

Item 3: General Statements

**STATEMENT BY
MS. CECILIA FORGBE WREH-McGILL, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES a.i.
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS, ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE
BOARD OF UNICEF AT THE ANNUAL SESSION OF THE UNICEF EXECUTIVE
BOARD, 14-17 JUNE 2022**

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1. Thank you, Mr. President!
2. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Members of UNICEF Executive Board.
3. At the outset, the Group would like to thank you, Ambassador Rodrigo Carazo of Costa Rica, for successfully leading the work of UNICEF Executive Board. We would like to assure you of our constructive support for a successful session.
4. As we enter the third year of the COVID crisis, the world finds itself grappling with more pressing issues. On the back of the fiscal crisis and the debt burden that we have had to bear with, rising inflation and supply chain disruptions are threatening to undo our social fabrics and political foundations. Additionally, we are witnessing the highest number of violent conflicts since the end of the Second World War. Significant actions still lacking to curb the impacts of climate change, communities continue to lose their livelihoods due to extreme climate events.
5. In all these catastrophes, children are the first victims. The COVID pandemic forced billions of children to miss out on schooling. Over

100 million more children fell below the minimum reading proficiency level and other areas of academic learning.

6. In April of this year, UNICEF Executive Director Ms. Catherine Russell visited the Horn of Africa, a region currently reeling from severe drought because of rain shortfalls for 4 consecutive years. In this part of Africa alone, well over 10 million children need urgent life-saving support.
7. The loss of cattle to this kind of drought deprives children of important sources of nutrition such as meat and milk. In these circumstances, children are forced to drop out of school as they have to travel long distances to find food and water, and as schools shut due to lack of water.

Mr. President,

8. The challenges that children face in all parts of the world call for concerted efforts at various levels. Governments, international partners and civil society organizations should come together in addressing these pressing challenges. As worrisome as the situation we are in now, we run the risk of facing an even more disastrous future unless we act together and act now. Because our future depends on the opportunities that we provide for children today.
9. Finally, **Mr. President**, I would like to appreciate the efforts of UNICEF to save lives and ensure a better future for children in light of growing constraints. As the current challenges warrant

more outreach, we call on donors to step up their support to UNICEF so that it can better serve children in Africa and around the world.

10. **I thank you!**