

AUSTRIA



PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

UNICEF Executive Board – Second Regular Session 2023

Item 2:

Opening Statement by the President of the Executive Board

Opening Statement by the Executive Director

STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA

New York, 5 September 2023

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Madam President,

Thank you for this opportunity to emphasize **Austria's commitment** to support the important work of UNICEF, and allow me to congratulate you and the whole Bureau of the Executive Board for your guidance and excellent leadership throughout this year.

Madam Executive Director, let me echo your remarks on the necessity to uphold and **accelerate progress on the child-focused SDGs**. In a few days, our leaders will gather at the SDG Summit to renew our commitment to the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. At this critical moment, we need to send a strong message that children's rights cannot be realized without the **full implementation of the SDGs** and vice versa. We must therefore ensure that children are meaningfully included across the implementation and monitoring of all SDGs. As a member of the Group of Friends of children & SDGs, we fully support its work to keep children at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.

At times, the challenges at hand seem countless; but whether it is about access to drinking water, regular meals, medical assistance or schooling, we have to closely work together and do our utmost to make sure that no child is left behind!

With this in mind, we would appreciate the Executive Director's views on possibilities to further **strengthen joint programming**. Furthermore, as we work to step up our efforts in the second half of the 2030 Agenda, we would be interested to hear which areas of UNICEF's Strategic Plan you see as **key enablers to accelerate SDG implementation**.

Rest assured that Austria remains strongly committed to UNICEF's cause: Children's rights as well as children's protection from violence and exploitation are long-standing focus areas of **Austria's human rights and development policy**. We are committed to build on our rich partnership and continue to support UNICEF's work with both core and non-core funding, as shown by our 2023 contributions of each 2 million EUR to **UNICEF's Humanitarian Action for**

Children in Angola, Mali and Syria. Those funds are supporting families and children who are most affected by current humanitarian crises as well as the implications of increased climatic alterations and drought.

In this light, Austria would also like to thank our distinguished colleagues for facilitating the **interactive special focus session on Africa's children**, scheduled for this Thursday.

Let me conclude by thanking you, Executive Director Russell, and your team, for UNICEF's unwavering commitment to our most critical agents of change, the children of this world!

Thank you very much.