Intervention by the Chair of the Standing Group of National Committees to
Item 9: Progress update on UNICEF experience in high-income countries and
in countries transitioning from upper-middle-income to high-income status
within the framework of the UNICEF universal agenda for child rights

Check against delivery

Mr President, my fellow National Committee and UNICEF colleagues, distinguished delegates,

When National Committees reflect upon what the universal mandate means in practice, we often
think about how we are able to realize it in places close to home or far away. The suffering of
children does not know boundaries, but as our logo rightfully puts, “for every child” is the
heartbeat of mission. It means that no matter where a child is, UNICEF will be there too.

National Committees are probably best known for the resources we send for the most
disadvantaged children, those who are in the poorest countries, in the middle of natural disasters,
and we are proud of what we deliver together with our supporters. We are equally proud of the
other, perhaps lesser-known, but very powerful way we deliver results: our advocacy work for
vulnerable children who must have our support in High-Income Countries.

This is the reason why we consider the 2016 Review of UNICEF experience in high income
countries to be a landmark paper. Not because it allowed us to do advocacy in our countries. On
the contrary. It is a landmark paper because after years of delivering results for children in the
form of advocacy, the Executive Board recognized and welcomed our important contribution, and it invited UNICEF to continue to use National Committees as one of the most appropriate engagement approaches to contribute to results in High Income Countries.

Today’s update is another important step in the right direction. It gives visibility to the plight of vulnerable children in High Income Countries and it describes the professional and cost-effective ways by which National Committees have continued to improve their lives through advocacy. It demonstrates our longstanding experience and how committed we are to quality standards and to building technical expertise.

The combination of the 2016 decisions and the present update therefore reconfirm that National Committees are indeed the most appropriate and advantageous engagement approach to deliver results for children in our countries.

In the pursuit of a better, safer, more just and sustainable world for every child, we will continue to uphold the principle of universality of child rights, to aspire to growth, and to deliver results with equity. We will continue to lead and convene all concerted efforts for this purpose, always working alongside our governments and involving relevant parts of the UNICEF family. This is the spirit of the new Strategic Plan put into practice: shifting the focus beyond what the organization can do alone to mobilizing and supporting National Committees to maximize our collective impact for disadvantaged children in High Income countries.

I would like to close my remarks by thanking ED Fore, Deputy Executive Directors Charlotte Petri Gornitzka and Omar Abdi for their visionary leadership and support. Over the past year, we have worked more closely together and this is already reflected into new ways of working that will benefit every child.
Thank you!

Suzanne Laszlo

Chair of the Standing Group of National Committees