SPEECH BY
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Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegate ladies and gentlemen,

(INTRO)

At this session we are submitting the Mid-term Review Reports for the Argentina, Ecuador, and Guatemala Programmes.

I also have the honor of presenting to you the draft document of the Mexico Programme for the period of 2014-2018. This opportunity is particularly pleasing to me since I had the privilege of being the UNICEF Representative in Mexico fifteen years ago, and now can observe the important advances achieved by the country in its actions toward the fulfillment of the rights of all Mexican boys, girls, and adolescents.

The Country Programme reflects the results of the 2010 midterm review, the annual reviews, and the continuous consultations with Ministries, key government counterparts at national and subnational levels, and strategic allies.

It also pays proper attention to the observations extracted from the fourth and fifth reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as the final observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, both for 2012.

Likewise, it is based on the National Development Plan for 2013-2018, as well as the results of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) signed in March 2013.

(MEXICO OVERVIEW – Progress and challenges)

Mexico, with a population of almost 117 million, of which 39.4 million are children, has achieved in recent years important advances in the areas of health care (with the reduction of infant mortality), education with better access to basic education, and social protection of children.

Allow me to highlight, for example, the constitutional reform on human rights passed by the Federal Congress in 2011, incorporating the principle of the “best interest of the child,” that is opening up the way to legislative and
institutional reforms to deal with the juridical, institutional, and regulatory fragmentation of the issues relevant to the rights of children.

As a result of the joint work with the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Congress, the federal budget now specifically identifies spending on children, a first step towards improving the targeting and effectiveness of social programmes.

Migrant children are benefiting from the new laws, budgets, policies, practices, and the training of migration officials specializing in the protection of children. This successful experience is shared at the international level by its duplication or adaptation through the South-South Cooperation.

Within the context of the initiative “All Children in School,” the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, Yucatan, and Zacatecas use new tools to monitor, secure school access and student retention, taking into account the large indigenous and migrant populations in those States.

Economic growth and the progress of social policies have generated important opportunities to guarantee the rights of all children and adolescents.

Nonetheless, challenges and difficulties persist, such as the impact of violence in the well-being of the youngest children.

Likewise, most of the indicators of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have improved on the basis of national averages, yet the data breakdowns still show inequalities and exclusion. If the current trends continue, it is very unlikely that the maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, gender equality, and environmental sustainability goals can be met.

According to a joint publication by UNICEF and the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (CONEVAL) on poverty and the social rights of boys, girls, and adolescents in Mexico, in 2010, 21.4 million children and adolescents of a total population of 39.4 million were living in poverty, that is, 54% of all boys and girls younger than 18 years of age. The ratio of children living in a situation of extreme poverty is five times higher in
rural areas than in large cities. Among the indigenous population less than 18 years of age, the rate of poverty was estimated at 76%.

By focusing on equality and gender, the future Cooperation Programme aims to contribute to the development and strengthening of the inter-institutional coordination to apply social inclusion policies that will ensure that all boys and girls, and adolescents have access to quality services and to their comprehensive protection without any discrimination, in all of the States.

The programme being presented today has six components: policy analysis and knowledge generation; system-building for child protection; early childhood and primary-school age child development with equity; adolescent development and participation; social and resource mobilization for the rights of children and adolescents; and finally, a cross-sectoral component.

With the policy analysis and knowledge generation, the programme will enable the strengthening of national and subnational capacity of those responsible for the formulation of policies. To this end, it will ensure that decision makers will have studies and empirical data focused on the children, and that they will contribute to the debate of the policies.

The component system-building for child protection, focuses on strengthening institutional mechanisms across sectors, for more integrated equitable policies, programmes and systems to ensure protection of children against violence, abuse and exploitation. UNICEF will support the development of effective special protection mechanisms, including access to social care and justice at all levels of the federation.

The component of the early childhood and primary-school age child development with equity will strengthen the capacity of institutions at state and municipality levels, in order to promote the development of children, especially of the most marginalized ones. UNICEF will promote programmes that will improve caregivers’ capacities and increase the knowledge of families. Special attention will be paid to educational inclusion for indigenous children, especially in the rural areas, emphasizing cultural adaptation of study plans and teaching methods.

The adolescents development and participation component, focuses on redressing gaps in public provision for adolescents and the promotion of adolescents participation in citizenship. Special attention shall be given to multiple manifestations of poverty and the discrimination that affects
indigenous adolescents and the 2.2 million adolescents of both sexes who do not attend school, 41% of whom are indigenous.

The component of social and resource mobilization for the rights of children and adolescents shall strengthen social communication strategies. We have included modalities to engage youth audiences in social dialogue. Communication modalities will be essential for UNICEF to raise funds for the country programme.

Lastly, the cross-sectoral component shall include all the activities related to programme management, and all UNICEF operations in the country.

I would like to close with a reflection on the great learning opportunities that UNICEF and other countries in the region and the world will derive from this programme of cooperation and support of the Mexican Government that will show how a large country characterized by such a wide geographic, ethnic, and cultural diversity is able to develop, strengthen, and articulate the application of its social policies and budgets to reach even its most excluded children.