Statement of the NGO Committee on UNICEF during the Annual Session of the 
UNICEF Executive Board, New York, June 13, 2017
Agenda Item 4: UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, draft for review

Mr. President, Mr. Lake, Distinguished Members of the Board,

On behalf of the NGO Committee on UNICEF and our member organizations, we are committed to partnering with UNICEF and with governments to realize child rights and equity. Please accept our sincere appreciation for inviting civil society input to the development of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021. We believe this mutual demonstration of commitment to working together is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and, in particular, to reaching the furthest behind.

As individual NGOs, we partner with UNICEF at the country level to implement the strategic plan. We recognize the important role that UNICEF plays in fostering partnerships, convening and coordinating partner organizations, and strengthening partner capacity. Together, we are stronger, and together, we can better achieve results for all children.

We collectively advocate that the following areas continue to be given full consideration in the final development of indicators and resources for the Strategic Plan:

1. Child poverty must be addressed as a multidimensional reality. We recognize a new understanding of poverty that is comprised of poor education, inadequate housing conditions, discrimination, exclusion, lack of family support and stability, insecurity, violence, lack of voice, and disempowerment. Taking a holistic view of this calls for impactful, targeted solutions, and forms the basis for designing and implementing more effective and just solutions for children.
We invite all Member States to attend a briefing on Child Poverty: a multidimensional reality tomorrow morning at 8:30am at UNICEF’s Danny Kaye Center to explore how governments, UNICEF, and civil society can work together to ensure every child has an equitable chance in life.

2. Further, the efficient collection and dissemination of comprehensive and disaggregated data is key for the provision of quality services. We encourage UNICEF to further invest in strengthening and expanding the coverage of data collection systems, and support national statistical offices by identifying data gaps and increasing the collection of quality data.

3. Optimal growth and development are critical during the first two years of life. The NGO Committee on UNICEF urges that the following key factors be strongly reflected in the next strategic plan: good prenatal care, breastfeeding, stimulation, play and child development, as well as adequate care and emotional support. Quality early child development builds a strong base for lifelong learning and growth.

4. Children must be protected from all forms of violence – whether physical and sexual abuse, early and forced marriage, or neglect – this requires an integrated system as opposed to separate interventions. Child protection systems must be accompanied by comprehensive budgetary allocations.

5. Migrant and refugee children, especially unaccompanied and separated children, must be at the forefront of our efforts to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable world. As was stated this morning, we all must find ways to increase cooperation and coordination between civil society, UN Agencies, and governments to care for these vulnerable children and families on the move. Financing of universal access to quality and safe services must be assured for
these populations without discrimination; this is especially important for girls in emergencies.

6. Finally, on equity and inclusion, we as a coalition would like to see meaningful participation of all girls, boys and young people, including marginalized and excluded populations, at all levels of decision-making. The NGO Committee on UNICEF promotes universal social protection as non-discriminatory and comprehensive in achieving Goal Area 5 “Every child has an equitable chance in life”.

In closing, the NGO Committee on UNICEF believes in the power of partnerships to achieve results for children. We remain completely committed to the pledge to leave no one behind. We look forward to ongoing collaboration with UNICEF to realize the rights of all children. Thank you.