UNICEF Executive Board – First regular session 2013

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland


Mr President,


We expect the Strategic Plan to be the guiding framework for UNICEF over the next four years, setting out the priorities and direction for the organisation towards achieving its long-term mandate. We are particularly thankful to UNICEF for the consultative process it has embarked on for this important exercise.

I would like to focus my comments and questions on the draft outline of the medium-term strategic plan for 2014-2017, and on three issues in particular.

Firstly, in terms of UNICEF’s Strategic Focus, we hope that UNICEF will clearly explain its comparative advantage in the changing global context and explain how it has shifted its priorities to address this, with evidence supporting its role in any new areas. For example, we would like to better
understand how the 7 results areas for the Strategic Plan have been selected and how they relate to the focus areas in the last Strategic Plan? In particular, we would like to understand the rationale for gender equality no longer being part of the results as an explicit part of a focus area, while it was highlighted in the focus area ‘basic education and gender equality’ in the previous strategic plan. We understand that gender equality, as one of the normative principles, will be mainstreamed in all focus areas. Yet we need to be convinced that this will be enough to further document progress in this area.

The report also notes that accelerating rates of urbanisation and migration has resulted in the need for enhanced support, and that contextual changes require UNICEF to focus more on climate change adaptation. We would like to know more about the kind of support and activities meant by that, and why UNICEF believes it has the comparative advantage in addressing these issues.

Secondly, and as mentioned in past statements, we would like to see UNICEF’s important humanitarian role clearly acknowledged in its next Medium-Term Strategic Plan, with organisational targets clearly covering humanitarian and disaster resilience objectives as well as development objectives. In this regard, we welcome the stronger link made between humanitarian and development, including on the need for building resilience as children living in fragile, humanitarian and conflict-affected contexts are often particularly disadvantaged. UNICEF also commits to giving humanitarian action more visibility and to setting targets for response, work on resilience
and on its role in humanitarian coordination. It also commits to tracking of key UNICEF operational indicators, including the availability and use of key resources. These are all positive elements we look forward to seeing further developed in the draft strategic plan.

This is also why we would have liked to see UNICEF’s humanitarian activities more clearly reflected in the draft outline and in the overview of the structure of the medium-term strategic plan. This need not be a separate ‘pillar’ but could be integrated as an underpinning element within the existing overarching pillars reflected in the overview.

**Lastly,** we believe that the development of UNICEF’s new Strategic Plan is an important opportunity for UNICEF to strengthen its **results** focus. [We welcome the steps that UNICEF is currently taking, including the on-going consultations through UNICEF’s peer-review group]. We welcome the intention for the results framework to cover the full results chain with a set of relevant measurable indicators at each level. It will also be important to ensure that there is a relevant set of measurable indicators at each level and that baselines, milestones and targets will be included. We also believe that the proposed approach to report on key outputs that absorb significant resources, are strategically important and relate to many countries seems sensible. But we would welcome more clarity on how these key outputs will be attributable to UNICEF. Indeed we would like the revised results framework to demonstrate how output level results are attributable to UNICEF and then
how these contribute towards higher outcomes and impact. We would also like to better understand what is meant by ‘indicative outputs’.

We remain committed to continue to work with UNICEF as it further develops the new Strategic Plan, and look forward to further discussions in this regard.

Thank you