
Thank you Madame/Mr. President,

I would like to deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, New Zealand, The Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, and my own country Canada.

We would like to thank UNICEF for the Report on the progress of Gender Equality Work, linked to the end-of-cycle review of the Strategic Priority Action Plan for Gender (SPAP) 2010-2013. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of UNICEF staff in the preparation of the report.

We welcome that, overall, the review of the SPAP finds that UNICEF’s organizational processes on gender mainstreaming, its leadership, and commitment to gender equality have improved over the last three years. We are also pleased to see that UNICEF has been effective in its involvement in interagency mechanisms and in developing tools and measures for planning and tracking progress on gender mainstreaming.

We note that the report clearly identifies a number of challenges, and we welcome the frankness of the analysis. These include the limited technical capacity of staff to use existing processes and tools, inadequate resource allocation and gaps in the systematic monitoring of programmatic work and capturing its relationship to results.

We would like to put these challenges in perspective with the findings of the Netherlands Review of UNICEF’s Development Effectiveness: 2009-2011, which reinforce some of the challenges cited, and provide solid ground for UNICEF to address them in the preparation of the new Strategic Plan. These include the need to better demonstrate how UNICEF supported programs effectively capture, address and report on gender equality. This illustration exemplifies the overall finding of the Review that, within UNICEF, more work needs to be done to mainstream gender equality in practice, and to ensure that existing processes and tools are applied within the organization and in its programming.

As the Report on the Progress of Gender Equality Work at UNICEF indicates, there have been significant improvements in the collection and availability of sex-disaggregated data. It is however unfortunate that this improvement is not sufficiently reflected in UNICEFs overall
reporting and in UNICEF draft strategic plan. Our assessment of both the Draft 2014-2017 Strategic Plan and the Annual Report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan, presented at this Annual Session, is that gender equality has not been sufficiently addressed in either document. In the Executive Director’s report, sections addressing the five areas of focus are for the most part gender blind, and population related data, when presented, is not sex-disaggregated.

While the draft of the new Strategic Plan indicates that gender equality is an integral part of and a crosscutting theme, its integration is not adequately reflected in the result matrices included for each of the seven areas of focus. For example, outcome number seven: social inclusion, which has great potential for integrating gender equality, is still lacking gender consideration.

Furthermore, UNICEF has two main mechanisms for knowledge management and sharing on gender issues at the global level: a self-assessment of gender mainstreaming survey in UNICEF and a community of practice on gender. These mechanisms have not been effective due to lack of participation. With participation rates as low as 10% for the survey and 2% for the community of practice, we would like to hear more about what is being done to create a regular forum for exchange, learning and strategizing regarding UNICEF gender priorities and programming. We would appreciate knowing if other more practical mechanisms, besides the self-assessment surveys and community of practice on gender, are being considered.

We encourage UNICEF to consider the following four recommendations to address the challenges cited in this report and to improve the progress of its gender equality work:

Firstly, we recommend that UNICEF strengthen the current Draft Strategic Plan by including gender sensitive performance information, more specifically, gender sensitive results and sex-disaggregated indicators. As the SP will guide UNICEF’s work for the next four years, the inclusion of such results and indicators is a key factor that will contribute to the achievement of positive and transformative gender sensitive results, both at corporate level, and most importantly at country level, where UNICEF can make a difference for adolescents and girls. Country Program Documents would indeed benefit from clear directions in this regard.

Secondly, we recommend that a strong and well-articulated SPAP, clearly linked to UNICEF’s Draft Strategic Plan, which is costed and allocated adequate funds for Gender Equality, be developed. We would also like to encourage UNICEF to include the following key elements in
the SPAP document: a results framework, a monitoring, evaluation and reporting plan, a budget, as well as strategies to address each of the challenges identified in the report.

Thirdly, we recommend that the performance information found in the SPAP be consistent with both the gender sensitive results and the sex-disaggregated indicators, which we expect to be duly reflected in the SP. Having the right indicators in place and collecting the data is useful if and only if data is analysed, both through real time analysis at country level, and analysis of strategic trends globally, with a view to strengthen decision making and quality of programming.

Fourthly, and finally, in the new SPAP, we would welcome clarification on the linkage between gender equality and UNICEFs equity approach. We believe that gender equality must be a fundamental part of the equity agenda.

We note that the above recommendations require stronger political will at all levels, managerial incentives for delivering on Gender Equality, and additional technical follow-through within UNICEF. These are key ingredients that will ensure that GE is systematically addressed and that the 2014-2017 SPAP is not seen as a stand-alone strategy, but rather as a key integral piece of the new SP, in other words the gender equality arm for the genuine operationalization of the larger UNICEF Strategic Plan.

To conclude, we would once again like to, acknowledge the improvements that UNICEF has made over the years to address gender equality within the organization and in its programming. We encourage you to continue to build on these important achievements throughout your efforts to address the unfinished agenda for children, especially girls and the most vulnerable.

Thank you.