



**Statement by H.E. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana to the United Nations during the First Session of
the Executive Board of UNICEF – Discussion of Country Programme Document
February 10, 2022**

Thank you, Mr. President

Allow me to reiterate Guyana's appreciation to the members of the Executive Board for the important work that you are doing in the implementation of UNICEF's mandate.

At the outset, let me underscore that Guyana has built a strong partnership with UNICEF which we value deeply and which we will continue to strengthen.

At the current juncture when developing countries are confronting several challenges, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, joint action with expert Agencies such as UNICEF is critical to moving forward.

Guyana is therefore pleased that the draft country programme document builds on the previous one while also addressing emerging challenges faced by our children.

We are especially satisfied with the consultative and inclusive approach that was employed in the development of the draft Programme. Substantive discussions were held with several of our Ministries and Agencies during which priority areas were identified. These include health and nutrition, education, including providing children and adolescents with the skills necessary for future employment, protection from all forms of violence and justice for children.

We therefore endorsed the draft CPD since it aligns with our national priorities and strategies.

I wish to highlight the Programme's focus on enhancing capacities to address violence against children, including violent discipline, and the mental health and psychosocial needs of children and adolescents through counselling facilities in schools. The long-term vision is for all our children to be protected from violence, harmful practices, exploitation and abuse, through strengthened child protection systems.

Also important in the Programme is the treatment of various educational challenges, such as, addressing the disparity in school completion rates between boys and girl, improving parental engagement and having stimulating home environments for early childhood development.

The technical support to strengthen service delivery and care systems for mental health and psychosocial well-being in schools and communities is also essential, while the enhanced cooperation with our Ministry of Health will allow for the provision of improved maternal and child health services, including in hard-to-reach underserved areas.

Allow me to underscore, Chair, that the work which Guyana will undertake with UNICEF in these areas is pivotal to improving the lives of our children and Guyana's achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Let me conclude by expressing deep appreciation to Mr. Nicolas Pron and the UNICEF team in Georgetown and to the entire UNICEF team for the sterling work you do globally. I now urge the Board to give positive consideration to the document.

I thank you.