Delivered by: Mrs Raakhi Williams, First Secretary Development, UK Mission to the UN

Thank you, Madame President.

We align ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished delegate of Denmark.

Ensuring all girls have access to 12 years of quality education is a UK priority. As the largest donor partner to Education Cannot Wait, the UK is committed to supporting and promoting education in emergencies and its critical place in the humanitarian response. Indeed, last week the UK appointed Nick Dyer as its first-ever Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs.

We recognise UNICEF’s leading role in the sector, both as Education Cluster co-leads and key delivery partners for the UK and others. Working with UNICEF Lebanon, we have provided over 110,000 places to Syrian refugee children and youth in non-formal education. The UK welcomes the evaluation which highlights UNICEF’s significant achievements in EIE. UNICEF has demonstrated an ability to deliver strong education responses in rapid-onset, natural disasters and, more recently, health crises. We applaud UNICEF’s role in the global response to COVID-19, affording children with the protection and resources they need to continue their education safely.

As the education response to COVID-19 evolves, we encourage UNICEF to focus on two recommendations in the evaluation: promoting equitable learning opportunities, with particular emphasis on gender and disability – which has been heavily discussed already today, and strengthening the capacity of staff and partners to identify and target those most in need.

We welcome the management response and the swift action already taken in many areas.

I’d like to end with two questions.

Can UNICEF colleagues please elaborate further to the presentation on the steps UNICEF is taking to ensure education interventions reach those who need it most?

Secondly, how will UNICEF support staff and partners to deliver more appropriate interventions in protracted crises (with a stronger focus on improving learning, not simply delivering supplies)?

Thank you, Madame President.