UNICEF Executive Board
First regular session 2013, 5-8 February 2013

Agenda Item 4:
Report to the Economic and Social Council

Statement by Switzerland

Mr President

Mr Executive Director

I read this statement on behalf of The Netherlands and my own delegation, Switzerland.

We thank the Executive Director for the concise report.

We would like to make five remarks:

The first remark concerns financial resources. The still low share of regular resources – 29 percent of the total income as well as the decrease in the area of thematic funding by 23 percent in 2011 is a concern. We would like to ask UNICEF for its analysis and its intention on how to respond to the fact that a decrease in thematic funding hampers not only the agencies flexibility but also the possibility for long-term planning.

We suggest that UNICEF engages in an innovative resource mobilization strategy to identify new potential funding sources.

Our second point concerns the strategic partnerships. We welcome the collaboration of UNICEF with the World Bank in particular on social protection and safety nets, in order to manage risks in fragile and conflict affected countries. We value as well the continued partnerships with Regional development banks.

Our third point concerns the transition from relief to development. We encourage the commitment of UNICEF to promote complementarities between humanitarian aid and development. To reach this objective a strong RC system is needed, even more in transition contexts. The focus on conflict sensitive management in those contexts and UNICEF contribution to peace building issues, such as the strengthening of Civilian Capacity are key.
As UNICEF operates both in development and humanitarian contexts, we see a high potential in coordination and building bridges between these two areas. Switzerland strongly supports the idea expressed during the last Executive Board to have “humanitarian response” as a formal agenda item in upcoming Board and we are looking forward to the upcoming thematic discussion on the synthesis report of humanitarian response foreseen for the annual session in June.

Our fourth remark concerns evaluation. Switzerland and The Netherlands welcome UNICEF’s progress in strengthening its evaluation system and we are pleased to note the good rating in the most recent MOPAN assessment. Further efforts in setting clearer criteria on determining the coverage and prioritization of evaluations will be crucial.

Finally, regarding UNICEF’s suggestions to reduce transaction costs and to harmonize and simplify reporting structures are most pertinent and we encourage UNICEF to have a creative and innovative approach in this aspect.

The implementation of the strategic plan strengthens the opportunity to fully implement the mandates given by the QCPR. We recommend that these mandates are taken up entirely and reflected in the performance indicators in order to ensure full implementation of this resolution.

Since we are turning from the TCPR to the QCPR, we would welcome further information on key challenges or gaps encountered in implementing the mandates provided by the TCPR.

The Secretary General mentioned in his report for the QCPR a need for developing an overarching strategy for system-wide repositioning of United Nations funds, programs and agencies in order to align them. The elaboration of the new Strategic Plans of UNDP, UNWOMEN and UNFPA provides a good opportunity to progress and to strategically reposition UNICEF, building on the strength of the organization and reducing fragmentation. Switzerland and The Netherlands are interested to engage in a dialogue with UNICEF on this aspect in the upcoming months.

Thank you for your attention.