

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Muhammad Abdul Muhith, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations at the First Regular Session of the UNICEF Executive Board, 2024**

**10 am – 1 pm, 6 February 2024**

**Venue: CR-1**

Thank you, **Mr. President**.

I warmly congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election.

I thank the Executive Director, Ms. Catherine Russell for her opening remarks highlighting the priorities of UNICEF in 2024.

**Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues,**

We express our concern that during the past year, new and protracted crises caused significant upheaval in the lives of the children. Humanitarian crises are severely impacting wellbeing of the children in many parts of the world. It has also experienced devastating disruptions in all sectors of development and the SDGs are not on-track.

**Mr. President,**

Allow me to raise a few specific points in this regard:

**First**, the year 2024 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Extended Programme of Immunization (EPI). My country Bangladesh has been implementing EPI in partnership with UNICEF and the UN Agencies, and it helped millions of children survive, thrive and fulfill their potential. We congratulate UNICEF on this occasion.

Despite a widespread success of this programme, the number of children not reached with essential immunization services increased in many regions,

especially in the global south. Madam Executive Director, how do you plan to continue bringing this lifesaving help and hope to children and families across the regions?

**Second**, the prolonged and overlapping crises have intensified the risk factors associated with Gender-Based Violence and other harmful practices, which has devastating consequences for individuals and for society. This further exacerbates the existing social inequalities and often violates human rights. A well-designed investment programme on adolescent girls' education, skilling and health is critical to break this cycle. A broader partnership among the UN Agencies, civil society organizations, women's rights organizations could complement the governments' actions to protect every girl.

We would like to know of your specific approaches to work with other UN Agencies and build wider partnerships to end Gender-Based Violence and other harmful practices.

**Third**, the effects of climate change on children's health, development and well-being are becoming increasingly apparent and the evidence of inexorable climate change is impossible to ignore. Children are more vulnerable than adults to the impacts of climate change and environment degradations. It is critical to better protect and climate proof the infrastructures that children rely on, including water and sanitation services.

In this context, how do you plan to fight the impacts of climate on children and adolescents, which is seen as a child rights crisis, with a view to build a resilient society?

I thank you all.