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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

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IN RESPONSE TO THE STATEMENT OF ANTHONY LAKE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNICEF

13 June 2017
Mr President, Mr Executive Director, thank you for your statements.

The UK would like to thank all the staff of UNICEF for the work they do, which is hugely appreciated.

As your statements reminded us, and as the annual report of the Executive Director sets out, UNICEF does such important work around the world, to save and change lives for the better.

Without going through all the statistics, the numbers of children reached in non-humanitarian and humanitarian settings are truly impressive. And it means so much, not just as abstract numbers, but to the lives of individual children.

The UK welcomes UNICEF’s commitments, its impact, particularly where help is most needed, and the crucial role it plays within the UN development system.

That is reflected in our core funding of about $60m in 2016, our programme support of over $340m, and our wider partnership.

We are also very proud of the contribution that the UK National Association makes to UNICEF as well.
The context is important. This Board meets at a crucial time for the UN. We all share high ambitions for the role the UN Development System and UNICEF can play in partnership in helping to make the 2030 Agenda a reality; and for UN reform to improve impact around the world.

First, on priorities for the UN development system as a whole. We believe a real step change is needed to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and see four key areas where this is necessary.

- **Leadership** – with clearer responsibility for performance to the Secretary General, to Member States, and to those we are trying to help. This has to be clearer at the country level, through an empowered Resident Coordinator and integrated Country Team.

- **Efficiency** – in order to strengthen impact and results, it is essential that UNICEF and the wider development system make best possible use of resources to prioritise front-line delivery.

- **Accountability** – clear accountability for results and transparency of how resources are used; and for this Board, and those of other Funds and Programmes, there is also a challenge to improve how we carry out our oversight function.

- **Performance** – we must focus our efforts where help is most needed. Living up to the 2030 Agenda commitment to prioritise those furthest behind - in the poorest and least developed countries, in fragile and conflict affected states, and the most marginalised within other countries.
Turning now to UNICEF’s new Strategic Plan, we see this as a crucial guide for the next four years.

We welcome the proposed focus on UNICEF’s comparative advantage and the five Goal areas, which provide a good framework.

We also welcome the emphasis on important cross-cutting issues on gender equality, humanitarian assistance, disabilities, and those furthest behind. It is important that these issues are fully integrated right across what UNICEF does.

As we discuss the draft Strategic Plan, we would like to suggest some areas where we need to make more progress and have greater clarity.

The first is in the humanitarian area. UNICEF spends around 40% of its resources on humanitarian action, delivering important results. That is a reflection of real world need and we see the case for it. So we welcome UNICEF’s commitment to strengthen the nexus or connection between humanitarian and development programming.

We would also like to see across the Plan a clearer translation of some of the important commitments UNICEF made at the World Humanitarian Summit, around new ways of working, joint assessment and planning, data analysis, capacity development, gender, education, and disability.
The second is around the totality of the Plan. We encourage UNICEF to share drafts of the Integrated Budget and Resource Plan for 2018-2021 as quickly as possible, so that the Executive Board can look at this alongside the new Strategic Plan.

It is important that for this Board to fulfil its function and provide the best possible advice and oversight, that we need to be able to look at how resources, capacities, and objectives are aligned right across the new Strategic Plan, budget, and results framework. We would welcome further discussion in this area.

The third is that we’d like to see a strong reflection in the new Strategic Plan and results framework QCPR guidance on joint working to improve results and achieve common goals in delivering the SDGs.

We recognise the value of UNICEF’s work and mandate, but also believe that a more collaborate and coherent approach across the UN development group will support greater impact and better results on the ground.

Finally, as I said earlier, we welcome the strong emphasis in the draft Strategic Plan on reaching the furthest behind. The UK agrees that this important principle and of reaching those most in need should continue to guide discussions on prioritising resources and programming, so that they are targeted where UNICEF can make the biggest difference to children’s lives.

Thank you Mr President, Mr Executive Director.