Thank you Mr. President,

I deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, and my own country, Canada.

Let me start by welcoming the DAC/UNEG Peer Review of the Evaluation Function, which provides a useful overview of UNICEF’s good practice in evaluation, as well as areas for improvement.

We commend the Evaluation Office for improving over time the quality of evaluations and the compliance with requirements for evaluation management responses, as well as the Office’s ongoing support to international evaluation networks. The commitment and energy of UNICEF staff dedicated to evaluations and the engagement of stakeholders in the evaluation process is very well received.

We note, however, that the overall assessment rated UNICEF’s evaluation function as ‘short of satisfactory’ or ‘close to satisfactory’ against the three core principles of independence, credibility and utility, and emphasizes the overall need to strengthen effectiveness and efficiency. The review makes a number of recommendations for strengthening planning, coordination and harmonization of evaluation activities across the organization, as well as improving the scope, timeliness and quality of evaluations, among other areas.

We welcome UNICEF’s management response to the review and its commitment to further strengthen its evaluation function, including by updating its Evaluation Policy. We encourage UNICEF to engage in broad discussions with member states, and look
forward to considering the draft policy at an upcoming session of the Executive Board.

We also welcome UNICEF’s commitment to allocating a minimum of 1 per cent of total programme expenditure to evaluation by 2018, as per the Results Framework, 2018-2021. However, we note that UNICEF disagrees with the recommendation to target 1 per cent at the regional level. We would like to request more information on the rationale for management’s response to recommendations 3.1 and the related 4.4 on country and multi-country evaluation advisers.

It is now of utmost importance that sufficient financial, administrative and human resources are set aside to allow for the full implementation of evaluation recommendations, including those of the Peer Review. We ask that UNICEF closely monitors whether the funds provided are sufficient for this purpose. Recalling decision 2017/9, we reiterate our request for UNICEF to present plans towards meeting the 1 per cent target and to provide annual updates on progress.

In line with the previous MOPAN review, we encourage UNICEF to further improve evaluation quality and coverage, as well as the systematic use of evaluation evidence in decision making, knowledge management and exchange across country and regional offices.

With regard to the evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa 2014-2015, we are pleased to see that UNICEF is identifying lessons learned from its response to this major health crisis, unprecedented in scale, severity and complexity.

While the evaluation demonstrated UNICEF’s strong WASH programs, community engagement, and large-scale supply capacity, it found concerning shortcomings in UNICEF’s ability to address secondary consequences and specific effects on children, particularly with regard to child protection and educational or
psychosocial services. We welcome UNICEF’s management response and planned actions to address these and other areas for improvement, including through direct assistance, advocacy, and capacity building and systems strengthening.

One aspect that was missing from the evaluation, however, was a clear analysis of how gender considerations were integrated into UNICEF’s response. As stated in UNICEF’s Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, UNICEF’s framework, principles and accountability include gender equality considerations. We would like these considerations better integrated into future evaluations. We would also welcome overall more evaluations on UNICEF’s humanitarian action.

The new Evaluation Policy provides a good opportunity to provide more guidance on the integration of cross-cutting issues in evaluations and in the formulation of recommendations. It also provides an opportunity to establish guidelines to ensure timely and systematic evaluation coverage of humanitarian assistance.

Again, recalling decision 2017/9, we request further harmonization to the highest extent possible of the evaluation policies across the Funds and Programmes, drawing on recently approved policies for reference, as well as increased collaboration and joint evaluation work.

Mr. President,

Recognizing the importance of UNICEF’s evaluations both for continuous improvements of its work as well as the oversight function of the Board, we would like to see all future evaluation items at UNICEF Executive Boards presented for decision.

Let me conclude by underlining that we support UNICEF’s efforts to improve the independence, credibility, and utility of its evaluation function, and we look forward to receiving updates on progress in implementing the Peer Review recommendations.

Thank you.