UNICEF-Academia-Private Sector Partnership WASH Innovation Project 2014-2016

Project Launch Friday 9th May, 2014

Venue: College of Engineering Design, Arts and Technology (CEDAT)

Conference Hall, Makerere Univeristy

OPENING REMARKS

by Ms. Marja-Riitta Ketola, Executive Director of Finnish Committee for Unicef

Prof. John Ddumba-Ssentamu, Vice Chancellor of Makerere University;

Eng. Aaron Kabirizi, Director of the Directorate for Water Development, Ministry of Water;

Ms. Aida Girma, Unicef Representative in Uganda;

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends and colleagues,

I am delighted to be here today to launch the UNICEF-Academia-Private Sector Partnership WASH Innovation Project. The Project is a remarkable example of multi-stakeholder cooperation; it brings together UNICEF, Makerere University, two Universities from Finland: Aalto and Helsinki University as well as private sector partners such as Biolan

from Finland. This project is funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and will run for three years. The overall budget for the project is over one million Euros.

The project idea derives from previous collaboration between UNICEF, Makerere University and Aalto University that started already in 2010. This collaboration resulted in successful outcomes, producing product prototypes: the elephant tap, Santrac monitoring system, portable water system as well as the clean school concept. These are all examples of innovations that have a direct impact on improving the lives of school children. The very core of UNICEF's work!

Based on the initial success, the cooperation was further developed bringing in new partners. Now we are happy to welcome Helsinki University and Biolan to the collaboration. The plan is to seek other partners as well from the private sector, especially Small and Medium Enterprises from Uganda who can carry on with the innovations deriving from the student projects, which are the essential nucleus of the project.

The student projects indeed are the lifeline of the project. Joint Makerere, Aalto and Helsinki University student teams will be working in Acholiland with children to find

innovative solutions for water, sanitation and hygiene problems. These innovations will be piloted and the successful and workable solutions will be scaled up through UNICEF programme work.

This is a new type of cooperation that we are involved with. The idea is not to bring solutions for water and sanitation issues from outside but to work together, in partnership, to find local solutions for local problems. It is the right of every individual, every child, to have access to clean water and adequate sanitation and hygiene services therefore Human Rights Based Approach is in the centre of this project.

The project supports the objectives of the Uganda National Development Plan that encourages innovations and adaptable technologies to address societal needs and social transformation. The project is supporting the objectives of the UNICEF country programme and pilots a new type of cooperation mechanism that can later be used as an example in other countries to support UNICEF's work in improving the lives and enhancing the rights of children.

It is my pleasure to inaugurate this project today with my colleagues. We have an intensive project preparation period behind us ending into an inception workshop this week

with all partners here in the Makerere University. The inception workshop showed that there is a great spirit of collaboration and willingness to create something truly new and inspirational.

The workplan for the coming three years is intense. However, we are certain that our partnership is strong. We have outstanding professionals who will contribute their expertise and bring their enthusiasm into the project. Together we are to deliver results that will outlive the project period. We are here together, united in our effort to improve the lives of children, through finding innovative solutions for water and sanitation issues in rural Uganda.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Partners in the Government, Makerere University, Aalto and Helsinki Universities, Biolan and all the colleagues in UNICEF. We would like to express our gratitude for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland for their generous support for this project.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who are here today taking part in this Project Launch. Your support for this project is greatly valued.. I warmly thank you all for your commitment and look forward to working together.