Delivered by Louise Blais, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations

[Introduction]

Thank you, Madam President. I am delivering this statement on behalf of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, United States of America and my own country, Canada.

Madam President, COVID-19 is testing the limits of UN Development System reform and emphasizing the imperative of implementing the reforms that have been put in place. Without these, we anticipate that the development system would not have been able to respond with the same degree of agility and coherence as shown over the past six months. For example, the coordination between the humanitarian and development system has enabled the agencies to be more responsive to the pressing needs of populations most immediately affected by COVID-19 whilst planning for the long-term recovery. We stress the importance of continuing this momentum. As the world continues to face the multiple consequences of COVID-19 and prepares to build back better and greener, we must ensure that the reform principles are at the core of the UN response.
As member states, our commitment to reform is steadfast, and we know this is shared by the agencies and Resident Coordinators. In order to translate this commitment into reality, the actions of agencies’ and their representatives at all levels to follow through on reform commitments to ensure harmonised, efficient and robust policy, programmatic and corporate approaches are critical. Allow me to highlight five key areas in which we would like to see further concerted action:

- **First, coordination and collaboration:** this is the bedrock of reform. Through policy mainstreaming, joint activities and the leadership of Resident Coordinators, COVID-19 has put coordination to the test. The Global Humanitarian Response Plan, a UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 and the Multi-Partner Trust Fund are positive examples of this in practice. Agencies must continue to pursue joint activities and collaborate focusing on their respective strengths and comparative advantages at all levels. Furthermore, we underline the system wide coordination role of UN Women on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

- **Second, efficiencies:** we note the potential efficiencies that can be achieved through the implementation of the Business Innovation Group’s research findings and its related work, and urge agencies to now demonstrate progress on this initiative.

- **Third, the Funding Compact:** this is a cornerstone of reform, and agencies must ensure they have set comprehensive baselines, milestones and targets for all relevant indicators, including where aggregated figures exist. The mutual responsibility of member states on the Funding Compact is also recognised.
- **Fourth, UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks:** As member states we reiterate the importance of ensuring CPDs are derived from UNSDCFs including through agencies’ close work with the Development Coordination Office and Resident Coordinators. This also requires meaningful, in-country consultation with member states of both the UNSDCFs and CPDs prior to adoption of the CPDs.

- **And fifth, the Management Accountability Framework:** we expect full implementation of the MAF, including mutual performance appraisals and would like to have regular updates from agencies and DCO on the implementation progress.

**[QCPR and Strategic Plan]**

**Madam President,** the reform process is not limited to the aforementioned initiatives and we call on agencies and the RCs to take a holistic approach to delivering the SDGs. This includes ensuring agency alignment with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, including on reform priorities such as efficiency and effectiveness, and thematic priorities such as inclusion of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls and persons with disability, humanitarian-development-peace nexus, and climate and environment. As we move forward into the development of new strategic plans for 2022-2025, we encourage agencies to apply this approach and engage closely with the Executive Board with sufficient time for consultation as the development of strategic plans and result frameworks progresses.
Additionally, agencies must ensure sufficient humanitarian competency and resources as respectively appropriate: as the Resident Coordinator’s role takes in an increased range of humanitarian activities due to COVID-19, the importance of humanitarian competencies including international humanitarian law and humanitarian access negotiations is highlighted, as well as the need to strengthen humanitarian capacities and the coherence of humanitarian and development programming in the field, particularly in agencies with a double mandate such as UNICEF and UNFPA.

As we look to the year ahead and a green, inclusive and resilient recovery, building back better and greener is a chance to continue to implement the reform processes and ensure the recovery continues to be supported through strengthened coordination across the Funds and Programmes and wider UN Development System.

Thank you.