Evaluation of Humanitarian Action

Thank you Madame/Mr. President,

I would like to deliver this statement on behalf of Estonia and my own country Ireland.

Let me begin by welcoming UNICEF’s focus on evaluating its emergency work and commending your openness and transparency in sharing the findings of these evaluations. UNICEF’s drive to focus on results is very positive, but ‘results for whom?’ is an important consideration.

**Level 1 Emergencies:**
We note that the review highlights a lack of evaluation of Level 1 emergencies. Given that this is where the bulk of UNICEF’s operations are, we strongly encourage that a system is put in place to ensure that an acceptable level of evaluations are carried out for this type of programming. Its nature is often quite different from the Level 3 emergencies and it would be important to generate lesson learning and best practice specific to this type of programming.

**Challenges and Limitations:**
The issues identified as limitations to evaluating humanitarian action, such as unclear programme objectives, results frameworks in flux, lack of baseline data, should be the exception rather than the rule. In most cases some kind of baseline can be established, and as a result, programme objectives can be clear. Results frameworks in these contexts can have a sufficient degree of flexibility built in, however they are still a very important management tool and if designed properly can be responsive to the changing context. The report also notes that there are clear challenges in regard to joint evaluations. It would be interesting to hear how UNICEF plans to address this issue.

**Results Focus:**
The report notes that very few exercises have focused on results achieved. For this to change, the culture of results based management needs to be firmly embedded across the organisation and the project cycle. If an evaluation is to focus on results achieved, there must be an initial baseline, clear objectives, targets and indicators. For humanitarian programming, UNICEF must ensure that they are able to define results that are appropriate to the operational context.

**Informing programming and policy:**
It is clear that the evaluations conducted have provided valuable lesson learning and examples of best practice. It would be useful to understand if and how this systematically influences programming decisions and informs policy at the organisation level, and indeed what systems are in place to ensure that this happens. Going one step further, it is possible that this focus on evaluating humanitarian action should inform the international humanitarian community and improve performance.

**Equity Focus:**
The finding that eight of the reports provided evidence that UNICEF’s equity focus had not been achieved is worrying. As a priority next step, UNICEF must reflect on how the equity focus can be effectively applied in its humanitarian work. The report points out that participation and accountability is key. We would suggest that a very clear target group (based on a solid context analysis and needs assessment) and a targeting strategy is equally key.

We look forward to engaging with UNICEF on these important issues.

Thank you.