA's census work, while critically important, is not enough. We need to strengthen our leadership in the area of data, working with governments, civil society, the private sector and other partners. And we have identified senior staff within the organization with both the technical and political expertise to take this forward.

These two projects are time-bound and I anticipate they will deliver the expected results within three years.

I would like to add that all of the organizational changes I have mentioned this morning are cost-neutral and will benefit our programming, especially UNFPA's field operations, which remain our key business.
As a field organization, we must push implementation of our strategic plan and accelerate our efforts in the final stretch towards the MDG deadline.

To this end, we are reassigning senior staff both at headquarters and in the field so that we can bring about the change that Member States expect and that will enable us to deliver more effectively in the years to come.

Operationally, the organization is welcoming new ideas and new leaders, while benefiting from existing strengths and capabilities.

We have strengthened our work to undertake audits, investigations and evaluations, and you have before you UNFPA’s revised oversight policy.

We will continue to promote a culture of ethics, integrity and mutual respect. There is no place in UNFPA for mismanagement, waste or fraud.

Managers at all levels must lead with excellence and combine creativity with results.

Managing change requires a blend of strong commitment, excellent judgment, intuition, and insight into motivating teams. This will ensure our achievements are not episodic, or fleeting, but rather are sustained and long-lasting.
Mr. President,

I have already spoken to some of the challenges we face in the area of humanitarian response.

Fortunately, thanks to the generous support of our donors, we have been able to scale up our efforts considerably, particularly on gender-based violence.

But we still believe we can do better.

You have before you some considerations that will enable us to scale up our humanitarian response more quickly.

Unfortunately, conflicts, natural disasters and other humanitarian crises are increasing and growing more complex.

To be able to better predict and respond to emergencies, UNFPA will conduct a strategic review of our humanitarian response to ensure that we are maximizing our capacity to build resilience within countries. We hope to be able to report more to the Board on this at the Annual Session in June.
Mr. President,

The world is changing, the UN is changing and UNFPA must change, too. These changes will help us be more dynamic and responsive, and deliver stronger results.

We believe that they will re-energize the organization and make us more fit for purpose as we enter the post-2015 arena. I am excited about the future of UNFPA.

The universality of the Sustainable Development Goals and their basis in human rights put inequality at the centre of our efforts.

As the UN system faces the challenge of blending individual agency mandates to best serve all people, UNFPA has a critical role to play.

We know about the power of people to drive sustainable development. Cairo’s integrated, comprehensive agenda has much to offer as a guide for future action.

A UN system that works together to support a holistic development agenda works best for countries and people.

UNFPA is firmly committed to working with our UN partners to take Delivering as One to the next level.
The Standard Operating Procedures provide a practical means of implementation for the post-2015 development agenda and can accelerate our collective efforts.

UNFPA will continue to drive collective change. We count on your support to help hold every UN agency accountable for advancing integration and coherence of policy, programme, funding and business operations.

We also count on you to help create the enabling environment for further coherence through your policy and funding decisions.

Working together as one UN family we can unleash the power of people to build the future we want.

Progress depends on reaching the poorest, and that takes knowledge, skills, technology and infrastructure. At the same time, development must be grounded in human rights and core values that apply to all people, everywhere.

We are committed to walking on these two legs – supporting practical operations as well as universal norms and values.

When we speak with one voice – and on difficult issues we are sometimes the only voice! – people listen. (And believe me, we at UNFPA know about difficult issues!)
Together we can do more, we can do better, and we can deliver on our promise to the world’s people.

Mr. President,

Martin Luther King once said, “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

It matters that every day 37,000 girls are forced into marriage and expected to have a child while they themselves are still children. It matters that, in some places, a girl is more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than to complete her education.

It matters that an estimated 225 million women who want to avoid pregnancy are not using an effective contraceptive method.

It matters that one in seven new HIV infections occurs among adolescents aged 10 to 19 years.

It matters that one woman in three will suffer violence at the hand of an intimate partner in her lifetime.

And we at UNFPA will not be silent.

We will not be silent because every life matters. Because human rights matter.
According to an Oxfam report released last week, the richest 1 percent are likely to control more than half of the globe’s total wealth by next year. And that matters, too.

Inequality is not just bad for individuals, but for society as a whole, as the ICPD beyond 2014 review showed.

It threatens social cohesion, empathy and shared responsibility – the fabric of healthy societies.

Unequal societies grow more slowly and have a harder time sustaining growth than more equal ones.

Mr. President, Ladies and gentlemen,

You’ve heard me talk a lot over the past four years about how critically important it is to ensure every 10-year-old girl today has the choices, skills and opportunity to reach her full potential tomorrow.

When we look at what we do and how we do it, that 10-year-old girl is the ‘why’.

The efforts we are making to strengthen our operations and have the right people in the right places, the emphasis on leadership and resources – that’s the ‘how’.
The ‘why’ is that 10-year-old girl. She is who we must be accountable to. She is what matters. Her rights. Her agency. Her future. And we at UNFPA won’t be silent. We won’t stop until she is able to exercise her rights, realize her dreams, and live in dignity and well-being.

That is what matters for individuals, for societies and for our common future. That is how we will build a more equitable, more resilient, more sustainable world.

Thank you.