



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - New York

UNICEF Executive Board - First Regular Session Item 2 - Opening statement by the Executive Director of UNICEF

Statement by Italy

Thank you Mr. President.

Italy confirms its alignment with the joint statements and wishes to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

First, we wish once again to wholeheartedly congratulate the Executive Director, Madame Catherine Russell, for her appointment and thank her for her first comprehensive presentation. We very much look forward to working with you.

As the Executive Director has pointed out, the number of challenges for children, from health – including but not only related to COVID - to education, from social protection to food security and nutrition, are staggering and increasing. Both development and humanitarian contexts are worsening between protracted and complex crises and rising inequalities in many of the Countries hosting the highest numbers of children and youth.

UNICEF is a key actor and shall remain at the frontlines of the responses from the global level to the last mile and, in close cooperation with the rest of the UN Development System, is called to deliver effectively in these increasingly complex situations. Effectiveness is today necessarily linked with strengthened coordination and synergy with all UN and non-UN actors.

Regarding the pandemic, we commend the central work continuously carried out by UNICEF, including in the context of the Covax Facility. Italy, as a major donor and founder of the ACT-Accelerator and the Covax Facility, both in terms of financial support and vaccine-doses donations, is proud to continue working together to deliver vaccines and other tools in the most vulnerable Countries. Ultimately, last week, we

donated 4 million doses of vaccines to the people of Syria, in addition to the more than 20 Countries, especially in Africa, the Middle-East and Asia. We will continue to work together to accelerate global and equitable access to vaccines, also as part of EU/Team Europe initiative, the first global supporter of international solidarity for vaccines. In this regard, we would welcome the ED views on which are today the major criticalities in-Countries, in order to deliver on our goal.

Beyond COVID, we will continue to strengthen our work in the areas of education, social protection, health. We also recognize UNICEF's capacity to shape concrete responses to the emerging challenges which have clear impacts on children, but also in the areas of research, innovation and the digital world. UNICEF's role in knowledge and evidence creation is critical to succeed in these areas. In this sense, we wish to highlight the special role of UNICEF Office of Research Innocenti, hosted in Florence, and its growing potential. In addition, UNICEF needs to continue to lead in public-private partnerships, including through the key role of National Committees, of which the Italian National Committee is proudly one of the top donors to our Fund.

Mr. President,

We encourage UNICEF to continue focusing greatly on effectiveness, efficiency and on its multi-dimensional responses, as well as on strengthening integrated actions with the rest of the UN System along the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the acceleration of the implementation of the SDGs. In this phase, in full alignment with the UNDS and the Strategic Plans, we shall all recommit to effective multilateral development cooperation.

Thank you.