Mr. President,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States and my own country, Germany.

First of all, we appreciate the immense increase in total income in 2017. It would be interesting to know how UNICEF coped with this spike in funds, how staffing changed and where crucial bottlenecks in implementation occurred. The large cash reserves noted in the report also point to the value of such a discussion. We welcome the planned drawdown of RR and OR fund balances and look forward to further information on how the speed-up of implementation of OR funds in particular is progressing. With regards to regular resource reserves, however, we would point out that the planned balance of 422 million USD in 2021 would fall only 22 million USD short of the minimum 400 million USD necessary to cover three months RR expenditure, as per established best practice. UNICEF must ensure that sufficient liquidity is available and fluctuations in cash inflows can be absorbed.

We also welcome the increase in RR in absolute terms but we also noted the relative decrease from 25% to 22%. RR must be sufficiently available to ensure UNICEF’s core functions and the comprehensive fulfillment of its mandate, including by providing funds for those contexts and topics facing the risk of underfunding. Therefore, we support UNICEF’s goal in securing a 28% share of regular resources by 2021, and we call for intensified efforts for its realization, including improved visibility for core contributions. However, donors must of course play their part, too, in ensuring that UNICEF has the support it needs for a well-functioning institution. We note that the continuous trend of a relative decrease of RR means that the goal of 28% RR is ambitious. We encourage UNICEF to continue their efforts in substantially broadening their RR base. Collectively we need to ensure that sufficient RR is available to implement programs as planned.

This notwithstanding, the main contributor to RR today is the private sector. And private sector fundraising is increasingly contributing to UNICEF’s revenue growth. Thanks to the work of PFP, the private sector contributed over 24% of 2017 overall income, with a planned 34% share in 2021. As with RR, this planned increase does not seem to be backed up by trends in the last couple of years, and we would welcome more information underpinning these estimates. Whilst revenue growth is in principle unreservedly positive, this trend does raise questions about UNICEF’s accountability and funding and spending strategies for the future. We would welcome an inclusive, forward-looking discussion on the matter. Ideas for how to integrate or reflect input from non-government actors during Board sessions, for example, are worth exploring but need to be considered in the context of more fundamental questions around a UN organization’s oversight and accountability in such a funding context.

Last but not least, we welcome UNICEF’s background note on UNDS reform and the provision of an additional 13 million USD to meet the UNDG cost-sharing requirements. UNICEF’s support to UNDS reform and especially to the new RC system as its bedrock are crucial. But we again call on UNICEF to intensify dialogue with Member States and the Board.
on reform implementation, challenges and success. While acknowledging that timeframes were short, scheduling an informal at the side of the Board without timely documentation falls short of facilitating in-depth exchange.

Mr. President, thanking UNICEF for their documentation and the corresponding presentation today – we stand ready for further dialogue and discussion.

Thank you.