A growing partnership for children

Over the past decades, the European Union (EU), which contributes some 60 per cent of the world’s official development assistance, has progressively expanded its emphasis on protecting children’s rights. The EU has developed a coherent policy framework in support of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with UNICEF an increasingly important partner across a range of development and humanitarian issues.

The growing partnership has also included a high-level policy dialogue aimed at increasing systematic engagement and development of common EU proposals benefiting children.

In 2013, UNICEF signed contracts with the EU worth €389 million ($515 million) in support of programmes and emergency operations on nutrition, child protection, water and sanitation, education, justice for children and health. While cooperation between the EU and UNICEF has been further strengthened at the country level worldwide, with a focus on the monitoring and analysis of the situation of children, a longer-term and more strategic relationship has also evolved around the achievement of the MDGs and poverty eradication as well as food security, disaster risk reduction, resilience and social protection.

The Special Focus Session will offer the UNICEF Executive Board an opportunity to learn more about the various forms of the EU-UNICEF partnership. The EU and UNICEF are currently collaborating in support of birth registration and towards ending violence against children as well as harmful traditional practices and female genital mutilation. The European Commission also recently announced that it would commit an unprecedented €3.5 billion ($4.6 billion) towards reducing malnutrition between 2014 and 2020; UNICEF will be one of the implementing partners. And as part of their strategic collaboration, the EU, with UNICEF, recently developed the Child Rights Toolkit: Integrating Child Rights in Development Cooperation.

Board members will be able to learn more on the synergies between the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and the new EU Agenda for Change 2014-2020 promoting inclusive growth, with a focus on the most vulnerable people. The session will also offer Member States an opportunity to reflect on the partnership within the context of the post-2015 development agenda and in view of the upcoming 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.