

Agenda Items 2 and 3

Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF and Annual Report 2022

Madam President, Madam Executive Director,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union as a donor.

We would like to reiterate our appreciation for the commitment by the staff of UNICEF and its partners in this very challenging year, where unfortunately the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance has reached yet another record. The EU has been demonstrating strong solidarity with people in need worldwide and supporting international partner organizations such as UNICEF. We commend UNICEF's efforts to help maintain basic services for children and protecting their rights wherever possible, including for children on the move and children in armed conflicts. We have seen, in particular, a true added value of UNICEF's work in Ukraine through the support to children in Russian-occupied territories as well as institutionalised and internally displaced children.

Looking at the Annual Report for 2022, it is encouraging to see that despite all difficulties, 12 out of 18 result areas of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 are on track with UNICEF milestones for 2022. We appreciate that UNICEF managed to reach its milestones for nutrition despite the severe food and nutrition crisis and increased costs for delivery and supplies. Nonetheless, the number of children suffering from severe

wasting in the 15 worst affected countries is expected to reach 8 million, 3 million more than the total treated in all countries in 2021.

More generally, the combination of crises such as conflict and the impact of climate change has pushed even more children and families into poverty. Over 222 million children and adolescents in crisis contexts are in need of education support. We therefore call on UNICEF to work towards accelerating results for children across its humanitarian and development interventions, in line with its dual mandate and keep building synergies and partnerships with other aid organizations.

Furthermore, considering the funding gap affecting aid organizations in a context of rising needs, we encourage UNICEF to continue striving for efficiency gains, through joint-up approaches with other UN agencies in a “One UN” approach. In this context, we welcome UNICEF’s engagement in IASC processes and continued support to the implementation of the UN Development System Reform and we take note of the Report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities.

We appreciate UNICEF’s efforts to enhance education and child protection systems as well as its new strategy on disability inclusion. We commend the Strategic Collaboration Frameworks UNICEF developed with UNHCR and IOM to promote the inclusion of refugee and migrant children into national child protection systems.

We welcome UNICEF’s advocacy and engagement at the Transforming Education Summit to highlight the digital learning and call for targeting of

resources towards education of the poorest and most marginalised children.

Regarding the Gender Action Plan 2022–2025, we note the progress achieved and UNICEF’s efforts to foster gender-responsive systems and services. We commend in particular UNICEF’s endeavours to increase inclusive and equitable access to education and enhance girls’ access to learning and life skills. However, adolescent girls continue to be particularly affected by the effects of education losses due to the pandemic. We therefore encourage UNICEF to continue addressing the disproportionate impact on girls and women and engaging in related advocacy to correct reversals in gender equality gains.

As one of the main contributors to UNICEF, we note that 2022 was another record-breaking year for the organization. We welcome the increase in new donors and strongly support UNICEF efforts to continue enlarging its donor base. We stress the need to mobilize additional humanitarian funding globally and achieve a more balanced funding structure which draws on the resources of traditional, emerging and potential donors, philanthropic foundations, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders.

Thank you.