Annual Session of the UNICEF Executive Board

Statement by Denmark.

Agenda item 3: Annual report for 2016 of the Executive Director of UNICEF

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Thank you, Mr./Madam President, for giving me the floor; and thank you Mr. Executive Director, for a comprehensive and informative statement on the work of UNICEF.

Also a warm ’thank you’ to UNICEF staff around the world– not least staff working in situations of high risk humanitarian crises situations. You deliver results often under difficult and hazardous circumstances. I want you to know that your work is highly valued.

Denmark welcomes the achievements of UNICEF during the past year, and note from the Annual report of the Executive Director that UNICEF and its partners continued to deliver significant results for children in the seven outcome areas of the current Strategic Plan. The average achievement rate of the outcome areas are 89% which among others reflects that more than 61 million children were immunized against measles and in humanitarian situations alone 11.7 million children accessed basic education. We congratulate UNICEF on these results.

[General remarks on Strategic Plan]

• The key issue for this year’s Board is the strategic plan for the next four years of UNICEF’s work. It is important that we get that right, and provides a plan that is focused, ambitious and sets out specific as well as measurable results for UNICEF’s work for the years to come.
The new strategic plan must be aligned with the 2030 Agenda, the reform-agenda of the Secretary General, and the guidelines provided through the QCPR-resolution of December 2016.

In essence - the Strategic Plan must ensure that UNICEF becomes a results-based, innovative organisation that promotes collaboration and coordination among the members of the UN family, based on country priorities.

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Allow me, Mr. President, to touch briefly on 3 issues that are important both for the new strategic plan, and in their own right:

[1. Human rights, including HRBA and gender equality]

- Human rights and gender equality are a key priority for Danish development cooperation and central to UNICEF’s mandate. They are also fully integrated into the 2030 Agenda and a pre-condition for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

- Denmark looks forward to continue working with UNICEF and other actors in applying a human-rights based approach to development – this is crucial to ensure sustainable societies where each person is able to create a future for herself or himself and realise her or his full potential.

- By the same token we must recognize the rights and the special role of women and empowerment of girls in sustainable development is crucial - not least true in fragile contexts.
• We welcome that UNICEF has included gender equality as a cross-cutting priority in the present draft Strategic Plan. However, we want to underline that there is still more work to be done before the adoption of the Strategic Plan later this year.

[2. Bridging the humanitarian-development-peace divide]

• The need for integrating the work of the three pillars of the UN has never been more urgent. As both a major development organisation and a major humanitarian actor, UNICEF has an important role to play in strengthening the coherence of the humanitarian-development-and sustaining peace efforts.

• UNICEF must do its part in making the UN family deliver on the pledge to provide collective outcomes - the pledge to New Ways of Working. On the ground it is crucial to see UNICEF and other UN agencies working collaboratively across institutional boundaries, based on comparative advantage, in line with our Grand Bargain commitments.

• The promise of ”leaving no one behind” requires that development and humanitarian actors work much more closely together to address the needs of the most disadvantaged children. For that same reason, we welcome that humanitarian action will remain as a cross-cutting priority throughout the strategy. However, we want to stress that the humanitarian-development nexus should be integrated better within the framework of the plan.
[3. Reform and innovation]

- Funds and programmes need to actively contribute to the realisation of the new UN reform agenda. The need for reform was articulated by Member States in the QCPR-resolution, and the reform agenda is a high priority of the Secretary General. It calls for the UN organisations to find new ways of working. National and local stakeholders, as well as NGO’s and bilateral partners must all be included.

- The changing financial climate also calls for innovative financing modalities, blending humanitarian and development aid streams.

- Denmark believes that innovation is important to improve the way we do development in our efforts to reach the SDGs. In 2013, Denmark decided to provide funding for the innovation efforts of UNICEF and other funds and programmes. UNICEF’s Innovation Fund has shown great ability to reach more people in a more effective manner, at less cost and with better results.

- For that same reason Denmark appreciates the importance given to innovation in the present draft Strategic Plan.

- Looking beyond traditional partners would enable us to bring new knowledge, thinking, concepts and ways of working to the table. Such partners include private sector actors, civil society and academia.

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To conclude, Mr./Madam President, I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our strong support for UNICEF’s work. We look forward to a continued close partnership with UNICEF as well as working together with UNICEF and other Member States to formulate a new Strategic Plan that addresses the needs of the world’s children. Thank you, Mr. President.