Item 6: Updated roadmap to and outline of the MTSP for 2014-17

6 February 2013

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Check against delivery
Mr. President,

On Monday, the joint boards discussed how to operationalize the QCPR-resolution and what this means for the new generation of MTSPs for 2014-17. I shall not repeat all my points from that discussion but it is clear that the overarching messages about coherence, coordination and division of labour apply to the UNICEF MTSP as well. We want to see a clear strengthening of system-wide coherence not least at the country level, and we believe that there is a strong mandate for that in the QCPR. In the coming months, as the outlines of the new MTSPs take shape, we expect a process exemplified by cooperation and dialogue between the agencies.

Let me now turn to the outline of the UNICEF MTSP:

We understand that the new MTSP will emphasize subtle, but strategic, shifts as compared to the current plan and, overall, we agree with that approach. We see UNICEF as an experienced and robust part of the UN system with a clear and powerful mandate. Taken together, the CRC, CEDAW and other human rights instruments form a strong backbone which gives purpose, direction and identity to the organization.

UNICEF has a solid and well-established business model and does not need to reinvent the wheel to remain relevant. Still, the new strategic plan provides an opportunity to consider how the organization can further develop its flexibility to adapt faster, innovate more, cooperate closer, and respond better to new and rapidly changing realities and needs at both global and country levels.

We will be deeply involved in the MTSP discussions over the coming months – today I will limit myself to a few key messages which will guide our engagement going forward:

First: None of the countries designated as ‘fragile’ by OECD/DAC have yet reached any of the MDGs, and it is clear that sustainable progress is a particular challenge in these settings. We see UNICEF as having a significant comparative advantage in these contexts – because of the organization’s legitimacy, its’ long term presence and its’ span of capabilities from humanitarian aid to development. The clear emphasis in the outline on resilience building, multidimensional responses and on flexibly linking humanitarian action and development programmes are important strategic steps forward which we expect to see fully developed in the final plan.

Second: It is clear, that comprehensive risk management must be an integral part of these efforts. Risks are undeniably higher in crisis and complex development settings and this must be recognized by all, if UNICEF and other fund and programmes are to step up their engagement. I would like to repeat in this forum that Denmark remains deeply concerned that the decision on cost recovery negotiated jointly last week did not include a surcharge to establish risk reserves in these settings.
Third: The new MTSP must not only link but also strike the right balance between development and humanitarian action. Humanitarian action accounts for approximately one third of UNICEF's total operations in terms of budget, and this must be clearly reflected.

It will also be vital to strike the right balance in terms of MTSP impact areas – we fully agree that health is important, but we note that out of seven areas, there are four for health (health; HIV; WASH; nutrition), two for protection (exploitation and violence; poverty and discrimination), and only one for education. This could be interpreted as a relative downgrading of education compared to health. We hope this is not the case - the impressive results achieved with regard to primary school enrolment, and the ongoing discussions of the role of education, including qualitative aspects, in the future international development framework clearly points to the importance of UNICEF's continued strong engagement in education.

Education in emergencies is a concrete example of an area suffering from underexposure and lack of comprehensive approach: It accounts for less than two percent of humanitarian aid according to some statistics. Furthermore, few education sector plans address disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response and recovery, thereby making it harder to keep children safe in the event of an emergency.

Fourth: As stated on Monday, Denmark sees a human rights based approach as a foundational strategy for implementation of development interventions. We are pleased to see human rights clearly confirmed as a normative principle that will infuse the new MTSP at all levels from sectors to management strategies, and we welcome the commitment in the plan to gender equality, protection, non-discrimination, meaningful participation, transparency and accountability – all crucial elements in ensuring sustainable development. We also appreciate the focus given in the outline to particularly disadvantaged groups of children and adolescents, including girls, children from indigenous communities and disabled children, and will continue to follow these issues closely.

Going forward in the MTSP development process, we expect to see an equally strong human rights footprint on the results framework. We do agree with UNICEF that the equity approach can be a way towards practical implementation of human rights, but we caution against assuming that the link from normative principle to implementation is somehow “automatic” or straight forward. Human rights must be linked directly to specific results and deliverables at all levels, including in the sectors, in order to be tangible and operational.

Fifth, and final: We recognize the universal mandate of UNICEF, and we agree that the organization has a role to play in MICs, as have other funds and programs, not least in respect of monitoring, data collection and analysis, and advice and advocacy for children. However, in a world with constrained development assistance budgets and dwindling shares of core
resources, *Official Development Assistance* must be targeted to the LDCs and other vulnerable countries where the intensity of challenges are the greatest. We strongly believe in national ownership – and in the obligations of middle-income countries to fully utilize their potential to finance social investments through domestic resources, allowing UNICEF core resources to be directed towards the poorest and most vulnerable countries. We will take some interest in the phrasing of this in the MTSP.

Let me finish by saying that Denmark looks forward to participating in a transparent and inclusive MTSP process over the coming months, where all members of the Board will be able to contribute to the discussions.

Thank you.