Mr. President, Mr. Lake, distinguished delegates.

As the Chair of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF, I am honoured to speak on behalf of this group of thirty-six independent organizations, who all are firmly committed to supporting UNICEF’s mandate and mission. We are proud to serve as the public face and dedicated voice of UNICEF in thirty six countries and their more than 1.1 billion people, and work tirelessly to raise funds from the private sector, promote children’s rights and secure worldwide visibility for children threatened by poverty, disasters, armed conflict, abuse and exploitation.

As we look back over the last year, we are reminded of the terrible impact that conflict, poverty and hunger had on millions of children around the world, especially in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and Syria. We also bear witness to the enduring kindness and generosity of our supporters who responded to these events and continue to offer their support to UNICEF in fulfilling its mission to protect children and their families all over the world.

In the midst of global economic hardship and increasingly saturated marketplaces, National Committees have shown our true strength. We have proved our resilience by leaning on each other, our partners at PFP and all our UNICEF colleagues to find innovative ways to generate revenue for UNICEF’s mission, while solidifying our continued commitment to operate efficiently and respond to new challenges. We have offered our undivided support to global campaigns like “A Promise Renewed,” to the UNICEF equity approach and to our important partnership with Kiwanis. As independently-audited organizations in our home countries, we not only generate roughly one third of UNICEF’s income, we represent the voices of over one Billion supporters and followers. We will continue to operate in accordance with our respective National Laws and regulations and, in partnership with PFP, to fulfil our collective mission in line with our Cooperation Agreement.

Our commitment and dedication are reflected in our results. Approximately 90% of the income to UNICEF from individuals and corporations are due to the efforts of National Committees working with PFP. National Committees also raised 97% of total private regular resources to UNICEF, an increase of $65 million more than our contribution in 2011.

What binds UNICEF and National Committees in different countries together is our allegiance to make children’s lives better. The calendar year 2012 also marked the birth of our new Cooperation Agreement. This document recognizes and values the real and potential contribution of National Committees as independent entities, working through a powerful partnership that is unique within the United Nations family, to enhance and empower UNICEF’s mission to build a world fit for children.

Together with our individual Joint Strategic Plans, our Cooperation Agreement reflects a spirit of trust and collaboration, having the best interest of children at heart and recognizing our independence and diversity as assets. The Cooperation Agreement and our Joint Strategic Plans allow for individual freedoms while fostering collective action for children.

In order to continue strengthening this partnership, it is incumbent upon all of us, National Committees and UNICEF, to uphold the commitments described in our agreement. We will continue to conduct
rigorous and periodic monitoring of the many obligations contained in our individual documents, and make every effort to ensure mutual compliance of responsibilities. The Standing Group, in partnership with PFP, has called upon National Committees to act as efficiently and effectively as possible without losing our autonomy or violating National Laws. To this end, many National Committees have responded by undertaking independent efficiency studies and implementing new efficiency measures. The National Committee family has made efficiency a top priority, as we know it is for PFP, and as reported by the PFP Director in her statement to the Board today.

As we look forward to 2013, we expect that our contribution to the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Strategic Plan will continue to unleash the National Committees’ full potential – to increase UNICEF’s visibility, to maximize efficiency, to strengthen our collective brand, to increase the amount and quality of income and to galvanize our respective populations in support of UNICEF and UNICEF programmes on behalf of the children of the world.

Mr President,
Under Mr Lake’s leadership, we are reminded of UNICEF’s true partnership with its National Committees, which is built on our shared commitment to the unique mandate accorded to UNICEF by the United Nations to uphold all rights of all children everywhere based on the principles, values and commitments of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We are driven by our shared passion to ensure that no child is denied his or her rights and that all children are able to fulfil their potential and contribute to the greatest extent to a better, safer, more just and sustainable world in the present, and to the future which they will inherit. We believe that this world can and must be achieved. Every part of our Agreement and every effort we make together shall be directed to this end. We agree to strive together in mutual trust, respect and collaboration towards this goal.

Thank you again Mr President.