Mr. President,

Thank you for giving me the floor. I deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and my own country the Netherlands.

We view the adoption of the Strategic Plans of the different Funds and Programs as a unique window of opportunity to make the UN “fit for purpose”, i.e. a strong, more effective and coherent UN that works for all Members, and is efficient, flexible and nimble enough to support different approaches while staying focused on impact and results. This also means that business as usual is simply not an option. Not for the whole UN system, nor its specific parts.

The Strategic Plans are important instruments to help implement reforms at individual agencies and within the UN Development System, and as such, these Strategic Plans should be in line with agencies’ mandates and comparative advantages, and be guided by the provisions of the QCPR. Strategic plans must, in the time to come, be adjusted to take into account the forthcoming recommendations of the Secretary-General’s reports on reform. The results framework must include clear and SMART indicators on reform to enhance transparency and accountability, and to enable Member States to track progress and understand what funds are being provided and what they are spent on, what results they have helped to achieve.

We welcome a coherent approach to the discussion of the Strategic Plans of the different Funds and Programs, including the aligning of discussions around the Strategic Plan with how the system works together and on what issues. The common chapter is the vehicle for this process.
We invite UNICEF to provide, in its Strategic Plan, clear information on its contribution to the UN system’s common approach towards delivering the SDGs and how synergies are ensured with other entities’ contribution.

We also call on UNICEF to provide us with a coherent, integrated vision translated into concrete results and resource requirements, by presenting and discussing the Strategic Plan narrative in combination with the integrated budget, the results framework, the Gender Action Plan and the Theory of Change as a coherent package. Furthermore, we ask for concrete indicators on important QCPR asks such as partnerships, transparency, humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus and indicators showing the institutions’ contributions to integrated approaches at country level. It is also important that UNICEF’s strategic plan going forward reflects MOPAN outcome follow-up related to results-based budgeting and sustainability, as well as other important reviews and evaluations, such as the independent Review of UNICEF’s Development Effectiveness, which recommended improvements in promoting gender equality, focusing on equity, and strengthening monitoring and results-based management.

The new Strategic Plan must present a clear operationalizing of the concept of “Leaving no one behind”, prioritizing concessional resources where most needed, with specific attention to capacity building as defined in QCPR. It must clearly explain how gender equality and consideration of children with disabilities will be integrated throughout all the new Goal areas as a concerted effort and how UNICEF will strengthen its institutional and country capacities in order to ensure transformative interventions. Disaggregated results indicators will be vital to measure the SDGs, and to better track impact and delivery.

In line with the QCPR, the Strategic plan must also secure UNICEF country offices’ contributions to a ‘comprehensive whole of system’- approach in countries struck by crisis and conflict. As a minimum, this can be done through joint assessment and prioritization of needs and joint
analysis and assessment of risk upon which UNICEF can base its strategic decisions, in line with common priorities in UNDAF.

We would also like UNICEF to present in the next version of the draft: 1) a clear business model that will lay out the envisaged differentiation of roles in different operating contexts in relation to UNICEF comparative advantages; 2) an elaboration of the humanitarian programming spelled out concretely, including lessons learned from the current Strategic Plan, as well as clearly defined result statements on UNICEF’s international humanitarian assistance commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit, with a strengthened emphasis on the humanitarian-development nexus; 3) its plans to use its core budget, both under the institutional budget as well as in support of the thematic priorities at HQ, regional and country level; 4) its plans to align its organizational structures and staffing to deliver on the 5 strategic goals that are aligned to the SDGs with clearer links between these goals in UNICEF’s programming work showing how such cross-sector working can contribute to multiple impacts; and 5) a clearer theory of change from outputs to outcomes reflecting common UNDG guidelines and terminology on results-based management.

Mr. President, let me conclude:

Over the past months, we have all agreed that a ‘whole of system’ approach is needed to establish coherence between Strategic Plans and the vision of the system on its collaborative advantage in support of the SDGs. A different, more integrated approach to the Strategic Plans is paramount. Thorough discussions on a coherent set of documents too. We look forward to receiving an updated draft and holistic set of indicators and financials to enable all members of the Board to work with UNICEF and be in a position to approve the Strategic Plan in September.

We note that there is much work to be done before we are at this point, but we would welcome clear timeframes around the receipt of updated documents to enable us to progress this work holistically, collectively and on time.

Thank you.