
Mr. President

Distinguished Members of the Board

The NGO Committee on UNICEF congratulates UNICEF on its outline of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan for 2014-2017, and welcomes the opportunity to comment on its strategic vision for the road ahead - particularly the unique role that Civil Society Organizations play in realizing child rights. We are pleased that the MTSP outline emphasizes the significance of partnerships to achieve lasting change for children, and would like to underscore our own desire to strengthen our collaboration with UNICEF in a more strategic way.

Broadening and deepening partnerships - particularly with organizations and networks with the potential to catalyze and support social movements that support child rights - is among the programme strategies identified in the roadmap to achieve results; we couldn't agree more.

Our organizations, particularly those with longstanding presence in as many countries as UNICEF and with a strong community presence, have the knowledge and credibility to extend the reach and impact of UNICEF programmes.

We have the presence and capability to educate and influence behavior. We work together with Governments on meeting demand for services and accountability which is an important focus of the forthcoming MTSP.

As active members of Civil Society, our organizations play a major role in advocating for child rights legislation and policies; and protecting the interests of children within the context of emergencies.
We congratulate UNICEF on its vision to employ communication technologies to mobilize networks that are both inclusive and dynamic. Like UNICEF, we recognize that innovation is essential to address our world's most pressing development challenges.

There can be no doubt that UNICEF and its NGO partners have a symbiotic relationship. A recent analysis by UNICEF's Civil Society Partnership Section revealed that, in 2011, UNICEF regional and country offices directed $505 million to CSOs in 2011, compared to $597 million directed to national governments.

Finally, the NGO Committee is pleased to note UNICEF's commitment to be a better partner, to be more accountable for results, and more nimble and efficient in strengthening existing networks and in creating new ones with many actors, including civil society.

With only one thousand days to go to reach the Millennium Development Goals, it is imperative that UNICEF and partners, and civil society more broadly, scale up efforts to support governments in advancing their development goals.

Looking forward toward the next development agenda Post-2015, we urge this Board to support UNICEF in bringing children to the forefront of the agenda together with its partner organizations. It is within its mandate; it is the very nature of its work.

Thank You.