

## **Agenda Item 2**

Joint statement at the

Opening Session to be delivered by the Vice-president and Deputy  
Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN,  
Marie-Louise Koch Wegter

Thank you Mr. President for giving me the floor.

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the regional group  
I represent/my regional group, WEOG.

First of all, let me congratulate you on your appointment, Madam  
Executive Director, and extend a warm welcome to the UNICEF Family.  
We look forward to working together and continuing our great partnership.

Madam Executive Director, you are **joining UNICEF at a crucial moment**  
**- at a time when millions of children globally** are still affected by the  
impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, by climate change and a historic number  
of protracted crises.

UNICEF has stayed and delivered for every child during the challenging  
and unprecedented circumstances presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.  
We appreciate the continued focus on enabling equitable access to  
vaccines, including through the joint efforts with other partners to establish  
the Global Covid-19 Vaccine Delivery Inter-Agency Coordination  
Structure. We also appreciate UNICEF's efforts to ensure safe returns to  
schools for all children and young persons. With its dual mandate and

operational expertise in both humanitarian assistance and development cooperation UNICEF has been and will continue to be a key partner in battling the pandemic worldwide and an essential partner as we build back better.

**You are also taking over the helm, at a historic moment for the UN,** where the Secretary General has launched his vision for our common future – Our Common Agenda. UNICEF has an essential role to play in the realisation of many of the recommendations set forth in Our Common Agenda, not least in the preparations of the upcoming Transforming Education Summit this year – and you can count on our support.

When joining the UNICEF-family you also join the greater UN family. UNICEF is not only a key partner to member states, but also to the UN system. UNICEF plays a central role in championing children's rights worldwide, in coordinating joint efforts and in contributing to system-wide results for children. This includes implementing the Children and armed conflict agenda in coordination with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on CAAC and advancing gender equality and the empowerment of girls around the world, including by defending and promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights. We welcome your commitment to UN reform, and to ensuring it manifests at country level.

**It is also a crucial time for UNICEF.** Last year we endorsed a new and ambitious Strategic Plan for UNICEF for 2022-2025 with a stronger focus on climate, humanitarian-development-nexus, sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality. We also welcomed a new comprehensive Gender Action Plan. Both plans are essential to achieving

results and realizing the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for every child and adolescent and we look forward to implementing them together.

As committed partners, we know that sufficient, timely and quality funding, in line with the commitments in the Funding Compact, is key both to the implementation of the Strategic Plan, and in allowing for the flexibility that has proved invaluable in these last few years.

Private sector resources are also indispensable for realizing UNICEF's Strategic Plan and the 2030 Agenda. UNICEF's engagement with businesses to leverage finance, influence and expertise including through UNICEF's National Committees is one of UNICEF's strongest assets.

We would also like to take this opportunity to commend UNICEF for the importance that the organization attaches to innovation. International development cooperation must be catalytic and innovative, and UNICEF has taken important steps and measures to embrace new approaches, partnerships, innovative ideas and inventions to create sustainable solutions to children's rights and needs. You can count on our continued support on this approach.

With the current initiatives on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, on the improvement of UNICEF's working culture and on the fight against discrimination and racism, we see UNICEF heading in the right direction. We are confident that under your leadership this will be further strengthened.

We would also like to emphasise the importance of UNICEF's mandate globally for supporting and promoting respect for the rights of children. .

In doing so, a human rights based approach is crucial for achieving sustainable results.

In conclusion, we have a challenging and exciting year ahead of us and we look forward to our joint collaboration to promote sustainable development, education, health and rights for every child. You can count on our unwavering support.

Thank you.