

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR HARDEEP SING PURI, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE , AT THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE
BOARD OF UN WOMEN ON DECEMBER 5, 2011

Madam President,

Permit me at the outset to thank the Executive Director and Under Secretary-General, Madam Michelle Bachelet for her statement and for introducing the first biennial institutional budget of UN Women.

We would also like to thank the UN Women Secretariat for the timely issuance of documents and for engaging member-states in a transparent and consultative fashion throughout the preparation for this Session.

As we draw close to the end of the first operational year of UN Women, my delegation is satisfied to note the progress achieved in laying the foundation of the new entity as it scales up its operations and embarks on its important work.

While we are fully conscious that the task at hand is enormous, my delegation is encouraged by the beginning made to reinstate the leading role of the United Nations in pursuing gender equality and the empowerment of women under the able leadership of Madam Bachelet.

The creation of UN Women flows from the firm conviction of the international community that undiluted focus on women's issues is central to addressing many of the challenges that the world faces today.

As the entity settles into its new structures and mandates, it is imperative that the initial enthusiasm and good will is not allowed to dissipate so that UN Women is best placed to fulfill the high expectations that member-states have entrusted to it.

Madam President,

I belong to a country that is home to more than 500 million women. In India, we are firmly convinced that ensuring the rightful place of women in society is not only a moral imperative but an essential pre-requisite for achieving peace, prosperity and sustainable development.

This acknowledgement is reflected in the priorities and policies that we have pursued at the national level. Over the years, we have implemented a raft of measures that focus on the socio-economic upliftment of women, with special emphasis on education, health, employment, micro-finance, access to agricultural land, social security measures and rural infrastructure.

Our well-recognized success in the political empowerment of women is transforming the traditional and entrenched power dynamic in both rural and urban India. Women are finding their place in all walks of professional and political life from corporate empires to the bureaucracy. Women adorn the highest offices in India including, at present, that of the President of the country, Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, and Leader of the Opposition. Further, today, more than a million women are represented on local bodies where they exercise decision making authority almost on a daily basis.

In the realm of legislative action, India has enacted laws against domestic violence, child marriage, and prenatal sex selection. More recently, a Bill has been tabled in the Parliament for prevention of sexual harassment at the work place.

Madam President,

Let me now turn to the institutional budget that is the main agenda for this session of the Executive Board. My delegation recognizes that it is a foundational budget and sets the tone for what will follow. This budget is important from our perspective in laying a sound basis for implementing the strategic plan approved earlier in the year by the Board.

The budget proposal addresses the need to deploy a strengthened field presence critical in accomplishing the vision championed by UN Women and member-states. As ultimately, UN Women will be judged by what and how it delivers in the field.

We look forward to the findings of the regional architecture review and the organizational efficiency initiative that will take further the work of establishing UN Women's global presence and the effective and efficient delivery of its mandate.

Madam President,

We are also aware that the ability of UN Women to marshal adequate resources will play a crucial role in its capacity to fulfill the aspiration and ambition bestowed on it by the international community.

In this regard, we have noted that UN Women has scaled down its resource mobilization targets to US\$ 700 million for the biennium 2012-2013 keeping in mind the constrained global financial environment. Nevertheless, we urge donors to not let contributions flag, particularly in today's difficult development landscape where women as a vulnerable section are more adversely impacted than otherwise, and need all the support they can get.

I would like to inform you that the Government of India has already pledged five million US dollars to UN Women as part of its commitment to provide core predictable funding to the best of its capacity. In April this year, my delegation handed over the first one million dollars.

I am happy to take this opportunity to announce that India will contribute another one million US dollars to UN Women in the coming days.

Let me conclude, Madam President, by reaffirming India's steadfast commitment to the global, regional and national effort to achieve gender equality, the empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming. We assure you that India will not be found wanting in our support and cooperation to realizing the shared vision envisaged in the creation of UN Women.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)