Thank you Mr. President:

On behalf of Bangladesh delegation, I congratulate you on your appointment Mr. President and other members of the Bureau. I also convey our deep appreciation to the Executive Director Dr. Anthony Lake for his statement before the Board today and for Executive Director’s Annual Report on progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan, 2006-2013.

Before making our observations on the agenda item, please allow me to express my delegation’s heartiest congratulations to Dr. Anthony Lake upon completion of two and half years in the office as the sixth Executive Director of UNICEF. Bangladesh delegation would like to assure him of its fullest support while he continue to provide leadership to UNICEF at this critical juncture

Mr. President,
My delegation considers Dr Lake’s opening statement and his persistent emphasis on the equity-based approaches to be a visionary one because of its focus on fulfilling its important mandate towards realizing the rights of children across the globe and accelerating achievement of MDGs by the 2015 deadline.

We share his view as well as the findings of the study entitled “Narrowing the Gaps to meet the Goals”, that equity-based approaches not only are a moral imperative but also are likely to provide a cost-effective way for achieving more rapid impact in pursuit of the Goals. The analysis, made the case that a focus on equity that prioritizes the most disadvantaged children and families is right both in principle and practice. The findings of the study has stirred up keen interest among all concerned and has led UNICEF and many partners to refocus on the inclusion of the poorest families and most vulnerable communities in meeting the Goals by 2015 and in sustaining the progress. This has also generated keen interest among the policy makers in Bangladesh and we are supportive of the approach.
Mr. President

My delegation studied with great interest the Executive Director’s Annual Report on progress and achievements in 2012 and against the medium-term strategic plan, 2006-2013. The report before us is a comprehensive report which highlights summary findings and elaborates on the results achieved in each of the five focus areas and other cross cutting areas of MTSP. The accompanying Data Companion and updates annexes of MTSP helped us to get a clear picture on the trends in progress and performance against key indicators. The analysis showed persistent disadvantages affecting the survival, nutrition, and access to education and basic services of children and families who are poor and living in rural and in some cases low-income urban areas. These inequalities are exacerbated by natural disasters and adverse impacts of climate change and by discrimination faced by girls, by other disadvantaged groups, and by children living with disabilities.

Mr. President

The Annual Report of the Executive Director now before us rightly points to the ongoing and emerging challenges which pose serious threats for the achievement of UNICEF’s objectives. We would like to reaffirm our fullest support to the activities of UNICEF in responding to the multiple crises. We also would urge UNICEF to continue its focus on the children requiring special assistance in humanitarian situations—be it in conflict areas or those affected by natural disasters and overall global climate change.

We recognize that we still have a long way to go to bring changes to the lives of the children. The very fact that still more than 3 million new-born and half million women continue to die annually from child-birth related causes asks for dedicated efforts on our part. To achieve the MDG 5, we have a daunting task ahead.

Although the report does not make any specific reference to Least Developed Countries, we are convinced that UNICEF has a special focus on LDCs. We also recall with gratitude, the Executive Director’s active participation at the LDC IV conference. We are confident that under his able leadership UNICEF will integrate the Istanbul Programme of Action into its programme of work.

Even in the face of multiple crises and challenges, Bangladesh, an LDC with a population of 150 million, has made noteworthy progress in the attainment of MDGs during 2000-2012. Bangladesh is poised to attain the MDG targets in reducing the incidence of poverty and poverty gap ratio; enhancing the coverage of minimum dietary energy consumption; net enrolment in primary education; gender parity in primary and secondary education; reducing child and infant mortality and improving immunization coverage; rolling back malaria, controlling tuberculosis and sustaining the low prevalence of HIV/AIDS; and improved access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

We note with satisfaction that a large number of countries including Bangladesh have achieved significant progress in net school enrolment and that there is a good chance of achieving universal primary education by 2015 (Goal 2). However, retention at the primary level and transition from primary to post-primary education remain key
challenges in basic education. In the face of growing food insecurity, which is exacerbated by global economic downturn, we would reiterate our call to UNICEF to broaden its complementary feeding programmes for young children, inter alia, forging partnership with WFP’s school feeding programme.

Bangladesh delegation very much appreciates the role of UNICEF during humanitarian and post crisis situation. Judging from the experiences of Haiti’s earthquake and Pakistan’s flood, we recognize that UNICEF humanitarian work has become better coordinated and more systematic, in recognition of the need to address disaster preparedness, risk reduction and capacity development as well as response.

Mr. President,
On the organizational aspect of UNICEF, we fully support the ongoing emphasis on improving management efficiency through the consolidation of an accountability system, establishment of accountability framework and preparation for VISION-One ERP and IPSAS etc. We appreciate UNICEF for its timely completion of requirements for IPSAS.

Mr. President,
The Executive Director’s Annual Report reveals a declining trend in mobilization of core resources to overall income which is a matter of great concerns for us. UNICEF’s core resources are critical for long-term investments in national priority goals and capacities for children’s rights in programme countries. We therefore call upon the donor countries to keep their promises in delivering the committed resources. Effective partnership for shared success much would, therefore, depend on predictable and adequate funding of UNICEF’s core resources, both form donor countries and public-private partnership. In this respect, we express our heartiest thanks to the national committees of UNICEF especially the National Committee of Japan for their valuable support.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you that Bangladesh would continue to remain actively engaged to enable UNICEF to perform its mandated programmes and actions specially in accelerating MDG achievements.

I thank you Mr. President.