Special Focus Session: UNICEF’s work for Children with Disabilities

Thank you, President, and thank you to UNICEF for organising this Special Focus Session and for the interventions at the opening of the session.

As a general comment, we appreciate the stronger focus of UNICEF on children with disabilities in order to ensure the rights of all children and the information that the Strategic Plan will be accompanied by a specific action plan. We look forward to reading the plan.

We have three specific comments:

1. Since there is broad agreement that a stronger focus on children with disabilities in the work of UNICEF is needed, I hope we also can agree that UNICEF in the years to come should be able to tell a systematic story - to report on the results - of its efforts to improve the situation of children with disabilities. It is results and impact that matters as also highlighted by the distinguished representative of Kenya on behalf of the African Group. For this reason, we encourage UNICEF to pay attention to this issue when the results framework of the Strategic plan is going to be finalised.

2. Second, there need to be a particular focus on children with disabilities in conflict and post-conflict situations in the work of UNICEF. We all know that the relative number of children with disabilities is higher in these countries and that they also often suffer from traumatic experiences.
3. Third, regarding funding. It was mentioned by UNICEF today that additional funding will be needed. This may be so. However, we would expect that UNICEF will give priority to children with disabilities also within its regular resources and softly earmarked funding. We think this is a reasonable expectation also because it appears to be a common view, as also underlined by the Chair of the International Disability Alliance in his intervention, that mainstreaming is the way to go in order to ensure the rights of children with disabilities. A lot has been said about synergies today. I would suggest that it is through mainstreaming that the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities meet.

Thank you, President.