

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR H.S. PURI PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF INDIA AT THE FIRST REGULAR MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
OF UN WOMEN ON JANUARY 24, 2011**

Madam President,

It is a matter of great satisfaction that UN Women has become operational and that the first meeting of the Executive Board is taking place today. We are happy to hear from Executive Director Madam Michelle Bachelet her vision for UN Women and also the 100-Day Action Plan for UN Women. Let me begin by thanking the newly constituted Secretariat of UN Women for providing all necessary documentations in a timely manner. Let me also commend the transition team of UN Women for their tireless and sincere efforts to successfully complete the transition phase of the merger of the four constituent parts into a single entity.

Madam President,

The creation of UN Women has been one of the most important transformational aspects of UN reform. I am glad that the UN Secretary-General was able to convince the Executive Director to lead this Organisation at its inception. The Entity has been rightly placed as one of his priority areas for action in 2011. We are confident in the Executive Director's strong leadership of UN Women as well as to bring to the forefront the leadership role of UN in the field of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Madam President,

The global, regional and national effort to ensure that women achieve the rightful place in society is still a faraway dream. UN Women has finally been created. Needless to say, the task at hand is enormous. Expectations are high. Goodwill is available in abundance. All this should not, however, blind us to the fact that unless there is effective prioritization, efforts will get diffused. Our effort should, therefore, be to prioritise the focus on gender equality, the empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming. We are happy to hear the very precise vision statement of the Executive Director. From my national perspective, the five priority areas which she has chosen are extremely important. These mirror the priorities of our Government as well as the extremely proactive civil

society in India. The plan to strengthen the sub-regional office in India will help in providing the technical expertise and programme funds for these activities in India as well as for the whole of South Asia.

Madam President,

Putting as the first core principle the issue of demand-driven support to national partners is also well appreciated. This will ensure customizing the activities of UN Women in each country and guarantee, “to each, according to their needs”.

One of the major constraints for the initiation of the reform process was the issue of coordination. Multiplicity of UN actors in the field had led to lack of accountability and delays in identifying the right agency for cooperation. The 100-day Action Plan rightly addresses this as one of the core principles for UN Women. With strengthened field presence, this issue will be resolved. We welcome the idea of migration of posts in the field from programme funds to support budget. This will indeed give greater sustainability in technical assistance. We would also like to support the proposal of having appropriately senior level representations of UN Women in the field, to ensure better coordination and coherence within the UN system. In this regard, we would encourage UN Women to employ both international and national staff from within the region. They will have the advantage of socio-cultural understanding of women issues and would be able to effectively marry the national objectives with international obligations.

Madam President,

To ensure that UN Women stands for action, we would support all efforts to ensure that scarce resources are not diverted from programme activities in the field to administrative expenditure at UN Headquarters. UN Women will be measured by what and how it delivers in the field, not just by what it symbolizes.

The first challenge of resource mobilization to fulfill its ambitious agenda is critical and would demonstrate the trust the international community bestows on UN Women. This needs a sound plan and a committed senior management. I am happy to see that the revisions which has been made in the support budget late last week, is the right steps in the right direction. This would also display to the contributors the professional and sincere approach of UN Women, as an agency for women, and not for UN.

The initial target of achieving resource mobilization of US \$ 500 million is reasonable as well as modest. Although I do want to point out here that the Secretary General last year had actually proposed that UN Women should be created with the initial corpus of US \$ 1 billion. This was also the demand of the developing countries and civil society. This might sound ambitious, but the lower target of US \$ 500 million should not make us complacent and limit ourselves. Instead, we should be prepared to revisit this target later this year, and consider upward revision, in a realistic and practical manner. I

would like to inform you that the Government of India is seized of the need to make appropriate contribution to UN Women.

Madam President,

We have noted the Executive Director would shortly constitute an Advisory Group of NGOs to feed into UN Women their perspective and expertise. I hope that such a group will be representative and have representation primarily from the grassroots organisations. There should also be efforts to ensure such interactions are established at the regional, sub-regional and country levels.

Madam President,

Yet another issue which needs attention is the agreement in resolution 64/289 to establish appropriate mechanisms to assist and support the realization of all the strategic objectives and actions agreed upon in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the national and international commitments stipulated in the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

I am hopeful that the Executive Director will keep in mind these suggestions when she finalizes the Strategic Plan of UN Women in June 2011.

Madam President,

A good beginning is half the battle won. Today's meeting, I see as the start of a new chapter in UN's efforts in the field of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Let me conclude by appreciating UN Women team for adopting a transparent and consultative approach in this critical phase of transition and consolidation. The timely briefing by the Executive Director herself to various regional groups has dispelled doubts and raised the level of confidence and hope. Let me assure you my delegation's full support and cooperation in this endeavor.

Thank you.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)