



IRELAND

Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Paul Kavanagh

Permanent Representative

At the First Regular Session 2009

of the

UNICEF Executive Board

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Mr. President,

We live in a world shaped by adults. It is not **always** a child-friendly world. Children are the most vulnerable of our citizens, in hunger and in war. Examples of this vulnerability abound. Yet the world's children cannot be held responsible for it.

Ms. Veneman reassures us of progress that is being registered for children and this is very good. But the Report of the Executive Director also serves to remind us of the huge task that still lies ahead.

In the recently-published '**The State of the World's Children 2009: Maternal and newborn health**', UNICEF charts, against a very difficult background, what still needs to be done to attain the fourth and fifth of the Millennium Development Goals.

'**The State of the World's Children 2009**' provides us with a model of best practice, with a delineation as between focal and partner agencies. It would be very helpful if Ms. Veneman could further elaborate and indicate to the Executive Board how this process is determined, particularly with regard to those components which include UNICEF as a focal agency.

The background to my question, Mr. President, is that Ireland, along with Tanzania, was privileged last year to chair the intergovernmental consultations on System-wide Coherence.

In the course of these consultations we had the opportunity to visit the 'Delivering as One' pilots and see at first hand the ground breaking reforms which the UN Country Teams are pioneering to ensure that the United Nations improves its ability to deliver aid efficiently and effectively, in alignment with the national plans and priorities of the countries concerned. We are among those many member states which wish to see the progress being made on the ground reflected fully in the decision-making process at Headquarters within and among the Funds and Programmes. We also share the widespread desire to see the necessary support given to the field to achieve the objectives of 'Delivering As One'.

The 'Delivering as One' Pilots and other developing countries which have willingly embraced this reform paradigm have yielded many positive examples of how reform in business practices can improve efficiency. Reforms such as the harmonization of ICT systems, for example, yields significant savings, as well as allowing UN staff to communicate more easily and effectively. We are also gratified to hear of the establishment of 60 UN Houses. In addition to cost savings, One UN Offices facilitate greater collaboration among UN staff at country level, promoting a more unified and effective UN presence. While we welcome the progress made to date in furthering business practice reform, we would like to underline that it is essential that these reforms urgently continue and deepen at Headquarters level.

We look forward to hearing a detailed presentation on these and other initiatives tomorrow.

Mr. President

One of the five priority areas for SWC, identified by General Assembly Resolution. A/62/277 is one on which Ireland places great weight, as being critical to the process of development, namely, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

In this regard, Ireland welcomes the particular efforts made by UNICEF to strengthen the incorporation of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into the work of the organisation. The Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation in UNICEF, which was finalised in 2008, reflected the recognition by UNICEF that progress in all Medium Term Strategic Plan focus areas depends upon advances in gender equality and should be aligned with the broader goal of achieving gender-equal societies. Ireland is glad of the opportunity at this Executive Board for discussion on the Follow-up to the Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation, including the many ways in which this process may be improved.

As you are aware another key priority of my Government is the fight against HIV and AIDS which is central to the reduction of poverty and vulnerability.

In October last, Ireland was particularly proud, successfully to co-host, along with UNICEF, the *4th Global Partners Forum on children affected by HIV and AIDS*. You will recall, Madame Executive Director, that this Forum was attended by representatives from over 40 countries.

It represented a critical step in our collective response to deliver the best possible outcomes for children living with or affected by HIV and AIDS.

Key global commitments were made. Commitments to invest in family centred and community responses to benefit children; to keep alive children and parents living with HIV; to increase the effectiveness of programmes, services and funding and to protect the rights of vulnerable children.

Given the importance of these commitments and our agreement to hold ourselves accountable to children affected by HIV and AIDS, Ireland requests a regular update to be presented to the Executive Board on progress being made in this connection. In addition, my delegation seeks clarity on the systems in place to monitor and report on these commitments over the next two years.

Mr. President

Finally, we are faced today with a global hunger crisis. As we speak, almost one billion people do not have enough food. Ireland has committed to placing hunger eradication as one of the cornerstones of our overseas aid programme.

One of the key messages of the **Irish Hunger Task Force Report** is that *hunger happens because it is allowed to happen*. Ireland believes that the international community **can** tackle this issue. But we also believe that success depends upon us having *system wide coherence* in our approach to combating hunger across the board.

In this regard, Ireland commends the leadership role of UNICEF in the area of nutrition, especially the concerted efforts of UNICEF to improve maternal and newborn nutrition, as outlined in the '**State of the World's Children 2009**'.

Together, we **can** make hunger history.

I look forward to the discussions of this Executive Board on these and other important issues.

Thank you, Mr. President.