Check against Delivery

Speaking notes on

Item 4 – Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

Following the introduction by the President of the agenda item 4,

Ms. Geeta Rao Gupta (introductory remarks along the following lines):

• Mr. President, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen
• This is the last of the reports to ECOSOC based on the recommendations of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review and the General Assembly resolution 62/208;
• In the future, we will be responding to the just concluded resolution 67/226 – that is, the QCPR.
• In the Board Paper we prepared for this meeting, we made an effort to respond to Executive Board decision 2012/1, in which you encouraged UNICEF to place greater emphasis on challenges, lessons learned and trends.
• I now invite Mr. Jeffrey O’Malley, UNICEF’s Director of Policy and Strategy, to introduce the report.

Mr. Jeffrey O’Malley

Good morning, Mr President, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The Executive Board held an informal session on the UNICEF report to ECOSOC on January 14th. Today I will highlight the main elements of the report and its adherence to the requirements outlined in the triennial comprehensive policy review resolution.

We suggest that the annual report to the Economic and Social Council should be read in conjunction with the “Executive Director’s annual report on the Medium-term strategic plan”, which focuses on the progress and results achieved in the plan’s five focus areas and in humanitarian action.
I would like to note that data in this report were current at the time of writing, which was in October 2012. Data for 2012 will be available when we present the Executive Director’s annual report in June this year.

Let me draw attention to a few highlights in the report before the President invites comments and questions.

**First, concerning funding for operational activities:**

- UNICEF income increased by 1 per cent, from $3.68 million in 2010 to $3.71 million in 2011 - primarily due to the increase in regular resources from governments and the private sector, partially offset by decreases in what we call “other resources-emergency”.

- Regular resources make up only 29% of total income, which is of concern. In addition, UNICEF thematic funds, which serve as the best alternative resources to RR, also saw a decrease of 23% from 2010 to 2011.

**The second section of the report discusses strategic partnerships, including cooperation with the World Bank and other IFIs:**

- As we just heard this morning, a growing number of UNICEF Offices are reporting positive results from joint work with the World Bank.

- According to the UNICEF annual survey, 84% of Country Offices in 2011 partnered with the Bank, ranging from information exchanges to deeper programme collaboration. Such collaborations most often focus on the equity agenda, education, social protection, and early childhood development.

- Nearly 42% of Country Offices collaborated with IMF in 2011, which was a striking increase from 29% in 2009. Collaboration with the IMF mainly focused on policy and budgeting, data and monitoring and social protection.
Third, the report highlights UNICEF contribution to national capacity development and development effectiveness:

• 75% of Country Offices are fully or mostly meeting the capacity development benchmarks introduced in 2010. A review also suggests that UNICEF has focused on all three levels of capacity development as per UNDG guidance – (a) individual; (b) organizational, institutional and community capacity; and (c) an enabling environment.

• Progress has been made in systematic capacity needs assessments, as well as in developing and implementing capacity development strategies. Several countries are supporting capacity development on data collection and use.

• In 2011 UNICEF support for South-South cooperation mostly focused on technical cooperation & research. South-South exchanges have proven very effective for sharing Southern innovations. At the joint meeting of the Executive Boards yesterday, you heard the system’s contribution to south-south cooperation and specific examples from the 80 UNICEF country offices that reported involvement in South-South last year.

• UNICEF support for “Transition from Relief to Development” and “Disaster Risk Reduction” included national capacity building programmes, development of global guidance, participation in global Working Groups, and preparation of country-specific and global analyses.

• UNICEF has continued to implement its three-year “Strategic Priority Action Plan for Gender Equality” and participates in the “System Wide Action Plan on Gender”, spearheaded by UN-Women. We are extending our work for one more year using the current “Strategic Plan for Gender Equality” to harmonize with the MTSP 2014-17.

With regard to UN coherence, effectiveness and relevance of operational activities:

• Of 90 actions in UNICEF TCPR Action Plan, 88 are completed and 2 are under way. UNICEF provided major inputs to the QCPR review process, the Secretary General’s TCPR progress report, as well as to the consultations with member states in the Second
Committee of the General Assembly during the course of the discussion on the reports and the resolution.

- Support was provided for the Resident Coordinators system at all levels, through inter-agency groups, deployment of human rights advisers, leadership of task team on talent management, provision of financial support, and dedication of staff time at country level for RC-related functions.
- UNICEF continued working to ensure that Delivering as One focuses on results, improved accountability and outcomes and also is working with UNDG to improve efficiency of programme processes.
- Humanitarian coherence was supported through internal systems improvements, participation in the cluster approach, strengthened monitoring and advocacy for improved strategic planning.
- Simplification and harmonization of business practices was supported through collaborative procurement among agencies; realization of internal efficiencies; human resource reform; and inter-agency harmonization of cost classification and reporting.

The fifth section of the report outlines evaluation of operational activities:

- In 2012, two global thematic evaluations – an evaluation of the application of the human rights-based approach to programming in UNICEF and an evaluation of UNICEF life skills education programmes – were completed. These will be discussed in a separate session of the Executive Board this week.
- Ninety per cent of UNICEF evaluations are conducted at regional and country levels. In almost all cases, a management response is prepared, and steps to implement agreed actions are reported. For all evaluations at UNICEF, a comprehensive annual assessment of quality is completed against clear criteria.
- UNICEF continues to play an important role in inter-agency evaluations on the work of the UN system. Through the United Nations Evaluation Group, UNICEF has made significant contribution to the independent evaluation of Delivering as One which
provided important lessons and recommendations for strengthening United Nations operations at country level.

• UNICEF continued to support development of national evaluation capacity, and further consolidated its position as a knowledge centre on country-led M&E systems. An e-learning programme was launched, enrolling over 4,000 evaluators from more than 160 countries.

The report concludes with a discussion of UNICEF follow-up to international conferences

• UNICEF participated in and followed up a number of major conferences.

• At Rio+20, UNICEF advocated for putting children’s rights and well-being at the centre of sustainable development and argued that investing in children is a central means to breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty and exclusion.

• Early last year, UNICEF established a unit to coordinate activities on the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals. The Task Team produced a report in June 2012 that provided analysis and recommendations for a development agenda beyond 2015. UNICEF is heavily involved within the UNDG on moving forward a number of thematic consultative processes to contribute to these deliberations, including a partnership with UN Women on “Inequalities”.

• Following the June 2012 ‘Child Survival: Call to Action’ event, UNICEF released a report in September called “A Promise Renewed”, with country profiles tracking progress in child survival at national and subnational levels. As of October 2012, 162 governments, 191 civil society organizations and more than 220 faith based organizations have signed pledges to follow up “A Promise Renewed” with concrete action to accelerate gains in child survival.

• A 10th anniversary report was issued for the 2002 Special Session on Children calling for a scaled-up response by governments to address bottlenecks that cut off disadvantaged children and disenfranchised communities from progress in health, education and protection.
Thank you very much, Mr. President. My colleagues and I look forward to the Board’s comments, questions and suggestions.