PERMANENT MISSION OF DENMARK  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations  
Ambassador Ib Petersen

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E-mail: nycnas@um.dk  
http://finnewyork.um.dk
Mr. President,

I would like to thank the Executive Director for his opening statement. It is not on cheerful note that we open this board meeting but instead facing the grave reality of a growing number of severe humanitarian crises and the effects on human lives – especially children’s lives.

Denmark is closely following evolving needs for humanitarian action and social mobilization that are triggered by the Ebola epidemic. Last week, Denmark provided 10 mil. DKK for UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), which will fly medical equipment and personnel to the affected countries in the region. We note that UNICEF has now upgraded the epidemic to the number 1 priority of the organisation and we look forward to receiving the updated plan for UNICEF’s response.

Even before the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic, UNICEF has increasingly been put under pressure – both in relations to funding resources but also in relations to human capacity of the staff working in the field. Today, one billion children live in areas affected by armed conflict – and 300 million of these children are under the age of five. This is a substantive increase that places a huge burden on UNICEF and us all.

As the Executive Director just outlined one of the ways to handle this increasing need is by linking short-term emergency response and long-term development. This is something Denmark strongly supports and we applaud the recent changes in UNICEF’s internal organizational structure which aims to facilitate this integration. Furthermore, within its first year the Strengthening Humanitarian Action initiative has already shown promise and we encourage the constant improvement and development of the initiative that EMOPS in cooperation with the programme offices are undertaking. Strengthening resilience on the ground can only happen if we stop working in silos. Current challenges in West Africa, in Somalia and in Sudan clearly demonstrate the need to deal more effectively with protracted crisis, and to see development action take place early on.
Protection of children is currently eroded in many countries, and international humanitarian law and human rights law are under pressure. We commend UNICEF for its strategic approach to strengthen the protection of children. We welcome the recent evaluation that provides a comprehensive global review of child protection issues, programme response and advocacy in emergencies. Yesterday in the Security Council, together with the Nordic countries we thanked UNICEF and their partners for their efforts and for their important inputs to the report. We encourage UNICEF to continue working together with all the relevant partners to this endeavour.

I would like to end my statement by thanking the many UNICEF staffs around the globe working under very difficult circumstances and in some cases at the risk of their own lives. It is a heavy responsibility to stay and deliver, but none the less, UNICEF and UNICEF staffs prove every day in the field that you are man – and woman – for the job.

Thank you.