Remarks by H.E. Mr. Margus Kolga at UNICEF Executive Board Annual Session. 18. 06.2013.

Mr President, Mr Executive Director, distinguished delegates,

Having heard the comprehensive overview of UNICEF’s annual report, allow me to congratulate the Executive Director Mr. Anthony Lake and the whole organization of UNICEF for the good progress gained and results achieved for the children around the world, and for the steps taken forward towards the Millennium Development Goals.

First, Estonia welcomes the efforts made by different agencies and programmes to improve the way they work together. The synchronised development of strategic plans of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UN-Women and UNICEF will ensure improvement in action while reducing duplication and therefore also administrative costs. Estonia also commends UNICEF’s contribution to fostering coherence and synergies among all funds, programmes and agencies within the UN to better support countries, and efforts made by using innovations and ICT solutions. The launch of the VISION system that provides the real-time information is a good example in this respect.

We are also encouraged to see the good work already done on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. We strongly support UNICEF endeavours in this long term challenge that needs customized country level approach and sufficient financial attention as well. However, referring to the annual report, Estonia encourages UNICEF to focus even more on generating awareness shift on gender-based and family violence that almost always affects children directly or indirectly and feeds in a new cycle of violence. We value highly the work UNICEF has done in cooperation with UN-Women and applaud the continuous emphasis on that issue. But we should not forget boys as well.

We highly appreciate UNICEF’s humanitarian programmes and the role they have on lives of countless children in acute and long-term crises. Evidently children in fragile and conflict-affected states are most vulnerable with long term impact on
their lives. Therefore we give importance to UNICEF’s endeavours of strengthening the linkage between humanitarian and development assistance and building resilience. Estonia wants herewith underpin UNICEF’s extraordinary devotion on responding to the Syrian crises, including warranting children’s rights on education in many refugee camps in neighbouring countries.

Mr. President,

In September, the Executive Board will approve the new Strategic Plan for 2014 to 2017. We are grateful for your and UNICEF’s hard work and outreach on the draft that we will be discussing during this week. Estonia supports all the seven priority outcomes of the UNICEF’s Strategic Plan 2014-2017, particularly the inclusion of child protection as standalone priority.

We also welcome centrality of gender equality and rights of all children, importance of partnerships and humanitarian activities, if just to name a few.

We are also looking forward to the first integrated budgeting of the Strategy and want to recognize the significant increase of resources that will be available for country programs.

Additionally, we highlight the importance of strengthening capacities for effective preparedness and integrating humanitarian and development programming to promote resilience.

We praise UNICEF’s commitment to continue to be actively engaged in the implementation of QCPR and one of its essential components, ‘Delivering as One’. We have continued interest in further strengthening Delivering as One to achieve better and more cost-effective results at country level and are therefore pleased that UNICEF has contributed constructively to the development of Standard Operating Procedures for Delivering as One.

Estonian government has contributed to UNICEF’s funds for 15 years already and is committed to continue to do so with progressive way in our core contribution. Thank you!