Executive Director Lake, thank you for your presentation and for challenging us to focus on the strategic issues that will make a real difference for children. And, as always, a sincere thank you to the brave and dedicated staff members of UNICEF, who work tirelessly, increasingly in the most difficult and dangerous situations, around the world to provide life-saving and life-enhancing services to children in need.

We congratulate UNICEF on the results achieved for children, despite being another year of tremendous challenges – the Zika virus, ongoing conflict in Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, the global migration crisis, and several devastating famines. We commend UNICEF’s progress across a range of areas – health,
water, sanitation, and hygiene, education, social inclusion, gender equality, and humanitarian action.

We would like to also recognize UNICEF’s active engagement in a number of major global-level health initiatives and partnerships, including the H6 Partnership, the Every Woman Every Child initiative and Global Strategy, Gavi, the Global Financing Facility and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. Given its vast geographic reach and leadership on maternal, newborn, child health and nutrition programs at the country level, UNICEF is well-positioned to help drive synergies among such global initiatives. Your continued efforts to help streamline and align global level efforts with country-level priorities will be key to delivering results for children in the years to come.
Given that a number of UN agencies and a wide array of partners are working on adolescent health, it will be important that UNICEF clarifies its specific comparative advantage in this area in different settings, including its potential contributions to addressing the leading causes of adolescent mortality and poor health outcomes. However, this should not divert attention from UNICEF's vital support to countries in ending preventable mortality among children under-five.

The United States applauds UNICEF’s continued focus on private sector engagement and innovation to improve its efficiency, such as its procurement and market-shaping practices which drove down the price of essential commodities for children by over half a billion dollars. UNICEF’s exemplary Innovation Fund has enabled it to target investments in portfolios of emerging technologies developed in program
countries and to expand its engagement with corporate partners, leveraging their core business as well as their innovations to bring about increased good for children. We also want to recognize the Education Cannot Wait fund as another a strong example of UNICEF’s innovative work at the nexus of humanitarian and development to reach crisis-affected children and youth with safe, free, quality education by 2030. UNICEF has truly been a model in this area and we encourage you to share best practices in this area with other Funds and Programs and with the Secretariat to catalyze and amplify the UN’s work in the area of innovation.

Turning to UNICEF’s efforts to increase its effectiveness and efficiency, we were pleased to see costs related to management, administration, and development effectiveness down to 9%, one of the lowest percentages among UN organizations. We
commend UNICEF's continued efforts to promote
the availability of good quality, appropriately dis-aggregated and
regularly updated data. Equally important are UNICEF's
contributions in building relevant data management capacities at
the country level to support decision-making.

Mr. Executive Director, despite all of these important
accomplishments, we still have great challenges ahead. As the
draft strategic plan notes, some 28% of the world’s children live
in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Not only are we
continuing to grapple with several crises, including three Level-
3 emergencies in Iraq, Syria and Yemen and their related
refugee crises, but we are now also confronted with the
devastating potential impacts of severe droughts, including
famine and severe acute malnutrition that could affect millions
in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen. These global
crises are creating substantial global insecurity and are impacting the short and medium-term needs of the world’s most vulnerable children.

These challenges are coupled with tightening donor budgets, requiring us all to redouble our efforts to increase impact and efficiency. This is why unlocking the potential of the private sector is vital to being able to adequately address today’s mounting challenges, including by bringing in new ideas, innovations, and contributing to long-term economic development. UNICEF is also well-positioned to lead in this area, as one of the key agencies that straddle the continuum from crisis to development. UNICEF’s ability to build resilience and help prevent crises in the first place, will be essential to ensuring the best use of limited resources to achieve maximum impact for the world’s children.
In this light, the United States believes that UNICEF’s new Strategic Plan provides an effective guide for accomplishing our joint objectives for children for the next four years. The five goal areas provide a clear, logical and comprehensive framework for UNICEF to achieve results for the most disadvantaged children in both humanitarian and development settings, focusing on both short and long-term horizons. We also appreciate that it supports the broader objectives of the 2030 Agenda, while also advancing the objectives of UNICEF’s core mandate.

The reports of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations and the Audit Advisory Committee provide the Executive Board with confidence that both oversight bodies are providing independent and objective oversight of UNICEF and that
UNICEF has adequate and effective governance, risk management, and control processes overall.

We also support UNICEF’s efforts to detail not only the specific efforts it will make on behalf of children, but also how it will work to sustain those efforts, including through its attention to the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and oversight of its operations and increasing its efforts to leverage the power of innovation and partnerships. In particular, the United States strongly supports and encourages UNICEF and its partners to find new and innovative ways to expand and deepen the private sector’s involvement in development and humanitarian assistance. Leveraging the vast resources of the private sector only enhances our ability to find innovative solutions to the mounting challenges hundreds of millions of children are facing today.
Thank you.