



**EU Statement on Agenda Items 2+3: Opening
statements by the President of the Executive
Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF
+ Annual Report of the Executive Director**

by

H.E. Mr. Silvio Gonzato
Deputy Head of Delegation
Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

United Nations
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Madam Executive Director, Mister President,

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

First of all, let me express our appreciation to UNICEF staff for their strong commitment and continued advocacy for children's rights during these truly challenging times.

As we all know, the COVID-19 crisis has had a particularly negative effect on children. We commend UNICEF's robust response to new needs while maintaining basic services wherever possible. We appreciate that thereby UNICEF has shown a solid partnership approach and encourage UNICEF to continue to strengthen these partnerships – both inside and outside the UN system. We also encourage continued UNICEF support to the implementation of the UNDS Reform in line with the new QCPR. We are pleased to see that UNICEF has already integrated several recommendations in its strategic documents and programmes. We ask UNICEF to keep the Board regularly updated on related

initiatives it leads or co-leads such as the Business Innovation Group.

We note in the Annual Report that despite a positive overall achievement in terms of outputs, child protection remains an area lagging behind. The pandemic has only further exacerbated the gap with regard to meeting the SDGs. We would like to hear more on which initiatives UNICEF plans to undertake in order to address this challenge.

We also noted the shortfall in humanitarian funding. Could you elaborate on how you plan to address future funding shortfalls while continuing to help families recover from the pandemic and address humanitarian emergencies?

We welcome the fact that UNICEF is drawing on the lessons identified in the evaluation of the current Strategic Plan for the development of the new one. We appreciate the focus on outcomes and identifying a limited number of priorities in order to be more flexible and better respond to children's needs in the future. We also welcome UNICEF's

intention to further strengthen its work through local actors and are looking forward to more information in this respect in due course.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder of the need to further enhance humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programming and prioritize interventions that strengthen national systems and capacities. We strongly support UNICEF's intention to better reflect its dual humanitarian-development mandate in its long-term strategy, including by systematically integrating a humanitarian lens in its new Strategic Plan. In a context of rising needs and reduced funding, it will be important to continue efforts for efficiency gains, through more common services and joint-up approaches with other UN agencies in a "one UN" approach. We would be grateful to hear about your plans to improve efficiency, ensure better value for money and increase cost effectiveness and accountability.

In closing, let me reiterate that the European Union remains strongly committed to promoting and protecting the rights of

children across the world, and to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic through our “Team Europe” approach, together with our Member States. We are looking forward to continuing our partnership with you - and to jointly make a positive change in the lives of children and young people.

Thank you.