Presentation to the Executive Board (informal):

UNICEF and Peacebuilding

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Thank you for this important opportunity to provide an update on UNICEF's approach to peacebuilding.

As you know, though peacebuilding was relatively recently established as a distinct field, the concept and the practice are not new to UNICEF. You will recall that the spirit of peacebuilding was at the core of the General Assembly Resolution founding UNICEF back in 1946. Later, in 1965 UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for the promotion of brotherhood among nations."

All along, striving to ensure that children can live in peace has been integral to our programmes in violence and conflict-affected contexts. UNICEF's humanitarian and development programmes have in many settings helped peace building efforts.

I would therefore like to focus my remarks today on providing an overview of <u>why</u> UNICEF does peacebuilding, <u>how</u> we implement peacebuilding in the field, and, finally, <u>what</u> we do and <u>where</u> I think we can do better.

Traditionally, UNICEF has been undertaking either humanitarian response or development programmes in countries or both. We still have a ways to go before the organisation recognises peace building as a different way of doing business in conflict related settings or post conflict situations. It is in this area we need to be better.

Let's start with the **WHY**:

UNICEF needs to strengthen its engagement in peacebuilding, not only because of our mandate and responsibilities vis-a-vis the CRC and international legal frameworks and commitments, but also because:

- <u>Children are devastated by conflict</u>: Recent research for the upcoming 2011 World Bank World Development Report will confirm that indicators of children affected by conflict are worsening since 2009. Conflict-affected populations already account for two out of three infants and children dying, three out of four mothers dying in childbirth, and one of every three children out of primary school.

- <u>Countries affected by conflict, armed violence and fragility are the furthest behind on MDGs</u>. None of the countries on the OECD-DAC list of fragile states has reached any

of the MDGs. The World Bank's World Development Report will reveal that 22 out of 34 countries furthest from reaching MDGs are in or are emerging from conflict.

- <u>Post-conflict countries are prone to relapse</u>. This fact points to the urgent need to address root causes of conflict, factors of instability, and threats to peace—and get it right. Addressing the needs of children and women through targeted policies and programmatic interventions has the potential to positively transform society over time.

- <u>We cannot hide from conflict dynamics.</u> In these settings, our interventions might either passively reinforce or actively redress conflict dynamics.

- <u>Young people have a role to play in sustaining peace</u>: They have the potential to fuel conflict if their needs and rights are not addressed. Engaging young people and ensuring their rights are important for peace building in many countries.

- <u>Children benefit the most from peace</u>: And this benefits a country most. A peaceful environment is conducive to a state that upholds the rights and needs of all citizens, particularly children and women, and provides services and opportunities that allow them to thrive.

UNICEF's role in peacebuilding is increasing—and increasingly recognised:

- <u>UNICEF's own investment in conflict-affected and fragile situations is already considerable</u>: a recent DPP study estimates that nearly half of UNICEF country-level expenditure in 2009 was devoted to 19 fragile or conflict-affected countries. This investment is key to reach the bottom quintile, and we must create innovative ways to monitor and analyze results to support direct expenditure.

- <u>UNICEF is seen as a key partner and player in peacebuilding</u>: We are recognised for delivering quality programmes, offering on-the-ground expertise and information, acting as an important broker and convenor in the field. And by maintaining a strong voice for operational agencies—particularly humanitarians— we influence delivery in the field and global policy discussions, reflecting the realities and the needs of the field.

- <u>UNICEF's unique role has been validated by the Secretary-General's Report on Peacebuilding.</u> This includes our operational presence before, during and after conflict, as well as our national and sub-national programmes that reach communities by delivering peace dividends to make peace tangible in the lives of people. Here, it is the core of our work—<u>basic social services</u>—which have been identified as crucial stabilising factor in conflict settings.

Peacebuilding is complex and calls for tailored strategies and interventions. The Peacebuilding Support Office stresses that "<u>peacebuilding is about 'how' things are done as much as about 'what' is done</u>". Strengthening or rebuilding the foundations of a society that has been torn apart by conflict cannot be "business as usual".

I will turn to the **HOW**.

The World Bank's upcoming World Development Report will conclude that a common element in the success of countries recovering from conflict is the transformation of national institutions, from primarily serving a powerful elite to supporting a more <u>inclusive social compact</u> responsive to the needs and demands of all citizens, including women and children.

This points to the work of UNICEF in reaching the most vulnerable populations, the application of a human rights-based approach and the principle of "do no harm" to ensure we do not inadvertently reinforce inequalities or conflict factors.

