**UNICEF Statement to the CRPD**

**Opening session, 14 February 2018**

Thank you Madam Chair. UNICEF commends the CRPD for its work to promote the rights of children and adults with disabilities and appreciates the opportunity to make this statement. We would like to outline several highlights related to our work on children with disabilities since our last update to the Committee in August 2017.

From January this year, UNICEF has started implementing its new Strategic Plan 2018-2021 which for the first time, has a specific result area on children with disabilities. More than 25 indicators will enable the monitoring of progress on disability, through specific indicators and disaggregation of data by disability across programmatic areas like education, health, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene. Financial tracking codes have also been set up to measure expenditure on inclusive activities as well as to track targeted activities for children with disabilities across different sectors.

Recognising that accessibility is a precondition for children and adults with disabilities to participate fully in society, UNICEF issued an Executive Directive on Accessibility of Programme Related Construction in December 2017. The Directive requires that all construction UNICEF is involved with -for example schools, health posts, and child friendly spaces- to be accessible to children and adults with disabilities, both in development and humanitarian contexts. Specific accountability and procedural mechanisms have been laid out in the Directive for the effective implementation of accessibility in all programme related construction. To support UNICEF Country Offices to implement the policy, technical resources have been developed and direct support is being provided by the Construction Unit based in UNICEF’s Supply Division.

As we had reported earlier, UNICEF has established an innovative financing mechanism to provide resources for improving accessibility of its premises through the Greening and Accessibility Fund. This Fund is resourced through a 3% surcharge applied to all air travel undertaken by UNICEF staff and consultants anywhere in the world. Over the last 2 years, 21 countries have improved accessibility of their premises through this fund. To further strengthen and systemise this work, in January 2018, UNICEF has also issued a Standard Operating Procedure on Eco Efficiency and Inclusiveness for its Offices.

Several initiatives are being undertaken by UNICEF to ensure the procurement and provision of accessible and assistive products. They include the finalisation of the first Assistive Technology product guide which will be available to UNICEF Offices next month. Our Supply Division is also field testing an accessible latrine slab which is used in emergency settings like refugee camps.

UNICEF, along with the International Disability Alliance and Handicap International, is also co -chairing the Inter Agency Standing Committee Task Team which is developing global guidelines on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action. To ensure a participatory process of guidance development, a multi-stakeholder workshop has been held in Geneva, and the first Regional Consultation was successfully held in Fiji last month. The next Regional Consultation will be held in Beirut on 6 and 7 March 2018.

We will keep the Committee posted on the Inter Agency Standing Committee’s guidelines development, and on other highlights of UNICEF’s work related to the rights of children with disabilities. I thank you.