Item 5: Structured Dialogue on financing the results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021

Mr President,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Norway and my own country, Sweden.

The structured funding dialogue is an important element of UNDS reform. Rightly used this instrument could significantly strengthen current funding practices and the governance of the funds and programmes. The dialogue should connect Executive Board approval of strategic priorities to a discussion between UNICEF and the Board, but also among Board members, on how these priorities are to be financed.

We particularly like to warmly welcome the suggestions made by UNICEF to improve the structured funding dialogue such as
introducing a series of dialogue opportunities throughout the year, improve the transparency including on funding gaps and allow other stakeholders to be part of these discussions. We encourage UNICEF to cooperate with the other funds and programs to build on each other’s progress in developing the format.

Dear colleagues of the Executive Board,

The Structured Financing Dialogue as a topic for Board discussions replaced the Resource Mobilisation agenda item, and the substance addressed needs to be a development from this previous item. Let me briefly recall improvements our delegations wish to see in this regard:

1. The dialogue should be viewed as a tool for us as Board members to take responsibility for financing the strategic plan that we have jointly approved;

2. The dialogue should also engage donors other than Governments;

3. A clear vision, principles and goals for the structured funding dialogue are needed. An annual cycle should be implemented, and we must all do our best to contribute to an interactive dialogue;

4. We need improved background documents to have a fruitful dialogue. The reports should be forward looking, and include information on financial needs, gaps and projections. They must also
enable an informed discussion on which functions are to be funded through core resources and which through other resources;

5. Also, the structured funding dialogue should cover all funding sources. We must discuss how to improve the quality of earmarked contributions, and not only focus on regular resources.

I believe we all can agree that we still need to work on the current format. We have taken the liberty of formulating a few questions to further illustrate the kind of discussion we believe the structured funding dialogue should foster.

Q1: We note that the two outcome areas HIV/AIDS and social inclusion were severely underfunded in the previous strategic period. Does UNICEF see potential shortcomings in these, or other, areas during the current strategy period? If so, what action is UNICEF undertaking to bridge these gaps? What can Member States and other contributors do to alleviate unbalances?

Q2: To us this dialogue is fundamentally about whether UNICEF has the right type of funding to deliver the core business spelled out in the strategic plan. The previous informal ECOSOC dialogue highlighted that funding must follow function. Looking at UNICEF’s results framework, therefore; which results are in greater need of the neutrality of core funding? And does UNICEF have sufficient core resources to cover these functions?
Q3: Our countries are the largest contributors to softly earmarked thematic funds, and we would encourage others to consider this quality funding modality. UNICEF aims to increase thematic funding from 8% to 15% during the strategic plan period. This is very encouraging, and we would like to learn more on HOW UNICEF intends to do this. What can UNICEF do to increase the knowledge of how thematic funding works, improve the transparency and understanding on the allocation criteria, and give donors and the Board a more frequent picture of what results thematic funding enables UNICEF to achieve? To answer this in full would probably require a more in-depth session, and we would be happy to contribute to such a discussion.

Mr President,

We sincerely believe that the structured funding dialogue has potential to foster a sense of shared responsibility for development results. We look forward to engaging with UNICEF and fellow member states on the funding of our common strategic plan.

Thank you for your attention