CLOSING-STATEMENT

BY

THE

PRESIDENT
H.E. MR. MACHARIA KAMAU

DURING

THE

UNICEF EXECUTIVE BOARD
SECOND REGULAR SESSION 2014

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Distinguished Delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

During this session, which is now drawing to a close, Member of the Board once again clearly reaffirmed the role of UNICEF and the importance of its mandate in reaching children and their families, particularly the most vulnerable.

This reaffirmation was also underscored by the presence and participation of the more than 30 observer delegations at this session, including those from the National Committees for UNICEF.

The Board fully supports the Executive Director’s call for a renewed commitment to children during the commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 20 November 2014.

It is vital that UNICEF continues to champion equitable outcomes for all children by investing in new technologies and seeking new partnerships and new ways of doing business. UNICEF must continue reinventing and reinvigorating itself as the demands on the organisation increase.
We have covered significant ground during this session. I thank you all for your constructive engagement and interventions during the discussions that we have had over the past three days.

The Board took particular note of the efforts of UNICEF staff working in the many ongoing humanitarian crises around the globe – the Central African Republic, Iraq, Gaza, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and West Africa, among others – often at personal risk and sacrifice of staff.

In his opening statement, the Executive Director reported that UNICEF has been straining to respond to the growing number of humanitarian crises – in an effort to support children and their families in times of devastation – whether due to conflict, disease or natural disaster.

The Board was particularly interested to learn how UNICEF is ramping up its efforts to help stem the spread of Ebola. We are now acutely aware of the potentially disastrous consequences that the disease bears for not only the infected but also their families and societies across West Africa, the region and beyond. The crisis is threatening to roll back years of progress in improving mortality, health, nutrition, education and other indicators of child well-being particularly in those countries. Social and economic activities, which are necessary enablers of child survival and development, are being crippled.
We applaud UNICEF’s efforts to date in the fight against Ebola, and express our solidarity with the children and families in countries affected by the crisis. At the same time, I want to emphasize the imperative of immediately implementing a rapid response, a massive, concerted response to the epidemic, so that all children living in the affected countries can survive and thrive. The statement released today reflects the Board’s concern and encouragement for broader and greater response to the crisis.

It is in this context that our discussion on funding the UNICEF Strategic Plan and the common principles for critical mass of core resources take on a more urgent meaning. I think we are all aware of the need for increased contributions and more predictable funding for core resources, as reiterated by the Executive Director.

Today’s challenging times have stretched UNICEF’s capacity. In order to continue to reach the millions of children who are denied their basic rights – access to clean water, sufficient food and nutrition, schooling and play, the protection and comfort of their parents and siblings – particularly those children whose lives have been upended by emergencies, UNICEF must be able to count on a solid and predictable funding base. Accordingly, the Board’s decision on the critical mass of core resources and funding the Strategic Plan of UNICEF, seeks to align UNICEF’s funding with its ambitions for children over the next years.
UNICEF's position as a global leader for children is well deserved, but it is one that must constantly be nourished and strengthened, in order to be retained. I strongly encourage Member States to increase their contributions of core resources so that UNICEF can continue to strengthen its programmes and humanitarian action, to innovate and to grow, reaching the ever-increasing numbers of children in need.

At this session, we also discussed the global thematic evaluations of UNICEF's nutrition programmes, as well as its cluster lead agency role in humanitarian action and its programmes to protect children in emergencies. The Board appreciated the management responses to these evaluations, which demonstrate an honest assessment of the organization's performance and areas for improvement. I trust UNICEF will continue to use such evaluations to further strengthen its ability to deliver results for children, particularly in emergencies.

Our discussion on the financial report on private fundraising for 2013 also underlined the importance of aligning the private fundraising and partnerships structure with the Strategic Plan 2014–2017. Partnerships are crucial to UNICEF's ability to achieve results, and the corporate sector plays a growing role in supporting the organization in fulfilling its mandate.

The Board also discussed the reports of field visits to Burkina Faso and the Sudan, and the joint visit to El Salvador and Panama. These field visits provide Board members a unique opportunity to learn more about UNICEF
programmes at country level, and to witness firsthand how children fare in different regional contexts in Africa, and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In closing, as this is the last session as President of this Board I wish to recognise and profoundly appreciate, the efforts and contribution of the Vice Presidents, who are the Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives of Bulgaria, Denmark, Haiti and Pakistan, in the management of this session, as they have worked studiously to assist me throughout the year. I am truly grateful for your friendship and support.

I would also like to appreciate the efforts and commitment of all the facilitators in bringing the negotiations to successful conclusions during this year’s sessions.

My sincere thanks also go to Mr. Anthony Lake, UNICEF Executive Director, and his senior management team, for the excellent collaboration during this year. It has been a pleasure to work with you all. To the entire UNICEF staff, and as I said in my opening remarks, and said many times before, your work is appreciated. You make UNICEF look good but more importantly do a great job for children.

Finally, I would like to thank the Secretary of the Board, Nina Nordstrom, and her team, who have provided me valuable support over the past year. Nina, we thank you deeply for your intelligent and efficient work. And on
behalf of us all, I wish you all the very best, as you leave UNICEF and take on your new assignment in Helsinki. It is my sincere wish that your next steps will be just as rewarding if not more than your assignments here in New York.

I also wish to thank the African Group for the confidence shown in bestowing on me with the responsibility of being the President of this Board.

It has been a pleasure working with you all throughout the annual and the regular sessions of 2014. I am proud of the work that this Board and UNICEF as an organisation have accomplished. But with all these great progress, we must all purpose to remain steadfast in ensuring that children remain high on the list of our priorities. We must not let our rhetoric become so common to us. Our best for children must continue to become even better. I am confident that we will continue to work together for many years to come.

I will come away from this session with a renewed sense of hope – about the difference that UNICEF can make – does make – and must continue to make for the world’s children.

I thank you.