

## **Agenda Item 2**

### Opening statement

Madam Chair, Madam Executive Director

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

Thank you, Madam Executive Director, for your words.

We reiterate our appreciation for the strong engagement of UNICEF staff and partners to help maintain basic services for children across the world, including children on the move and children in armed conflict.

We acknowledge the revised financial estimates for the Strategic Plan and support UNICEF's conservative approach for the period 2023-2026. However, we note that the total income for 2023 is projected to increase by 24 per cent compared with the approved estimates submitted to the Executive Board in 2022. We would be interested to hear from UNICEF whether this projection is still considered realistic as of September 2023.

*Madam Executive Director, you reiterated today the importance of the forthcoming SDG Summit in accelerating progress on the 2030 Agenda. Indeed, despite all efforts, there is a risk that the world will not manage to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, notably in terms of child mortality, immunization, access to safe water and sanitation, or education. These challenges confirm the need for UNICEF to strengthen even further coherence and collaboration across humanitarian and*

development work, in line with its dual mandate. We would therefore welcome more information on the strategy UNICEF intends to put in place in the sectors which are lagging behind in order to accelerate results and impact for children.

We appreciate the update on the actions taken by UNICEF management to implement the suggestions to strengthen the independence of the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations. We welcome that UNICEF has fully implemented five of the eight suggestions and that the remaining three are under implementation.

To conclude, I wish to reaffirm the European Union's strong commitment to promote and protect the rights of the child. The EU has steadily been a main donor to UNICEF, and we are looking forward to continuing our partnership with you.

Thank you.