Statement by

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(check against delivery)

In response to the Annual Report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan

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Thank you Madame/Mr. President,

We would like to thank the Executive Director for the report on progress and achievements against UNICEF’s medium-term strategic plan. Canada is pleased to see continued improvement in the analysis and reporting on results and welcomes UNICEF’s achievements in 2012. Your continued efforts to address the unfinished agenda for children, especially girls and the most vulnerable, demonstrates why UNICEF continues to be an important partner for Canada in achieving the objectives outlined in our Children and Youth Strategy, the Muskoka Initiative for Maternal, Newborn and Child health, and those in the area of child protection.

We are pleased to note the significant progress made in addressing children’s rights to health, protection and education under UNICEF’s leadership. We welcome the new scope given to the upstream work within country programs to build stronger national health, education and protection systems through enhanced partnerships - such as the GAVI Alliance, Scaling Up Nutrition initiative and the Global Education Initiative - and through inter-sector collaboration, for a more holistic approach to meet children’s basic needs.

UNICEF’s continued focus on equity, and the recent emphasis on the inclusion of children with disabilities, is supported by Canada. We appreciate UNICEF’s significant contribution to increasing universal access to quality education through its equity focus, and we are pleased to see the success of initiatives offering alternatives for education to out-of-school children and youth. We also note the launch of UNICEF’s new “Global Framework for Social Protection”. The concepts and tools developed by UNICEF, such as sustainability audits and social budgeting, will be of great interest to all partner countries, which value sustainable development.

We would now like to provide more detailed comments in 4 specific areas.

First, as you are aware, improved attention to gender equality has long been a concern for Canada. We are therefore pleased that the section on crosscutting issues in the Executive Director’s report contains explicit information on gender equality and gender mainstreaming and demonstrates some progress on benchmarks. We are of the view, however, that further improvements are needed. We hope that future iterations of this annual report will reflect the commitments that UNICEF has made to address gender equality, including the inclusion of figures on gender-related resource allocation and expenditures. We will provide further comments in this regard in the context of the Report on the Progress of Gender Equality Work.

Second, Canada is encouraged by the inclusion of performance information in the annual report that highlights UNICEF’s contribution to achievements in 2012, and we note the efforts made to improve reporting by UNICEF. In future reporting, we would welcome more information on how these achievements contribute to UNICEF’s higher-level outcomes and additional references to risk assessment and mitigation, given the unpredictable environments in which UNICEF routinely works.

Third, with respect to evaluations, Canada is pleased with the role that UNICEF has played in leading, and supporting, interagency evaluations. We also note the progress made with respect
to knowledge management. Canada would like to continue to encourage UNICEF to include more information on how evidence generated by evaluations has been used to inform programming, policy and advocacy, and on how evaluative evidence on equity, gender and environmental sustainability have been taken into account.

Fourth, we welcome UNICEF’s leadership in promoting, both at the global and national levels, a systemic and holistic approach to child protection. Efforts to strengthen national protection systems and to create inter-sectoral collaboration for more effective programming and results to ensure safe and secure environments for children and youth are in line with Canada’s priorities in this area. Canada is considering opportunities to champion children and youth in the post-2015 development discussions, as we believe its inclusion in a future framework would help us to achieve greater results for children and youth facing violence, exploitation and abuse. We are interested in hearing more about how UNICEF is positioning children and youth in the post-2015 consultations.

We take note of UNICEF’s efforts to improve the monitoring of progress in the protection of children, especially girls, from violence. The meta-analysis of UNICEF’s child protection programmes is a step in the right direction in demonstrating progress towards results at all levels. The benefits of multi-sectoral approaches in results achievement is an important finding that should be disseminated widely.

Canada is pleased to note that UNICEF has initiated the first global evaluation of child protection in emergencies in 2012. We commend your ongoing commitment to the Transformative Agenda, and, particularly, the changes that you have made within UNICEF to ready yourself for level three emergencies. We believe this important effort should apply to all humanitarian emergencies. Canada would welcome information on the plans to measure performance in these humanitarian situations. Acknowledging the important role that UNICEF plays as the global lead for the education and nutrition clusters, as well as the child protection sub-cluster, we also encourage UNICEF to appropriately staff humanitarian coordinator positions for those clusters.

As a final note, Canada would like to acknowledge the efforts of UNICEF staff in the development of the draft 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. We have welcomed the opportunity to provide feedback and we are pleased with its focus on the unfinished agenda of Children. With an aim to help support UNICEF’s efforts, Canada pointed to a number of key concerns that require special attention, in line with those raised in the recent Review of UNICEF’s Development Effectiveness, that was led by the Netherlands. These included the need to strengthen performance information, including results; to improve the integration of gender equality and environmental sustainability; to develop more robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track results and costs, including the development of staff capacities at all levels to use these systems; and, to adopt results-based budgeting to capture value for money and cost efficiency.

As the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan is still in draft form, Canada recommends that UNICEF take advantage of the opportunity to address these concerns, particularly as they will support the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.
To conclude, Canada would like to congratulate the Executive Director and his staff for their considerable accomplishments in 2012. UNICEF staff work in challenging environments in many countries. Their continued commitment, expertise and experience are the organization’s most valuable assets.

Thank you.