Mr President, Executive Director Lake,

I would like to thank the Executive Director for his comprehensive annual report. We congratulate UNICEF for important progress made in several areas. UNICEF has a unique mandate and role to fulfill, and it is reassuring to continue to witness the fruits of its hard work, commitment and professionalism.

With the Post-2015 development agenda, as well as the new UNICEF strategic plan now taking shape, it is more important than ever to maximize efforts. We are very happy to see issues related to the rights of the child reflected in the report of the Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel, and we appreciate the work that UNICEF has done to facilitate discussion in this area. We also welcome the proposed strategic direction in the Strategic Plan for 2014-17, presented to this Executive Board session.

In this context, I have two specific points I would like to bring attention to:

The first one concerns child protection. While fully appreciating the work of UNICEF in all its core areas, we will continue to emphasize the importance of child protection, a crucial area in promoting the rights of the child. There are huge opportunities for UNICEF to be the leading agency that supports multisectoral approaches to building child protection systems – an area where international players are far fewer than in many of the more ‘traditional’ areas of development.

My second point is on reporting. The work of UNICEF is about results. The annual report, however, does not always do full justice to these results, or to the challenges faced by the organization. We expect that the ongoing work on a new results framework, harmonization efforts with other agencies, knowledge management initiatives, results monitoring, new gender
action plan, and the implementation of the revised evaluation policy will improve the quality of UNICEF’s reporting.

We welcome UNICEF’s efforts to strengthen its evaluation, and encourage it to continue work in this area. We also commend UNICEF’s lead role in establishing ‘EvalPartners’, a key initiative with civil society to strengthen national evaluation capacity that Finland is proud to support, as well as UNICEF’s work in promoting development evaluation via e-learning.

Mr President,

Finland had the honour to host the annual meeting of UNICEF National Committees in May this year. National Committees are an invaluable part of UNICEF’s work, and the results it produces. We welcome the direction to which the partnership between UNICEF and the National Committees is evolving, including the explicit reference to their supportive role in the draft strategy.

In fundraising, National Committees have shown impressive capacity and skill. We are delighted that an increasingly significant part of the overall revenue of UNICEF is coming from private fundraising and partnerships, and that some National Committees have also been able to increase their contributions to much needed regular resources. It is a clear sign that National Committees contribute strongly to building trust in UNICEF as an organization.

The role of the private sector, of course, is not just limited to the area of fundraising. It is vital to advocate companies to abide by ‘Child Rights and Business Principles’, developed by UNICEF, the Global Compact and Save the Children. The way it takes a village to raise a child, it also takes the whole international community to protect the rights of children everywhere.

Thank you, Mr President