UNICEF has traditionally been a humanitarian and development agency, and we like to think peacebuilding is not new. We have <u>considered peace as a general objective</u> to our work before, during and after violence and conflict. But our programmes that aim at building peace are often not recognized or categorized as "peace building" as such. They are <u>ad hoc</u>, based on available expertise and willingness, and not always using a robust conflict analysis with a child-focus. We work in some sectors better than in others and need a more systematic framework to target our resources and assess our results in these contexts.

Some activities work <u>"around" conflict</u> rather than making interventions into areas where the conflict factors exist most. And we can improve our upstream political and policy work in-country.

In other words, although our programmes often approach peacebuilding, they are not always <u>truly targeted peace building</u> efforts. We have only recently started to apply conflict analysis and conflict-sensitive approaches, to work in partnership for common strategies, and to develop capacity of both governments and civil society to understand and prevent "flash-points" that trigger violence or conflict. We need to do this less by default and more by design.

<u>We must do more to help</u> prevent outbreaks of violence and conflict, build peace in contexts affected by conflict and violence, and reduce the risk of a relapse of violence and conflict in post-conflict contexts.

As we look to strengthen our peacebuilding efforts, our programmes and advocacy must stay at the centre of our contributions to a common system wide effort.

We have already started to <u>strengthen our peacebuilding partnerships on the ground</u> in order to position children's and women's issues, and in particularly girls as they often find themselves the most vulnerable in these contexts. This has included our work with peacekeeping missions, peacebuilding offices, as well as with agencies and national partners. We support integrated strategic frameworks for peace consolidation, contribute to peacebuilding plans and Peacebuilding Fund proposals, and collaborate on programmes, including on conflict prevention.

Our relationships with <u>national authorities at all levels</u> play a key role in our peacebuilding interventions—as national ownership is the cornerstone to good peacebuilding.

At the global policy level, UNICEF has strongly advocated for a practical and creative approach to women's and girls' issues in the discussions around Resolution 1325 and in the recent SG Report on Women and Peacebuilding

Let me speak to **WHAT** needs to be done to advance peacebuilding, what UNICEF's role currently is and what we believe it should become.

We know peacebuilding is multidimensional—a combination of political, security, economic, and social interventions that address direct and indirect causes of conflict. These elements are interdependent—they all must be done together and no one actor can do it alone.

Last year's SG's Report on Peacebuilding laid out five recurring peacebuilding priority areas. UNICEF contributes to all of them, and has a particular value added in delivering basic social services and peace dividends to the people. Here we see our real thrust. This points to our work in health and education--with concrete deliverables to a destitute population. Education is particularly important, with our back to school programmes, child friendly spaces, peace education, life skills training, and schools as zones of peace. These services not only deliver peace dividends, they also build public confidence in peace and newly established state authorities.

In particularly fragile and complex contexts, UNICEF is increasingly asked to step in to substantially help governments deliver services, and facilitate aid delivery. For example, in Guinea and Madagascar UNICEF is the implementing agency of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) in education assisting the government, while in Zimbabwe we implement another multi donor education pooled fund for service delivery, supporting implementing partners. In the Somaliland and Puntland regions of Somalia, we work directly with the local authorities to provide social services, including health, while concentrating on institutional and capacity development. In Liberia we are also heavily supporting government capacity for education, also here through administering an education fund. A recent review confirmed UNICEF's adaptability and flexibility in fragile contexts.

UNICEF contributes also to the other four areas highlighted by the SG Report:

- We contribute to safety and security and security sector reform through our work in mine risk education, small arms and light weapons, reintegration of child combatants, support to international commitments such as the International Arms Trade Treaty, Anti-Personnel Mine Ban treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, training of police forces on child rights and constant advocacy on the impact of conflict on children and against the use of weapons with indiscriminate effects.

- Our capacity development work with line ministries, ministries of planning, and with ministries of finance on budgeting, as well as at the subnational level, help build core government functions.

- We help revitalize the economy through a variety of interventions, including: social protection mechanisms such as cash transfers, adolescent and youth-friendly centers, adolescent development support and life skills programmes, livelihoods support in general and to children and youth formerly associated with armed forces and groups specifically, and psychosocial programmes.

- UNICEF also promotes inclusive dialogue and reconciliation through peace education, youth development and social cohesion efforts. We advocate for young people's rights and issues in relation to peace processes.

