Mr President, Mr Lake, distinguished delegates.

It is my great honour, as the Chair of the Standing Group, to attend this UNICEF Executive Board alongside such dedicated and talented colleagues. Together, we have a great opportunity to participate in the construction of a better future for children.

Today, I speak on behalf of the 36 National Committees for UNICEF. For over sixty-five years, we have united for children and supported UNICEF’s lifesaving work. Our existence is based on a very simple premise: all children are created equal in dignity and rights. And we will not rest until the doors to opportunities are open to every child, everywhere, in a more just and safe world than we see today.

Mr President,

Despite difficult economic times, and with fierce competition for funds in our home countries, we have set and exceeded our aggressive fundraising goals. This year, National Committees have contributed almost one third of UNICEF’s operating budget. In 2012, the total private sector contribution to UNICEF surpassed expectations with resources amounting to US$ 903 million dollars.
National Committees are responsible for almost 90% of that contribution. We are incredibly proud of this accomplishment, and of what it means for UNICEF’s work around the world.

We recognize the urgency to support the many humanitarian emergencies that have affected children and families this year. In particular, we appreciate the partnership with colleagues at PFP and DOC to raise awareness and funds for UNICEF’s response for children in Syria and the region. We have drawn on our expertise in social media, our celebrity ambassadors and used our connections to raise the profile of this emergency. In 2012, we are proud to have contributed over US$ 80.5 million dollars for emergencies.

Over the years, National Committees have also kept up with the times by investing in innovative fundraising activities. Our digital income has increased from US$ 60 million dollars in 2008, to US$ 130 million dollars in 2012. In only 5 years, together, we have more than doubled these numbers.

Mr President,

As 36 independent and diverse civil society organizations, National Committees come together as one family, representing over 1.1 billion people in the world. We have nurtured a powerful fellowship in which innovation is abundant and the channels for mutual support are always open.

UNICEF and National Committees collaborate through an unusual structure that is the key to the successful partnership we have enjoyed. Although our relationship might seem unconventional or even confusing to some, it has enabled us to raise a remarkable US$ 12 billion dollars to UNICEF since 1947. Our partnership works
because we are all committed to constructive cooperation for the benefit of children.

We commend PFP director Leila Pakkala as well as our PFP colleagues for their efforts to improve the efficiency of PFP operations, for the UNICEF Private Fundraising and Partnerships Plan and for the funds that have been invested by PFP to help grow our most promising and successful fundraising programs.

With regard to efficiency and effectiveness, National Committees have also implemented measures aimed at reducing costs, and invested in activities with the potential for the highest returns. We are committed to transparency and reporting back to the millions of citizens and corporations that support our mission, and seek to motivate our donors through a strong communications strategy and clear reporting of results. Our sincere thanks to DOC Director Paloma Escudero, for having invited National Committee representatives to participate in the recent Communications Workshop that discussed UNICEF’s vision and mission. We are eager to continue this collaboration, ready to contribute in any way possible.

We are grateful that our voices were heard in the drafting of the UNICEF Private Fundraising and Partnerships Plan and that the ambitious goals reflect projections put forth by the National Committees. It is our hope that UNICEF will count on the National Committees to support other areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, and will call upon our global network to achieve UNICEF’s goals. We look forward to seeing our role more clearly articulated in those aspects of the plan as well.

We recognize the ambitious targets set for the Private sector, and in spite of economic adversity and uncertainty, we have faith that these targets can be met as we continue to press on, holding our performance to high standards. We will look
for the support of our PFP, PARMO and DOC colleagues to help facilitate the environment for our collective growth.

Mr President,

Under Mr Lake’s leadership and the support we have from our colleagues at UNICEF, we are driven by our shared passion to ensure that children are able to fulfil their potential and live in a better, safer, more just and sustainable world, in the present, and in the future which they will inherit. We believe that this world can and must be achieved. And National Committees will continue to fight the good fight alongside our UNICEF partners in this pursuit.

Thank you again.