Item 9 Global thematic evaluations

Mr. President,

This statement is made on behalf of Switzerland and The Netherlands.

The three presented evaluations on Early Childhood Development, Life Skills and the Human Rights Based Approach are, in our view, of good quality. The conclusions and recommendations have wider implications for UNICEF’s programs, and UNICEF should follow up on them.

These evaluations apply to the core of UNICEF’s mandate. UNICEF has a responsibility for children from the age of 0 up to 18. Early childhood development is a first requirement, as deprivation in the early years will affect children their whole life. Life skills are needed to empower the young and to prevent them from harm at later stages of their life. A human rights based approach and equity imply that every child will have an equal opportunity to survive, develop, and reach his or her full potential.

The Netherlands supported the Early Childhood development program from 2008 up to 2010. It was an innovative program and as a pilot it was supposed to have wider implications for UNICEF’s work. We are pleased that based on the outcomes of the evaluation, it was recommended to mainstream the approach and policies further into national policies, plans and services. The evaluation was critical of the way UNICEF was using monitoring and evaluation to improve interventions and for changing policy. We recognize that since then UNICEF has taken up these recommendations.

Mr. President,

Reading the three evaluations, it is striking just how interrelated the issues which are dealt with in these three evaluations are. The importance of behavioral change and capacity building through systems and structures, are common denominators in these reports. They underline the importance of using a systematic approach to assess capacity gaps.
We appreciate that UNICEF has put these evaluations on the agenda. It shows once more how important a strong and independent functioning Evaluation office is for UNICEF. At this point, we would like to emphasize as well the importance of the follow up of crucial lessons learnt and recommendations and we would like to encourage UNICEF to strengthen efforts in this regard.

Furthermore, systems like VISION and MORES are key instruments to monitor performance, to identify barriers and bottlenecks and to reinforce transparency. The Netherlands and Switzerland would however like to emphasize that we consider evaluation as important as monitoring systems and research. It cannot be replaced by these systems. Evaluation is complementary and has a different function. A strong Evaluation unit, which gives guidance on all levels and is responsible for independent evaluations, is a requirement for UNICEF to function effectively.

Thank you.