Nordic statement on behalf of Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark by

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Mr. President,

I am pleased to deliver this Nordic statement on behalf of Finland, Norway, Sweden, Iceland and my own country, Denmark.

We would like to take the opportunity to commend UNICEF on their tireless efforts to develop an ambitious strategic plan. We welcome the end result and recognize the inclusive process where member states have been heard, our comments have been considered and taken into account. This is indeed a strategic plan that has been developed in close collaboration with all relevant partners and therefore we hope we will all feel ownership and a common responsibility ensuring that the overall goal is reached: the realization of the rights of every child.

UNICEF has nicely balanced the seven priority areas in the strategic plan. In particular, we appreciate how crucial issues such as quality education; girl’s and women’s empowerment and rights; and child protection will be emphasized in the coming four years.

Gender has been well included as a cross-cutting issue throughout the strategy. However, we think it is necessary to operationalize the strategic focus on gender equality and the rights of girls further, in particular through the indicators in the results framework. We would also encourage UNICEF to ensure that the new Gender Action Plan provides strong guidance on how gender equality perspectives will be strengthened in UNICEF’s operational activities.

Furthermore, we acclaim the way humanitarian assistance has been integrated in the results framework with separate objectives under each relevant thematic outcome. We recognize UNICEF’s comparative advantage in working in fragile situations and welcome their efforts in bridging humanitarian assistance and development. We welcome the increased risk analysis for humanitarian action and encourage UNICEF to increase its capacity for risk management in the field. From our side, we will continue working for a more uniform approach from donors as regards risk-sharing.

The equity approach will be a core part of UNICEF’s work and we appreciate how UNICEF in the strategic plan has defined how the human rights-based approach and the equity approach complement and enhance each other. In order for UNICEF to be able to report on the organisation’s contributions towards reducing social inequities
through the equity approach, we would encourage UNICEF to include indicators in the results framework that differentiate between various vulnerable groups and also indicators that will measure social inequities or reduced differences. Indigenous peoples should not be forgotten in this work.

We welcome how the human rights based approach has been integrated throughout the strategic plan. At the same time, this approach is also relevant when looking at how to proceed. Accountability, participation, transparency and non-discrimination are goals to be achieved, but they should also be used as principles for UNICEF's operational work towards achieving those goals.

It is appreciated that the latest versions of the strategic plan and the supplementary document contain more references to UNICEF’s involvement with the treaty bodies. We would like to emphasize that the main responsibility of UNICEF in this regard is to assist individual governments in implementing the recommendations of the treaty bodies.

We recognize that UNICEF has fully adhered to a culture of results based management. We appreciate the improvements made in the results framework and look forward to a continued dialogue on the framework, including on indicators. It is important that UNICEF continue to develop methods to measure and systemically report on shared results and results attributable to UNICEF. Therefore we would suggest that the efforts towards the Annual Session 2014 will include also a closer look at the selected indicators, not merely establishing baselines and targets. Furthermore we appreciate the improvements in the theories of change as presented in the ‘Supplementary Programme Note’. We encourage UNICEF to present the final version to the first regular session in 2014 in support of finalizing the results framework as we requested at the annual session in June.

UNICEF cannot be seen as one – you are a part of the UN family. Therefore it is encouraging to see that the strategic plan accommodates this responsibility by prioritizing UN development coordination. We acknowledge your active participation in the UNDG to define joint implementation of the QCPR, and we appreciate that the funds and programs have included joint indicators for QCPR implementation in their results framework. Furthermore, the integration of the strategic plan – and budget – is a step towards efficiency and effectiveness. In the future we hope and
expect that UNICEF will further embrace the ‘Delivering as One’ and ‘One UN’ ideas. This is something we will follow closely and work towards realizing.

In the coming two years we are all facing the challenging task of “finishing the job” of the MDGs. The strategic plan will work as a tool for UNICEF. But already now the international society is busy discussing the new set of goals after 2015. UNICEF together with the member states have a key role in making sure, that the rights of all children and youth are not forgotten or left behind.

For UNICEF the strategic plan is the first step, but only together can we achieve the ambitious goals that have been set out. And we must keep in mind that the goals might be ambitious but none the less extremely relevant both today, in 2015 and beyond.

Thank you