Thank you, Madame President, and thanks also to the Executive Director for his remarks. Thank you for the important focus on the striking links between the sustainable development goals and humanitarian conditions and actions. The United States supports your call for better coordinating between humanitarian and development work. We ourselves are exploring new models of planning and programming, just one example of which is the Global Resilience Partnership with USAID, the Rockefeller Foundation and the government of Sweden. We welcome and applaud the many important points you raised this morning, and hope that they will be advanced productively in the coming weeks, both in New York and elsewhere.

We would also like to recognize and appreciate UNICEF’s dedicated staffers for their hard work, often in the most difficult environments, throughout this past year.

Madame President, we are witnessing a time of exceptional human challenges. An estimated 230 million children globally currently live in areas affected by armed conflicts, including those internally displaced or living as refugees in places like the Central African Republic, Iraq, South Sudan, the Palestinian territories, Syria, Yemen, and the Ukraine. We applaud UNICEF’s continued efforts to draw attention to the plight of these children, including the most marginalized, and your unceasing efforts to put the welfare and interests of these children first.

Over five and a half million children are affected by the conflict inside Syria, several million of them living in hard-to-reach areas. More than two million children now live as refugees, and over two and a half million school age children are not receiving the education they need and deserve. Several million more children in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq—already vulnerable and living in overstretched communities—have also been impacted.

The United States has contributed $4 billion to relief efforts in Syria and the region since the conflict broke out in 2011, $354 million to UNICEF to support vital child protection, education, and water and sanitation programs in Syria and throughout the region.

We commend UNICEF’s efforts to shield an entire generation against the impacts of conflict. We will continue to support your efforts in Syria and elsewhere to deliver not only life-saving, but also life-transforming interventions, so that every child has a fair chance to succeed and make a positive contribution to their societies and the global community.

We recommend that UNICEF continue its active participation in the IASC and on-going commitment to the Transformative Agenda and efforts to promote collective action across agencies.

We encourage UNICEF to recommit to identifying and nominating high calibre candidates—particularly women—to the Inter Agency Standing Committee humanitarian coordinator pool and to create incentives for their senior staff to take up HC positions.
We acknowledge and applaud the work now underway within UNICEF to strengthen gender based violence programming, and to promote gender equality from the earliest days of an emergency onwards. Both the Office of Emergency Programs–led Program Quality and Accountability initiative and the Programs Division’s Building Evidence and Accountability project reflect UNICEF’s best practices and set an example for others, demonstrating a willingness to identify barriers to persistent challenges in the humanitarian sector and dedicate staff time and resources to operationalize practical, meaningful and evidence-based solutions.

Madame President, we remain concerned about violence and bullying that target members of vulnerable groups, including children who are targeted based on real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. We welcome UNICEF’s attention to these issues and its coordination with other UN agencies in this regard.

On country program documents, we note management’s recent efforts to work with donor and program countries alike to improve the quality of country program documents. As we noted at the annual session in June, we have been concerned that under the current process, providing comments when the CPDs are nearly final may not afford appropriate time for proper consideration and for adjustments to be made ahead of the programs’ approval. We welcome management’s decision to begin reaching out to donor missions at the country level from the start of the process to incorporate their suggestions. We look forward to supporting improved interaction between UNICEF and governments with the goal of producing better CPDs and better results for children globally.

Madame President, the United States appreciates UNICEF’s efforts to strengthen its evaluation function. Evaluations are critical learning tools to inform decision-making at all levels. We welcome the recent synthesis of evaluation findings on cash transfer as a social protection mechanism, as well as the management responses. However, we note that the report’s conclusions are based on a relatively small set of evaluations. Further, many of the findings are anecdotal.

While this report is a promising start, we would welcome more data and evidence in the future on the effectiveness of cash transfers as an effective social protection intervention.

Madame President, we appreciate UNICEF’s role as a strong and vocal advocate for children’s rights in the process of negotiating the 2030 development agenda. We are especially pleased that UNICEF has made a key element of its Agenda for Every Child 2015 the renewal of our global effort to End Preventable Child and Maternal Deaths. We look forward to the invaluable role UNICEF will play in helping countries implement the agenda’s ambitious goals.

Thank you.