



CZECH REPUBLIC

Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations

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Item 2

Statement by

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Madam President, Madam Executive Director, Colleagues,

As Executive Director Russell highlighted, these days are marked by the upcoming SDG Summit, which is taking place at the mid-point of SDG implementation towards 2030. Unfortunately, the Summit will not, and should not, be a celebration of progress. As the report of the Secretary General “Progress towards the SDGs: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet” concludes, around 50 per cent of SDG targets are off track, and further approximately 30 per cent have even seen a decrease compared to 2015.

While keeping in mind the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and indivisibility of its SDGs, Czechia has been among persistent advocates of Goal 16 – and while this Goal is often understood in terms of effective, accountable, and transparent government institutions, it is useful to remind ourselves that ending all violence against children is indeed its target 16.2. This clearly builds on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defining protection of children from all forms of violence as a fundamental right.

President of the Czech Republic, Mr. Petr Pavel, is going to lead our delegation to the SDG Summit.

Nonetheless, how to change the unsatisfactory course of non-achieving the majority of the SDG targets amidst multiple ongoing crises is a key question to which leaders at the SDG Summit must aim to find answers. While national governments bear the main responsibility for achieving the 2030 Agenda noble objectives, the UN Development System, which has undergone significant reforms in recent years, no doubt provides substantial support, expertise and guidance. It is encouraging to observe UNICEF doing its part in these efforts.

UNICEF works hard in conflict-affected countries, Least Developed Countries and other places in need to lend children a helping hand, to coordinate humanitarian response in the WASH sector, or the on-the-ground implementation of vaccination against COVID-19. My country, Czechia, has been supporting UNICEF activities in some of these cases, for example in the Sahel, Horn of Africa, Iraq and beyond.

While we see Czechia's role mainly as a donor and partner of UNICEF in fragile and least developed contexts, our own country has had to undergo a “stress test” of coping with a large wave of refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine. For our country this was an unprecedented situation we had to tackle – after all, per capita Czechia has hosted the highest number of Ukrainian refugees.

UNICEF's refugee response operation in the countries of our region has provided useful guidance, complementing the efforts made by our national system and its stakeholders, from central government ministries, through sub-national and municipal authorities, to Civil Society Organizations.

At the same time, we value the role played by the Czech National Committee for UNICEF. The results it has achieved over the years in terms of mobilizing public support for children in less fortunate parts of the world, rock-solid reputation of UNICEF in Czech society, as well as funds raised, are impressive. Our government would be pleased to see the meaningful efforts of the National Committee to continue in the long-term.

Thank you.