Mr. President, Executive Director, Excellencies and distinguished colleagues,

I would like to thank you Executive Director for your comprehensive address, and indeed for your leadership and commitment to regular and comprehensive dialogue with the Executive Board.

Ireland is particularly pleased to assume membership of the Board this year. We are committed to working with you to deliver better development outcomes by contributing to the implementation of the QCPR Resolution, to the development of the Medium Term Strategic Plan and to the preparation of the new development agenda post 2015.

We thank the Executive Director for the Annual Report to the Economic and Social Council and look forward next year to a more strategic presentation linked to results chains, as provided for in the recently agreed resolution on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

We would like to provide comments on four key elements of the report.

Regarding World Bank and International Financial Institutions,

Ireland commends UNICEF’s active engagement with IFIs, including the World Bank.

We welcome the close cooperation between UNICEF and the World Bank (as outlined earlier by Dr. Kim in his comprehensive presentation). Such cooperation has improved considerably in recent years and shows the comparative advantage each organisation can bring to the table. At country level, close and effective coordination between partners is essential to avoid overlaps and duplication. This cooperation can and does leverage considerable resources for the work of UNICEF at country level.

The report however, is surprisingly short on cooperation with regional development banks. Given the key role of regional banks it is somewhat surprising that only 48% of country offices cooperate with these banks. It would be useful if UNICEF could elaborate further on this and provide greater details in due course.

My second point relates to gender mainstreaming,

The increased engagement with UN-Women, particularly UNICEF’s piloting of the System Wide Action Plan, is welcome. A core part of UN-Women’s mandate is to support other UN agencies in strengthening their approaches to gender mainstreaming and it is positive to see this being put into practice.
We welcome UNICEF’s commitment to strengthening internal capacity and systems for gender mainstreaming, including reporting systems. It will be important therefore to ensure that parallel systems of planning, monitoring and evaluating do not emerge, as the ultimate objective should be to embed gender equality across the core systems.

The focus on building capacity of country systems in relation to data collection and statistics is very welcome, and is an area which could also benefit from close collaboration with the World Bank. Including key gender indicators and ensuring data is disaggregated by sex are very important but it is also important that data collection analysis is complemented by qualitative research to gain a fuller picture of very complex gender issues such as gender based violence.

**Thirdly in relation to transition from relief to development,**

We welcome UNICEF’s continued focus on supporting countries throughout the transition from relief to recovery to longer-term development, and your recognition that these phases are inter-linked and frequently overlap.

This focus on linking relief, recovery and development is also one of Ireland’s key priorities for its EU Presidency. A more coherent joined up approach is required to promote better linkages between the EU’s development and humanitarian policies and programmes, to address the chronic nature of poverty and vulnerability and the increasing frequency and severity of natural and man-made disasters in recent years.

Another key focus will be to increase efforts to build the resilience of vulnerable individuals, families, communities, nations and regions. UNICEF’s focus on building resilience in the Sahel and Somalia (and the broader Horn of Africa) is therefore very welcome and is a priority shared by Ireland and the EU.

**And finally regarding coherence in humanitarian situations,**

We very much welcome UNICEF’s continued efforts to improve the efficiency of its operations and its commitment to the implementation of the Transformative Agenda, including through its cluster responsibilities. We look forward to seeing further tangible progress in terms of practical implementation of the Transformative Agenda over the coming period.

We believe that coordination is essential for successful humanitarian action and support a strong and effective OCHA in the field. In this context, we would like to encourage UNICEF to continue to nominate high-calibre candidates for Humanitarian Coordinator posts.

Thank you