



# PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

**UNICEF Executive Board - General Discussion Statements**  
**First regular Session, New York, 8 – 11 February 2022**

**Check against delivery!**

**H.E. Ms. Lachezara Stoeva,**  
**Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN**

*New York, Tuesday, 8 February 2022*

**Mr. President,**

Since this is the first time I am taking the floor, I would like to congratulate you and the rest of the members on the Bureau on your assumption of the stewardship of UNICEF's Executive Board. You can count on Bulgaria's full support.

I would also like to welcome Ms. Catherine Russell to UNICEF. I wish you every success as Executive Director and look forward to closely collaborating with you.

UNICEF's work and efficiency in delivering assistance and protection to the most vulnerable has been indispensable and is ever more necessary in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its recovery, including disruptions in education. It is critical for UNICEF to keep its innovative approach when addressing the emerging challenges children are facing such as humanitarian emergencies, the impact of the digital environment, climate change and its consequences, as well as the very pandemic we are undergoing, while keeping specific focus on children with disabilities and girls.

In this regard, Bulgaria welcomes the Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 as it addresses these arising challenges and just as importantly – factors in gender and disability as cross-cutting issues. The document provides sufficient guidelines for the fulfillment of UNICEF's mandate and we are glad to see such a strong focus on the COVID-19 recovery and children in vulnerable situations. We also welcome the inaugural Global Forum on Children and Youth that took place in December 2021. A "Davos for Children", dedicated to their urgent and specific needs, while providing a platform for Member States to commit to concrete action proved to be extremely useful and much needed.

Bulgaria remains highly involved in advocacy, while raising awareness on critical initiatives related to children. As one of the co-chairs of the Group of Friends of Children and SDGs, Bulgaria co-organised the first-of-its-kind high-level meeting of the Group during the Global Forum bringing together Heads of Governments, Ministers, as well as child/youth advocates. During the meeting, the Chairperson of Bulgaria's Agency for Child Protection announced several new commitments, including the mechanism for collecting opinions and suggestions coming from children around the country set up by the National Council for Child Protection, as well as the efforts to reduce the vulnerabilities of Bulgarian children living in poverty. This year will be of key importance with regard to the cooperation between my country and UNICEF as we are looking forward to the adoption of Bulgaria's country programme for 2023-2027.

Lastly, we realize that predictable and reliable funding is crucial. Therefore, Bulgaria intends to keep its level of commitment to the core resources of UNICEF in 2022 as a flexible

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instrument for the fulfillment of the mandate of the Children's Fund. We remain committed to the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, especially inclusive education of children with disabilities and the process of deinstitutionalisation.

**Thank you, Mr. President.**