STATEMENT BY

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On

Item 6 – Updated roadmap to and outline of the medium-term strategic plan for 2014-2017

UNICEF Executive Board, first regular session 2013

NEW YORK, 5 February 2013
Mr. President,

As this is the first time The Netherlands takes the floor, we wish to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election.

We also thank Mr. Lake for his inspiring address at the opening of the Board. The exchange of views with the President of the World Bank was stimulating and provided some very interesting thoughts and leads to intensify cooperation. Like the representative of Kenya mentioned on behalf of the African group, we also would like to see more of these kinds of exchanges.

Mr. President,

The Netherlands compliments UNICEF on the outline of the medium-term strategic plan. It is informative and provides good points of departure for the next MTSP.

We have a few comments to make and questions to ask.

We consider important:

First that UNICEF’s mandate, that all children have the right to survival, development, protection and participation, is leading for the MTSP. We agree that all aspects of UNICEF’s work should be guided by: principles of equity and human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability.

UNICEF’s strength is that it is a flexible, innovative organization that can adapt quickly to changing circumstances and give support and deliver where and when necessary. Flexibility and innovation should in our view be key leading principles for UNICEF in the MTSP and the connected results framework.

Second, we would like an MTSP with a strong strategic focus. The world is changing very rapidly. More children are surviving early childhood today than 20 years ago. The question is, from a strategic and long-term perspective, what the role and added value from UNICEF should be, to be able to address the economic and social development problems of all children in this century. From early
childhood all through adolescence. How will UNICEF achieve this and deal with emerging challenges as the youth bulge in developing countries?

In our view, this requires an organization which functions efficiently and effectively on normative and operational levels, and which has strong cooperation and flexible partnerships with other multilateral organizations, governments, NGO’s, civil society and the private sector.

Third, The Netherlands considers sustainability of programs and national leadership and capacity building crucial. In our view, there could be more emphasis in the outline on sustainability, in the strategic focus as well as with regard to results based management. An enabling environment is not enough to achieve sustainability. A question for us is thus, how UNICEF will address sustainability of development programs in the MTSP?

Fourth, many problems are multi sectorial, and need an integrated approach. Programming will become more and more complex. As an entry point it needs to be based on solid context specific analyses at country level. This implies more than analyzing barriers and bottlenecks that hinder results. We would like to hear UNICEF’s views on this.

Fifth, we consider results based management an important tool to guide UNICEF’s management to report and learn and to achieve outcome and impact in a cost effective manner. It assists to inform national governments, donors and the public at large on progress and results. But, it is a complex institutional matter and there is a risk of overextending the organization. It is important that performance information is mainly used for the purpose intended by results management, that is: improved analysis, planning and decision making.

The Netherlands would welcome if results based management, frameworks and monitoring will have built-in mechanisms to support national capacity building and sustainability of programs. Where appropriate, UN agencies should work towards similar types of indicators at corporate and national levels and be able to use each other’s and national monitoring frameworks, in striving to attain strong UN coherence.

In our view, at global level a limited number of strategic important indicators may be used. At country level indicators may differ and there should be enough
flexibility in results frameworks to allow for programmatic changes if these are necessary.

We also wish to signal here the risk that results frameworks and monitoring systems like VISION and MORES will focus too much on easy to reach outputs and outcomes. And because of this they could draw proportionally unbalanced attention and funds from UNICEF management and donors. Multi sectorial and integrated approaches and goals with a longer term perspective – however difficult – are just as important.

Finally, Mr. President,

As the humanitarian context is concerned, the Netherlands considers a smooth transition from humanitarian action to longer term development key for sustainable results. Humanitarian assistance results frameworks should thus be linked up with early recovery and development results frameworks. We consider it insufficient to mainstream humanitarian assistance.

We commend UNICEF for its focus on resilience and encourage you to further integrate this in strategic planning. In situations of transition context-specific analysis at country level should be the basis for humanitarian results frameworks at the national level, in order to facilitate integrated approaches.

Thank you.