UNICEF Executive Board Second Regular Session

Opening of the Session: Statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF

Statement by Angela Hassan-Sharp, Counsellor of New Zealand to the United Nations

9 September 2014

Please check against delivery
Mr President

New Zealand congratulates the UNICEF Executive Director on his leadership this year. We extend our deep appreciation to staff members for their tireless work responding to the huge weight of humanitarian crises facing the world today. We commend UNICEF for its pursuit of continuous improvement in programming noting that these efforts are informed by in-depth evaluation.

New Zealand welcomes the findings in the two major humanitarian evaluations presented at this meeting. It is encouraging to know that UNICEF is seen by partners as effective in its country cluster coordination. We are pleased that UNICEF cluster roles have had particularly positive effects for education and gender based violence.

The evaluation of programmes to protect children in emergencies found that funding shortages have led to cuts in funding in some areas including for example for services to survivors of sexual violence. Data and case management on grave violations beyond child recruitment have been weak. New Zealand welcomes UNICEF’s plans for improvement in this area. We are heartened that UNICEF supported psychosocial services have led to significant improvements in aspects of children’s well-being.

Please permit me to spend a few moments on the subject of humanitarian assistance in the Pacific. New Zealand understands that the numbers of people affected by humanitarian disasters in the Pacific is small compared to many other places in the world. We would note, however, that in smaller countries disasters impact as profoundly on development opportunities as they do in bigger countries. UN system wide coordination and Delivering as One is a challenge when working across the vast Pacific Ocean. We commend UNICEF for its humanitarian work in the Pacific region. We encourage UNICEF to work with other UN agencies and humanitarian actors to advance cooperation and understanding of the unique characteristics of the region, including its vulnerability to natural disasters.

I can advise that New Zealand will provide its contribution to regular resources for 2015 in January as part of our multi-year commitment. We would encourage all member states to make payments early and consider balancing their support for UNICEF’s regular budget and their support for more ear-marked resources with the aim of ensuring that UNICEF can both deliver on its plans and respond flexibly to emergencies.

We congratulate UNICEF for its strong performance in lifting regular monthly giving by pledge donors around the world. This engagement by citizens demonstrates confidence and commitment.

Mr President, New Zealand, shares this confidence and stands ready to support the Executive Director and his team in UNICEF’s work over the forthcoming year.