

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR H.S. PURI, PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE UN AT THE FIRST ANNUAL  
MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UN WOMEN ON JUNE 27, 2011**

Madam President,

I am happy to participate today in the first annual session of the Executive Board of UN Women. I would like to thank the Executive Director, Madam Bachelet for the presentation of the Strategic Plan of UN Women for the period 2011-13 including her report on her recent country visits.

Madam President,

I have had the occasion to observe earlier that Madam Bachelet's appointment as Executive Director augured well for UN Women which got off to an excellent start. We now see the evidence.

The first Strategic Plan of UN Women should be ambitious, achievable and results oriented. We believe that this document is a critical document as it sets out the right note for the rest of the work to follow.

We are pleased to note that this document further develops the vision as well as the strategy for UN Women, which Madam Bachelet had set forth in the January meeting of the Executive Board of UN Women.

We are satisfied with the elements of the Strategic Plan and are particularly happy that the Strategic Plan takes into account our priorities for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The Strategic Plan which we have in front of us is comprehensive and has practical Management Results Framework (MRF) and Development Results Framework (DRF) with concrete and measurable results, targets, indicators and baselines.

UN Women has to play a strong leadership role globally as well as within the UN system on all women related issues. Needless to say, the elements of Strategic Plan have rightly captured all the major priorities of UN Women.

Madam President,

We are appreciative of the fact that the first core principle of the Strategic Plan is the issue of demand-driven support to national partners. This will ensure customizing the activities of UN Women in each country and guarantee, “to each, according to their needs”.

The gender issue, due to its cross-cutting nature, has resulted in engagement of multiplicity of UN actors in the field. We note that UN Women will develop coordination mechanisms that will enable the United Nations country team to ‘Deliver as One’ in support of this issue. This is exactly the kind of coordination we seek to achieve.

We look forward to close cooperation with sub-regional office of UN Women in India in the coming days.

In addition, with the establishment of clear results based framework, we are confident that our own agencies in the field, as well as civil society will have better coordination and cooperation with the UN system.

Madam President,

Over the years, we have taken considerable steps to overcome traditional mindsets about women and gender stereotypes and ensure that women can play a more equitable role in all aspects of society. Today, we have made commendable progress, but challenges remain.

Our successes in the field of political empowerment are historic. We have more than a million women elected to local bodies, thereby enabling them to be the decision making authority in the mainstream discourse of development.

We have focused considerably on socio-economic empowerment of women, with focus on education, health, employment, micro-finance, access to agricultural land, social security measures and rural infrastructure.

This has inculcated the spirit of entrepreneurship in Indian women. They have been successful in breaking the ‘glass ceiling’ in the corporate world and have come to occupy positions as top executives in banks and corporate board rooms, both in India as well as globally.

In addition, we are striving to provide a safe environment for women to enable them to live their lives and engage in livelihoods with respect and dignity.

We strongly condemn violence against women in all forms. India has enacted legislation 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.

To address the problem of violence against women holistically, a multi-pronged strategy has been adopted including, legislation, advocacy and awareness raising as well as programs for

socio-economic empowerment of women. We are happy that this important issue is being addressed in Development Results Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan.

The Government is also giving impetus to Gender Budgeting initiative for mainstreaming of gender concerns across sectors/schemes/programmes. While this is a continuing process, the budget allocation for women, as a percentage of the Union Budget, has increased from 4.5% in 2005-06 to 6.22% in 2011-12.

I must also mention that we are currently in the process of formulating our 12th National Five Year Plan. A multi-pronged approach to women's empowerment is the hallmark of the comprehensive strategy towards ensuring "more inclusive and sustainable growth".

We expect the UN Women to become a global knowledge hub with country-specific data on evidence-based and effective approaches on combating violence against women. We intend to draw from this the best practices for use and application in India.

Madam President,

I would like to touch upon one important aspect, which will largely determine the success of UN Women and to ensure that it does not meet the same fate of the former UNIFEM. That is the issue of financial resources.

Nearly 6 months after its operationalization, the actual contributions and pledges received are modest and only around US\$ 80 million. This is not commensurate with the aspiration and ambition assigned to UN Women.

We must not be oblivious of the fact that activities enumerated in the Strategic Plan need resources. The Strategic Plan envisages financial requirement of nearly US \$ 1.2 billion in 2011-13. If we have to ensure that UN Women stands for action, the donor community has to make generous contributions to UN Women.

India has made an actual contribution of US \$ 1 million to UN Women in April. We will also be making an additional substantial contribution in the near future. We will provide full political and financial support to UN Women and call on others to do likewise.

We hope that the donor community will not only demonstrate strong political commitment but also equally demonstrate strong financial support in the form of predictable core funding to UN Women.

Madam President,

It is critical at this juncture that we endorse this Strategic Plan so that UN Women could kick start its activities in the field swiftly. The expectation and anticipations are high, and we must stand up to that.

The establishment of UN Women is one of the truly transformative steps and important reforms

which the United Nations has undertaken. It is up to us, members of the Executive Board, to ensure that Madam Bachelet and her team are given the necessary authority, mandate and resources to deliver.

Let me take this opportunity to once again reiterate India's strong support for the Strategic Plan and its early implementation.

Thank you.

**BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS**