Statement by the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Israel, Spain and Switzerland

[Mr. President, Mr. Executive Director,]

I deliver this statement on behalf of Belgium, France, Israel, Spain, Switzerland and my own country, the Netherlands.

1. We congratulate UNICEF with the vision and priorities expressed in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. We consider it a solid basis for UNICEF to carry out its mandate, namely to contribute to the wellbeing of all children worldwide, especially the most disadvantaged.

2. The Strategic Plan covers the last two years of the MDGs and the first two years of the post-2015 development agenda. The Plan is up to both tasks – accelerating towards 2015 and looking beyond 2015 to meet the challenges and requirements of the next period.

3. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in his important report “A life of dignity for all,” notes that it is possible to see the emerging outlines of a new sustainable development agenda. An agenda where the highest priority is ending poverty and reducing inequality. An agenda where “no person anywhere should be left behind.”

4. UNICEF’s new Strategic Plan fits perfectly with this vision. In fact, under the leadership of Executive Director Tony Lake, UNICEF has been pushing for an equity focus for quite some time. We were very pleased with the strong references Mr. Lake made earlier this morning about embedding equity in the post-2015 agenda. Instead of saying that UNICEF’s vision aligns well with the emerging thinking about the post-2015 development agenda, one could also say it the other way around – the equity approach is becoming the new norm.
5. Eradicating poverty in its various dimensions and ‘leaving no one behind’ means that the world must address the plight of the marginalized and vulnerable, children among them. There is no way around it. The MDG experience has taught us that using aggregate data based on averages tells us only part of the story, often leaving severe inequalities unexposed. We need disaggregation of data to better identify and address these inequalities and promote equal opportunities.

Mr. President,

6. I would like to highlight the following points in particular.

7. First. We welcome the attention paid in the Strategic Plan to demographic transition. How the world deals with that transition is key. It will be one of the determining factors for the new development agenda. Today’s small children are the adolescents, parents and work force of tomorrow. It is essential for children and adolescents to develop their full potential, inter alia through access to health care and good quality education for boys and girls alike, including comprehensive sexual education, and measures that respect the reproductive rights of girls - delaying marriage and childbearing until after childhood.

8. Second. We also welcome the greater focus in the Strategic Plan on strengthening real-time monitoring systems of government and partners through MoRES, with particular focus on barriers and bottlenecks faced by the most disadvantaged children and families. We consider the use and strengthening of national data collection systems important for monitoring and progress reporting on the Strategic Plan. Of course, parallel data collection systems should be avoided as much as possible.

9. Third. We would like to emphasize the importance of the integration of Gender equality in the Strategic Plan and the integrated budget. The empowerment of girls and women allows them to reach their full potential and contributes to the development and growth of their communities and societies. We welcome that gender-related indicators are part of the results framework. We consider the use of sex-disaggregated data extremely important in this respect.
10. Fourth. We welcome the engagement with the **private sector** for resource mobilization and leveraging, innovation, scaling up, and corporate social responsibility. The fact that UNICEF has both a normative and an operational mandate makes it an attractive partner for private sector actors in, for instance, health and nutrition.

11. Fifth. The **humanitarian situation** of so many children is dismal. As Mr. Lake pointed out this morning, Syria is at a shocking and sad low point in the suffering of innocent children. We salute the dedication of the entire humanitarian community in this crisis as well as in other emergencies to do whatever they can to save lives. In the humanitarian field, UNICEF plays a key role as leader and co-leader in different cluster areas. We welcome UNICEF’s commitment, in line with the QCPR, to strengthen the linkages – wherever and whenever possible – between humanitarian and development results and to strengthen resilience.

12. Sixth. We are pleased to note that **enterprise risk management** will continue to be an essential element of UNICEF governance and accountability. We are encouraged by the strategic priorities of the Office of internal Audit and Investigations mentioned in the integrated budget and by the clarity in the Strategic Plan on **evaluation**. Evaluation findings will be used to improve planning, programming and resources allocation. Sufficient management attention and resources will be devoted to evaluation to ensure that this essential tool of accountability and organizational learning will be used to its fullest potential.

13. Seventh. Strengthening **results-based management** in the United Nations development system should be seen in the broader context of national ownership of the development agenda and development results. The role of the United Nations development system is to complement and strengthening national policies and systems in pursuit of sustainable development results. UNICEF has come up with a robust results framework. The present result framework is well defined in results chains, including the impact, outcome and outputs of its work and associated
indicators and risks. We especially recognize the inclusion of relevant indicators resulting from the QCPR. We consider it an important learning process for UNICEF in the coming years to see how this framework will contribute to more measurable and visible development results.

14. Eight and last. The integrated budget with its cost classification identical to UNICEF’s sister agencies is an important improvement and step forward. We consider it a very useful document, which makes the allocation of financial flows more results-oriented and transparent.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

15. With this new Strategic Plan, UNICEF is ready, both for the two years that remain of the current MDG agenda and for the dawn of a new era thereafter. UNICEF’s mandate continues to be essential. The world’s children cannot do without a strong UNICEF to help protect their rights and promote their wellbeing.

Thank you.