This year, UNICEF’s report to the Executive Board with regard to progress on gender equality comes at an especially important time. The Strategic Priority Action Plan for Gender (SPAP) which was crafted as a follow up to the revised Gender Policy instituted in 2010 was due to end in 2012. As you may remember, at last year’s Annual meeting of the Executive Board, the Board decision required UNICEF to report on the overall progress under the SPAP, and to develop a new Action Plan going forward.

In developing its organizational Strategic Plan this year, UNICEF saw an important opportunity to embed and align the new Gender Action Plan within the overall Strategic Plan, thus ensuring that gender equality goals would be central rather than peripheral to UNICEF’s overarching goals and priorities. We therefore extended the SPAP by one year, and we are now developing a Gender Action Plan that is concurrent with the Strategic Plan’s four year cycle, and amplifies the results and programmatic focus on gender equality that is already embedded in the Strategic Plan.

Earlier this year, UNICEF completed an End of Cycle Review of the current gender SPAP which forms the predominant substance of this year’s report to the Executive Board on gender. I would now like to ask Anju Malhotra, Principal Adviser Gender and Rights at UNICEF, to present the key findings and insights gained from that End of Cycle review as well as how these have informed the preliminary direction for the new Gender Action Plan.