



# REPUBLIC OF POLAND

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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## **First Regular Session of the UNICEF Executive Board**

*Item 2: Opening segment: general statements*

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Krzysztof Szczerski  
Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations**

**New York, 6 February 2024**

*Mister President,*

Let me start by congratulating you on assuming the Presidency of the Executive Board. I wish you and the entire Bureau success in guiding our deliberations throughout 2024.

As a former member of the Bureau, I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to you, Madam Executive Director, and your knowledgeable team at UNICEF's headquarters and on the front lines. With the modest support of the Bureau, the Executive Board, and the entire membership, they tirelessly work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for all children worldwide. It was a pleasure to contribute to this noble endeavor throughout the past year.

*Mister President,*

Although Poland's role in the Bureau has concluded, our commitment to improving children's lives persists. Allow me to point to four pressing challenges that UNICEF, in collaboration with us all, is very well positioned to confront head-on:

First and foremost, the significant issue of **child food insecurity** and insufficient nourishment persists, stemming from conflicts, natural disasters, climate change, inequality, and poverty. Comprehensive strategies encompassing food distribution, nutritional education, and sustainable agriculture, are urgently needed.

Secondly, the concerning **decline in childhood vaccination coverage**, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, threatens decades of progress in disease prevention. As we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WHO's Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI), UNICEF, with support from Member States, should take the lead in revitalizing vaccination campaigns, rebuilding public trust, and ensuring unimpeded access of all children worldwide to critical immunizations.

Thirdly, the escalating repercussions of **environmental disasters** pose an existential threat to the future of all children. As we prepare to COP29 in Azerbaijan, our approach must extend beyond immediate aid, addressing the root causes of climate change through advocacy, education, and sustainable initiatives.

Lastly, **armed conflicts and humanitarian emergencies** have devastating impacts on children, leading to physical and emotional trauma, disrupted education, and

increased vulnerability to exploitation and violence. UNICEF and its partners should prioritize providing safe spaces, psychological support, and advocating for the protection of all children's rights.

*Colleagues,*

I invite you to consider the transformative impact your support for UNICEF can have in addressing these pressing challenges. Let us join UNICEF in its mission to make a meaningful difference and deliver results for every child.

Poland remains committed to playing its part.

*Thank you.*