Mr. President, thank you for giving me the floor.

First of all, the Netherlands would like to congratulate UNICEF with impressive results in 2016 in protecting children in a time of great insecurity and instability. Easy to forget while in a conference room in New York city, UNICEF staff deliver these results often in very difficult conditions and in hard-to-reach places.

In 2016 children continued to suffer due to conflicts they have not chosen to be a part of. We thank Mr Lake for his continued effort to make the world aware of the many, often preventable, atrocities.

Apart from looking back at last year, the Annual Report also reflects on longer term developments. Growing inequalities across the world, the increasing scale and complexity of crises and the effect of climate change requires us to get prepared for major challenges in the future, even beyond 2030.

The Netherlands believes today’s challenges the world is facing can only be tackled by a strong united response, a multilateral response. We believe the goals set by the international community through the Climate Agreement and the 2030 Agenda will only be met when we all join hands to make this happen.

The Netherlands therefore encourages UNICEF, and all other UN development organisations, to pro-actively support the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General in making the
reforms a success. We are curious to learn how the new strategic plans of the Funds and Programmes will relate and adjust to the proposals on further UN Development System reform, as being prepared by the Deputy Secretary-General. Reforms not for the sake of reforming but to ensure better delivery of results by the UN as a system.

We encourage the entire UN Development System to ensure it demonstrates its commitment to the principle of Leaving No One Behind, which underpins the 2030 Agenda. The principle needs system-wide operationalization, including clear indicators to measure progress on reaching those at risk of being left furthest behind first. Over the past years, UNICEF has been at the forefront to operationalise Leaving No One Behind in its internal processes. As we congratulate the organisation for this effort, we also believe the acquired expertise gives UNICEF the unique position to ensure the wider UN system takes the right path to equitable sustainable development.

Mr. President,

The Netherlands stays strongly committed to a strong multilateral system and encourages UNICEF to continue leading the UN in reaching concrete and tangible results for children around the globe.

Thank you.