Madam President, Mr. Lake, distinguished delegates,

It is my privilege to speak today as Chair of the Standing Group on behalf of the family of National Committees.

The entrepreneurial and creative spirit which has driven the growth of National Committees over many decades, has succeeded in creating a network of considerable scale and impact. This is reflected in the results for 2014 which Mr. Gerard Bocquenet has outlined to the Board this morning.

Despite challenging economic environments in many of our host countries, tough competition for resources, and significant adverse exchange rate movements, total funds raised and contributions made from National Committees surpassed budget expectations.

In 2014, we raised $1.124 billion dollars representing approximately 88% of the total private sector revenue, and one quarter of the total net income of UNICEF.

Of this National Committees raised 96% of the total private sector unrestricted income and 78% of the total private sector Other Resources.

We also responded to UNICEF’s humanitarian action by raising over $124 million in emergency resources, which corresponds to 95% of the total private sector ORE.
As these results show, in 2014, National Committees substantially exceeded its approved budget.

It is worth acknowledging that if constant exchange rates had been maintained, the results achieved by National Committees in 2014 would have corresponded to planned outcomes for 2016 established by the Private Sector Plan. This illustrates the underlying strength of these results in local currencies.

We celebrate these numbers not in monetary terms, but in what they translate into: more vaccines, more clean water, more education and equitable opportunity, and more protection for the world’s most vulnerable children.

However Madam President

…the impact of National Committees goes well beyond that of fundraising to support UNICEF programs. We play an increasingly important role through the strength of our advocacy in building strong connections with host governments, with civil society, and with key stakeholders in the private sector to actively promote and realize the rights of children in each of the 35 countries represented. We are one with UNICEF in our shared vision and mission.

This is a key message of my remarks this morning. National Committees encompass a wealth of expertise and experience. Our strength lies in our diversity, and the talents of our people, united by common goals. It is our purpose to ensure we harness this extraordinary diversity…this breadth of skills, to better assist UNICEF achieve its mandate and mission for children. We can only achieve this through full engagement and alignment with UNICEF’s strategic priorities.

The partnership with UNICEF has never been stronger, and we would acknowledge the strength and vision of Mr. Lake’s leadership in encouraging a true sense of collaboration across all areas of the organisation.
As we have heard throughout this session, the needs and calls upon UNICEF are greater than ever, which is why this alignment is such an imperative. National Committees are justly proud of their call to action in response to the tragedy of the Nepal earthquake. We raised over $80 million dollars in a very short space of time.

But we are acutely aware of the many equally tragic humanitarian crises which are under-funded, particularly as a result of conflict. National Committees are working diligently with UNICEF to find ways of increasing flexible and equitable humanitarian thematic funds to alleviate the suffering of children and families.

Today, our National Committees are very active in supporting UNICEF’s response to the current refugee and migrant crisis in countries of origin, transit and destination.

Madam President,

As the General Assembly prepares to an historic milestone to endorse the Sustainable Development Goals, National Committees have already begun work on how to better support UNICEF in the pursuit of these goals. We are well placed – particularly through targeted advocacy and innovative partnerships in the industrialised world, to step up to the universal aspirations of these goals.

National Committees are excited that the SDGs have at their centre the equity agenda, which has been such a core principle of UNICEF since the CRC was enacted…and by the recognition of child focused investment as a central pillar of sustainable development. The SDGs present a fresh opportunity and momentum for new thinking and innovation at all levels to tackle the causes of inequity.
Finally, Madam President,

National Committees have every reason to believe that together with UNICEF, we can go even further in ensuring that more children survive and thrive to achieve their full potential with dignity and respect. We are together embarking on a period of unprecedented opportunity, openness and engagement to harness the strengths of National Committees to further grow our contribution to achieve greater results for children.

In this spirit we will continue to honor our mandate with drive and purpose to uphold ‘all rights, for all children, everywhere’.

Thank you.

Norman Gillespie
Chair of the Standing Group of National Committees
9 September 2015