UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-17

EXECUTIVE BOARD 2ND REGULAR SESSION

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Deputy Permanent Representative

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New Zealand Statement
UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-17,

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Before we talk plans and budgets, frameworks and indicators, New Zealand feels bound to draw attention to the cruel reality faced by children in conflict situations everywhere – but Syria in particular.

We are, in Syria, witnessing a great human tragedy.

Syrian children and their families now approach a third year of conflict.

A whole generation is losing their childhood; their hopes for the future; and, quite simply, their right to be children.

Children are being killed, gassed, burned, maimed, orphaned, separated from their families.

Over one million children have become refugees.

Some have watched the death of parents.

Some have no clean water; no regular food.
Their schools have been closed - often taken over by those with nowhere else to go.

Girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence.

A bitterly cold winter approaches

And now they face the prospect that they - innocent children - might be the victims of illegal chemical attacks or use of napalm-like weapons.

We have all seen the awful images.

We have all, Mr President, borne witness to war crimes - crimes against humanity; and a huge humanitarian crisis in which has also placed an enormous burden on Syria’s neighbours.

And we must wonder whether a self-perpetuating cycle of violence will be passed on to the next generation.

Mr President -
What's happening in Syria is of particular concern to UNICEF because it, and civil society, must deal with the consequences of this inhumanity.

New Zealand pays tribute to the work of UNICEF in Syria, and to the courage and dedication of its staff, who are helping Syria’s children from becoming a lost generation – who are investing in their future through education and child protection.

New Zealand therefore joins with UNICEF’s statement of 21 August 2013 in saying that "this terrible conflict has gone on far too long and children have suffered more than enough" and that “Children must be protected, and those who fail to protect them will be held accountable”.

With all that very much in mind, my Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Murray McCully, has today announced that New Zealand will provide almost $800,000 to assist Syrian refugees, with the funding matched dollar for dollar by non-government organisations.

That funding will help more than 200,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan and will be delivered through six New Zealand-based NGOs which have agreed to match any government funding dollar for dollar.
And so, Mr President, to the housekeeping - seemingly so mundane, so everyday, when set against such horror, but still so important.

New Zealand commends UNICEF for all its draft Strategic Plan 2014-2017 - not only for the document itself, but also for the comprehensive and transparent consultative process on which it is based.

We see four main strengths in that draft Plan.

First is the clear focus on children who are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged – the hard-to-reach children.

We particularly support the alignment with international norms on gender and disability rights.

Second is the approach that integrates the seven outcome areas to each stage of a child’s life, strengthened by cross-cutting, sectoral elements, such as gender equality, humanitarian action and resilience.

This integrated approach, ranging from pre-natal to early adult, recognises that young people are more likely to contribute to their country’s economic development if, from the earliest possible age, they are healthy, educated and protected from conflict and exploitation.
Third, New Zealand is pleased to see even greater focus on value-for-money and development effectiveness; and particularly acknowledges UNICEF’s efforts to institutionalise the outcomes of the QCPR, including greater harmonisation and simplification of business practices, support for the *UN Delivery as One* approach, and efforts to strengthen the Resident Coordinator System.

We also support the Plan’s strong emphasis on results-based management and reporting, and see the new results framework as being helpful in this regard.

However, we also recognise that results-based reporting challenges us to find the best possible balance between tracking short-term results and achieving longer-term goals, because sustaining meaningful results for hard-to-reach children and their families requires an acceptance that transformational change takes time.

New Zealand regards the clearly articulated description of changes to the global development environment, which provides the context for the Strategic Plan, as one of its most significant elements.
Some changes are negative, such as increasing conflict and disaster-related humanitarian emergencies.

But many are positive, such as the growth of middle-income countries.

Lifting all people out of absolute poverty is now seen as an achievable goal – and achievable within our lifetime.

More infants are making it to their fifth birthday than any other time in human history.

Countries are now actively working together on a single development agenda for 2015 and beyond.

In reflecting such changes, this new Strategic Plan has demonstrated that UNICEF is more relevant than ever.

New Zealand would like to acknowledge the work of UNICEF for the children with disabilities and that of the International Disability Alliance, as described by Mr Yannis Vardakastanis this morning.

New Zealand congratulates UNICEF’s on its increasing ability to match resources to priorities, and to demonstrate this transparently.
Two important examples of this are the Special Focus Session today and the focus on children with disabilities in UNICEF's flagship report, The State of the World's Children.

We support the Executive Director and his staff; we support their draft Strategic Plan, and we look forward to its implementation over the next four years and beyond.

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