Mr. President,

Thank you for giving me the floor. I deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Italy, Ireland, New Zealand, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and my own country the Netherlands.

We consider joint meetings of the boards an important element of the agenda to promote stronger alignment and collaboration within the UN Development System. We therefore appreciate today’s topic on operationalizing the decision of the QCPR, as it is indeed an issue that requires a coherent approach, across the Funds and Programmes and across the Strategic Plans that are in various stages of development and discussion.

While we appreciate the focus on climate change and resilience as very important issues for the UN Development System, this statement will address a more general concern, which we feel is of particular relevance to this joint meeting of the executive boards. This is the question of how and in what way the strategic plans will take forward the guidance provided by the QCPR resolution of last year.

The Strategic Plans are important instruments to help implement reforms at individual agencies and within the UN Development System, and as such, these Strategic Plans should be in line with agencies’ mandates and comparative advantages, and be guided by the provisions of the QCPR.
We welcome a coherent approach to the discussion of the Strategic Plans of the different Funds and Programs, including the aligning of discussions around the Strategic Plans with how the system works together and on what issues. The common chapter is an important vehicle for this process, as should be joint meetings of the Boards, such as the meeting we are having today.

We appreciate the effort made by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women to develop a common chapter as an element of their respective Strategic Plans to provide coherent guidance on the UN system’s common approach towards delivering the SDGs and how synergies are ensured with other entities’ contribution.

As was mentioned in the joint statement delivered by Switzerland on the common elements of the strategic plans during the Executive Board meetings of the past weeks, we call on the four Funds and Programmes to include more information on the innovative and collaborative ways of working together, reflecting the new context of the 2030 Agenda. We believe that a focus on collaborative working across the Agenda should be the primary function of this board, rather than discussions on specific cross-cutting themes, interesting as they may be.

In the context of today’s discussion on operationalizing the decisions of the QCPR and reflecting on the current draft text of the common chapter, we would like to share a few examples of areas we believe could be elaborated further in order to align them with the guidance provided in the QCPR resolution:

1. We appreciate the prominent reference to leaving no one behind as a central tenet of the 2030 Agenda and the ambition to reach the furthest behind first. Delivering on that ambition is easier said than done. Particularly in view of limited resources, the Funds and Programmes should translate the Leave No One Behind principle in their strategy, programs and Integrated Results and Resources framework. The principle of Leaving No
One Behind needs system-wide operationalization, including clear indicators to measure progress on reaching those who are most at risk of being left behind.

2. The ambition for stronger partnerships is mentioned, but this could usefully be elaborated to reflect the level of ambition called for in OP 22 of the QCPR-resolution, which includes guidance on intensifying collaboration in multi-stakeholder partnerships, and improving the accountability and impact of working in partnerships.

3. The work of each Fund and Program, both collectively and apart needs to capture what their role is inside the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which is a roadmap for delivery of scale. Here the UN has a huge catalytic role to play in helping governments to build funding basis for key sectors like health and education and developing conditions that encourage dynamic economies.

4. The current draft of the common chapter focuses on alignment to the 2030 agenda at the country level through the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. The QCPR resolution also contains specific guidance on improving the functioning of the resident coordinator system. While follow-up to this guidance is foreseen as part of the forthcoming recommendations of the Secretary-General’s reports on reform, we feel it is possible, and important, to already take elements of the QCPR guidance forward in the Common Chapter and associated indicators, within existing agreed modalities of the resident coordinator system.

5. We appreciate the ambition towards greater coordination, accountability and transparency in business operations as mentioned in the draft text. We note, however, that the ambition of Delivering as One, as reiterated in the QCPR resolution, goes beyond ‘coordination of business operations’ towards joint business operations, on the basis of Standard Operating Procedures, where possible and appropriate.

Strategic plans will need to be adjusted to take into account decisions ensuing from the forthcoming recommendations of the Secretary-General’s reports on reform. This certainly applies to the common chapter, and it would be useful if the common chapter would make
specific reference to a possible need for adjustment ahead or in the context of the Mid Term Review in 2019.

The results frameworks associated with the various strategic plans must include clear and SMART indicators on reform and their targets should reflect the level of ambition expressed in the QCPR resolution and the text of the Strategic Plans. This should enable Member States to track progress, including on the provisions of the common chapter. We note that work on common indicators is still ongoing and we look forward to a timely opportunity to discuss such proposed common indicators and their targets, including those related to the common chapter.

We note that there is much work to be done, including on the common chapter and corresponding elements in results and budgetary frameworks, before we are at the point of approving the different strategic plans. We would welcome clear timeframes around the receipt of updated documents to enable us to progress this work holistically, collectively and on time.

Thank you.