Statement

by H.E. Ambassador Miguel Berger
Chargé d’affaires

at the

Annual Session
of the
UNICEF Executive Board

Annual Report of the Executive Director
(agenda item 3)

18 June 2013

(check against delivery)
Mr. President,

Executive Director, Members of the Executive Board,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

(check against delivery)

From the outset, I would like to thank the Executive Director very much for his very comprehensive and informative report that showcases UNICEF’s operational activities and constant engagement in strengthening children’s rights, improving children’s safety, and promoting child protection. Once again, it was impressive to see in how many areas UNICEF is active to improve the lives of all children all around the world. Let me today only focus on a few of them:

First:
Let me congratulate you, Executive Director, and the entire organization on the work accomplished and the results achieved under the current Strategic Plan. UNICEF staff has contributed remarkably to advancing child development and the rights of every child around the world, often under difficult and precarious circumstances.

At the same time, UNICEF has undergone internal audits and investigations as well as comprehensive evaluations of its activities, its global and regional programmes, and the
Strategic Plan itself. This demonstrates UNICEF’s willingness to learn from past experience and to improve the work of the organization for the benefit of further achievements for children. We appreciate the readiness of management to take on board the recommendations coming out of these evaluations and we look forward to learning how they inform the next version of the Strategic Plan and – over the course of the next years – how they will help to improve UNICEF’s performance in areas such as equity, poverty eradication, and gender equality.

We have to take into account the findings of the implementation of the Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2006-2013 when discussing the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 at this Annual Session. We would like to congratulate UNICEF on the improved version of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and the annexes. The content of the Strategic Plan is very well thought through, and we especially welcome UNICEF’s focus on equity, the Human Rights Based Approach, gender equality, and the most disadvantaged, marginalized, and vulnerable children. We also highly estimate that the Strategic Plan was established in line with the UN reform and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR).

With regard to the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, we agree with the core issues and we are convinced that we will be able to our discussions during this session will form the base which will allow us to adopt the Strategic Plan at our Second regular Session in September.
Second:
The importance of the new Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) for the work on the new Strategic Plan cannot be overemphasized. We therefore encourage UNICEF, together with other UN agencies, to develop indicators that will be integrated into UNICEF’s Strategic Plan and the strategic plans of other UN entities to monitor the implementation of the QCPR. The wording and the language concerning the QCPR should be coherent and harmonized across the agencies.

Therefore, we ask for an active engagement of UNICEF for the Delivering as One-approach to empower Resident Coordinators as representatives of the entire UN system at country level. Germany has high expectations towards the swift implementation of the QCPR resolution of the GA and the Standard Operating Procedures for the Delivering as One initiative in this regard.

We expect that UNICEF will be a champion towards the harmonization of business practices and the removal of the bottlenecks for the implementation of Delivering as One. This enables the full realization of efficiency gains by the whole UN System. Especially in the area of sustainable procurement a lot of analysis has been done to address fragmentation and come up with a more efficient UN procurement system. What we are missing is formulating specific steps to go ahead.
Third:
The evaluations show that UNICEF achieves the best results and is most efficient when it follows a focussed approach. We appreciate that UNICEF’s activities have become more focussed and less fragmented over the last years, including through the collaboration with other UN entities. We are pleased with UNICEF’s commitment to translate its revised Evaluation Policy in accordance with the standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) into a comprehensive evaluation strategy and plan of action. Evaluation is crucial to further improve transparency, promote progress, and support evaluation goals of accountability, learning, and performance improvement.

We regretfully have noticed that evaluation quality has not improved much and evaluation quantity has decreased in 2012. The number of submitted evaluations has significantly dropped in the recent years despite the requirement in the 2008 Evaluation Policy. We are concerned by the fact that UNICEF is still not able to measure and clearly demonstrate its impact and its contribution to child development results. Therefore, we expect UNICEF to include in the Strategic Plan a strong results framework that provides clear goals at output, outcome and impact level, as well as well-defined indicators including qualitative indicators with baseline data and targets.

Fourth:
We very much appreciate the focus on extreme poverty, the needs of the most disadvantaged children, equity, and gender
equality. Gender is one of the intersecting forms of discrimination and needs to be taken into account under an equity agenda. We therefore welcome UNICEF's efforts in gender mainstreaming and its active participation in piloting the System Wide Action Plan.

Fifth:
We are very pleased to hear that the rate of child survival could be improved, and that UNICEF considers adjusting current strategies and interventions to further reduce child mortality and maternal deaths. It is very important that we keep going on mobilizing and intensifying global action to improve the health of women and children around the world, as agreed upon in the “Every woman every child” initiative. With common efforts and renewed commitment we can accelerate the decline in child and maternal mortality, thus enabling more countries to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5 by 2015.

Children’s rights have to be at the heart of a post-2015 agenda. Like other countries, Germany closely cooperates with UNICEF to include children and young adolescents in the consultations on the post-2015 agenda. We will hold a side event to the Special Event on MDGs in New York in September where young participants from Germany and other countries will be given the opportunity to present key findings from intense youth consultations.
We are looking forward to fruitful discussions over the next four days to advance child development today and in the future.

Thank you, Mr. President.