***Theme: ‘’Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030”.***

**Date and Time: Wednesday 8 March, 2017 (Time: 15:45)**

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to have the Secretary General, António Guterres joining us here at UNON as we commemorate this year’s International Women’s Day (IWD).

This year as we mark International Women’s Day, I wish to reiterate the UN’s committment to contributing to a county in which women and men have equal opportunities in the workplace. The Kenyan workplace is rapidly changing. We are working together with the Government of Kenya, civil society, development partners in communities all across the country, to guarantee all Kenyan girls and boys the chance to education, giving them access to a wide range of careers in the future. In our daily work, we are contributing to ending harmful cultural practices such as early and forced marriages and Female Genital Mutilation. All across the country, we are partnering with men and boys to change stereotypes that perptuate gender inequality in the home and public, thereby addressing major issues such as Gender Based Violence which continues to threaten the wellbeing of all girls and women and exerts a heavy toll on this country’s economy.

Women’s contribution to Kenya’s economy is huge, both through paid work and the often overlooked unpaid care work. In all sectors, they are breaking new ground.

Here at UNON, this year we are celebrating the contributions that women make to our work. The Secretary General just viewed a photo exhibition on “***The Women of UNON***”. The exhibition seeks to recognize and raise the profile of women working at different levels with various UN agencies and in the complex.  I hope that this exhibiton will not only inspire us all, but also contribute to a conversation internally on how we can all help cultivate a conducive working environment, that allows women to thrive and ultimately enables us to tap into our entire talent pool to achieve our mandate here in Kenya.

The SG also just met with a group of women leaders here at the UN who are assisting me in my mandate to ensure that we close the gender gap at the Nairobi duty station. This is an initiative that I started at this duty station to make a concious effort to achieve gender parity being the first dedicated DG of UNON, and a woman as well.

In terms of the progress among agencies based in the UN Nairobi Duty station, based on data from 49 UN agencies as at April 2016, whereas we are making some progress, yet more needs to be done especially within the professional categories to increase female representation:

* **Female representation within General Services staff was found to stand at: 42%**
* **International Professional staff (D1 level): 23%**

The network continues to face many challenges such as commitment from senior managers (both male and female) as this adds an extra burden to them in relation to their day to day work. Also, the lack of funding for such programs has meant that implementation has been slow. I therefore use this opportunity to call on the UNSG on this IWD 2017 to encourage all UN entities, funds and programmes to prioritize financing for programmes that aim at achieving gender parity, as this would greatly benefit our organization towards achieving its goals.

I thank you for your kind attention.