UNICEF Executive Board
Annual Session 2013

Item 4: UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017

Statement by Peter Verseg, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations

Delivered on behalf of New Zealand and Australia

(Check against delivery)

Thank you Mr President

Let me start by thanking UNICEF for their report to the Board and for their work and consultation on the Strategic Plan.

Australia and New Zealand support UNICEF's renewed focus on equity and targeting of the most disadvantaged and excluded children and families as captured in the draft plan. UNICEF has made good progress on the plan thus far, and we are broadly supportive of the seven outcome areas proposed. We encourage UNICEF to use these for the basis of its work towards finalising the results framework and the integrated budget.

We note that the next UNICEF Strategic Plan is being development in a changing operating environment. The continuing challenges in making progress towards the MDGs in fragile and conflict affected states, the growth of middle income countries and the emergence of sustainable development as a key component of the post-2015 development landscape should all inform the development of the new Strategic Plan. Agreeing a new Strategic Plan that enables UNICEF to remain relevant in a changing development landscape and focussed on delivering on its strong mandate, particularly in areas which UNICEF has comparative advantage, should be at the forefront of all of our minds.
I would now like to turn to several matters of particular significance to our delegations.

**Results framework**

Like many other member states, we are increasing our focus on value for money and the use of results-based management to support investment decisions. Against these priorities, we welcome UNICEF’s efforts to strengthen the results framework as part of the new strategic plan.

Robust reporting is important to improve transparency, accountability and credibility. A strengthened and simplified results framework will greatly assist in demonstrating UNICEF’s effectiveness and bolster member state confidence in UNICEF’s ability to deliver value for money in an ever tighter fiscal environment.

We particularly encourage UNICEF to ensure the new results framework moves beyond simply measuring outputs and also takes a more comprehensive results-chain approach that can accurately measure and attribute UNICEF’s investment and direct value-add. The use of indicators with measureable baselines, milestones and targets will enable consistent measures of progress, help demonstrate value for money and crucially, build the case for future donor investment.

We also hope that, in preparing a final draft of the plan, UNICEF will show clear theories of change, in order to demonstrate how outputs are directly attributable to UNICEF, how outputs and outcomes are linked, and how risks and assessed and managed. Following on from comments made in yesterday’s session of the Board, we also encourage greater collection and use of disability and gender disaggregated data in the results framework.

These changes to the results framework will take time to deliver the information that we are all seeking. While it is fundamentally the right and necessary thing to do, we should not underestimate the challenge of measuring and reporting on outcomes and impact, and attributing this to UNICEF’s engagement. From our own experience, solid reporting on outputs needs to remain a bedrock of the results framework both now and into the future.

**System Wide Coherence and Reform**

We recognise UNICEF’s efforts to institutionalise the outcomes of the QCPR in its next Strategic Plan, particularly greater harmonisation and simplification of business processes, greater support for Delivering as One and a strengthened Resident
Coordinator system. We would like to learn more about how UNICEF proposes to support its regional and country offices to operationalize the QCPR components of the Strategic Plan, and would stress the importance of developing common indicators, together with other UNDG members, to track implementation of the QCPR over the next four years.

Programming focus

Mr President, as we mentioned yesterday, we welcome the strengthened linkages between humanitarian and development programming in the current draft plan. We also encourage UNICEF to develop a results framework that enables better monitoring and reporting of humanitarian action and results.

We are pleased that the plan will have a stronger focus on gender mainstreaming and disability inclusive development. We encourage UNICEF to enable implementation of these development approaches by operationalizing these principles at the regional, national and sub-national level.

Finally, Australia and New Zealand also encourage greater alignment with the needs of the Asia-Pacific region, particularly small island developing states, and fragile and conflict affected countries, especially those in transition such as Myanmar and Afghanistan.

Mr President, we welcome the collaborative approach taken by UNICEF to the development of the new Strategic Plan. While there is further work to be done, it is clear that progress has been made in building the foundations for UNICEF to be a more results-focused organisation, which the Executive Director described yesterday as UNICEF’s number one management challenge.

Australia and New Zealand remains committed to supporting UNICEF and working with Executive Board members in these efforts.

Thank you.