

**Mr. Urs Kluser – General Secretary, UEFA Foundation for Children**

**(Translated version, original in French)**

Thank you very much indeed Madame Chairman.

Madame Arancha, Mister Minister - Thank you for the invitation to come here today.

We're really honoured to be here and to be participating in this meeting here, and to be able to sign the agreement that we're about to sign. I'd just like to tell you a little about football, what football is doing here and I'm maybe going to disappoint some of my ITC colleagues – I'm not actually here talent spotting for footballers in your organization. I'm sure there are great talents here, but that's not actually why I've come here today. I've come here to explain the importance of football and how football and sport in general can really be a vector for development.

We within the UEFA foundation, which is a foundation under Swiss Law and which exists under the auspices of UEFA, seeks to reach out to vulnerable and precarious communities. What we try to do is to use sport to inspire young people to rally them around certain values, but also to teach them about certain values like: discipline, team work, respect for other people, and so on. These are key social values.

And in the course of our work, we have seen that employability is very important for young people. We need to develop these values so that the people can get into work and this is something that if they do, can prevent them ending up falling into criminality or crime of some kind, or indeed being involved in illegal migration, as we've just heard. So thinking about that, we have spoken about some of these issues, with people in the ITC, to think about how we can best use sport and football in particular, to achieve these common goals - the goals that we have in UEFA and the goals that ITC has.

Guinea seemed to us to be a good opportunity to start with a pilot project. And so, we're really going to start with certain activities, within the framework of existing projects in Boffa – and we're going to see where that gets us. And if we can really have a positive impact on young people there. We're then going to see if it's possible to encourage them to improve their life skills, and thus to make themselves more employable.

We are very encouraged by what we've seen thus far – particularly by the commitment of the Government of Guinea - and we've had contact obviously with the Guinea Football Federation. In the near future, we're going to be visiting Gambia also to see if we can do the same kind of thing there. Now, I can tell you that the board of the Foundation has already decided, it was last month that this was decided. [It] has already decided to devote some funding to that. We are now ready then to get down to work on really fleshing out this project. We can start as soon as possible with the first few steps that have to be taken. There are still some questions about how it's all going to be organised – but I hope, working with you Madame Executive Director, that next year we will be able to report on first steps that will have been taken on some tangible activities that will have been undertaken in Gambia and Guinea.

So once again, thank you for the invitation. Thank you for the trust in us, and we are happy to work together.