Lastly, let me talk about **WHERE** we can do better, and how:

UNICEF's programmes that contribute to peacebuilding have been widespread and varied. Even as the peacebuilding architecture was being established back in 2006, we were implementing hundreds of programmes to help build peace: a mapping carried out in 2007 identified around 350 peacebuilding programmes in over 120 countries across several sectors.

It is telling, however, that to capture all of UNICEF's work that contributes to peacebuilding, we must carry out such a mapping, programme by programme, to determine whether they indeed could be categorised as peacebuilding - since they could not be coded or recorded as such in the system.

We have achieved real results at the global and country levels. Our high level advocacy initiatives, such as the 1996 Machel Study on the impact of conflict on children, helped shape the debate on the reality and consequences of conflict. At the country level, we provided advice on children's rights in peacebuilding negotiations in northern Uganda. We demobilised and reintegrated child combatants in Central African Republic, Sri Lanka and Nepal and a number of other countries.

We are also beginning to apply important learning in peacebuilding. We ran a conflict sensitivity assessment of our large Programme of Expanded Assistance to Returnees (PEAR) Plus in eastern DRC for better peace dividends, and we just championed a UN system-wide peace and conflict impact analysis in Madagascar to inform our actions better.

But our efforts need to be more coherent globally. They are often isolated examples. They need to be known to and recognized by other parts of the organisation.

We are committed to doing better as UNICEF, but also as part of the UN family in contributing to a cohesive response to conflict. A clear call for UNICEF to improve its engagement in peacebuilding has come from the field. A recent global meeting of UNICEF Representatives from conflict-affected countries confirmed the importance of strengthening UNICEF's role in peacebuilding. The meeting concluded that our potential is often not achieved because of the lack of a systematic and coherent approach to peacebuilding.

We continually need to know more and learn more about our evolving peacebuilding efforts on the ground and those of our partners. We can do more to adapt our internal reporting frameworks and systems to better capture and assess our contributions to peacebuilding, As part of these efforts to learn about the impact of our interventions, we have recently launched a large research project to look into how education as a holistic sector can contribute to peacebuilding and play a role within broader reform and transformation in post-conflict reconstruction.

The Representatives meeting requested UNICEF to explore an overall more strategic approach to guide our peacebuilding efforts. This includes a more consistent and institutionalized approach in the organization, whether in supporting capacity development to fragile governments, conducting conflict and context analysis, or mainstreaming peace building in programmes. Peacebuilding considerations should become both the lens with which we develop our programmes in conflict affected countries, and the approach with which we implement them. It is about concrete interventions as well as how we do business.

In this regard we better guidance and tools, such as adapting existing inter-agency conflict analysis tools, using a peace and conflict impact analysis, as well as developing a UNICEF specific programme guidance note. This will help Country Offices better understand the causes and dynamics of conflict, define priorities and more appropriate strategies for long-term peacebuilding.

We are currently engaged in an effort to develop these frameworks and tools, ensuring they are coherent, and of real use at country and regional levels. We must make sure they fit into inter-agency requirements and frameworks. We are also looking into how to develop our capacity in peacebuilding, applying lessons learned and good practice from our own broad and rich experience.

It is also important that we stay focused in our work at the global policy level at headquarters, specifically within the peacebuilding architecture—which is currently going through an important review. Here we have opportunities to influence global debates on peacebuilding to reflect children's interests.

We will support a stronger connection between the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and efforts on the ground, and offer advice on advancing implementation of the SG's commitments on behalf of the UN system. We have been actively engaged in the revision of the Peacebuilding Fund and are working very closely with the Peacebuilding Support Office and other partners in increasing and improving coordinated peacebuilding responses to conflict.

Moving forward, we must also manage risk. As a development and humanitarian agency, we must be clear and strategic in our peacebuilding choices on the ground in order to protect the perceived impartiality and neutrality of our humanitarian action. We must take care in being associated with stabilization and military objectives. Member states will have a key role to play to ensure that we can be true to both, in recognition that sustainable peacebuilding is the real solution to conflict-induced humanitarian suffering, but that humanitarian assistance should not be used to pursue a political agenda.

We do not foresee a new political role for ourselves, but we have an important role to play with our partners to help build and achieve sustainable peace. We know that this can only be achieved when it is inclusive, when the dividends of peace are reaching the most vulnerable, and when young people feel that they have a future. UNICEF therefore has a critical role to play in these situations.

We will always continue to be true to our mandate, upholding the rights and needs of children in post-conflict settings, both at the global level and in the field.

We openly welcome reflections and suggestions from Executive Board Members on this important issue.

Thank you very much.