

As delivered

First Regular Session of the 2022 UNICEF Executive Board

Statement by Counselor Mr. Byungseok Yoo,

Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

10:00-13:00, Tuesday, 8 February 2022

Mr. President,

Allow me to join others in congratulating you on your assumption of the Presidency of the UNICEF Executive Board. I would also like to extend my warmest welcome to Madame Russell, the new Executive Director of UNICEF. I am confident that UNICEF will continue to successfully deliver its mandate to support and protect children's rights and future under her able leadership. Korea reaffirms its full support to the work of UNICEF as well as its Executive Director.

Before beginning our national statement, we would like to align ourselves to the joint statement delivered earlier by Switzerland.

Two years into COVID-19, we are still living in the midst of the pandemic. COVID-19 has severely changed people's lives and exacerbated global inequalities. The world has been thrown further off-track in its efforts to fulfill the SDGs. The challenges are indeed complicated. Such a reality demands that we work collectively to tackle the current obstacles. In this light, my delegation would like to briefly highlight three points.

First, equitable access to safe and effective vaccines is critical to ending the COVID-19 pandemic and returning to normal life. My delegation is pleased to note that UNICEF is playing a leading role in the procurement and distribution of vaccines in the COVAX Facility. For our part, Korea has decided to make a contribution of 15 million USD to improve vaccine access in Africa, in close coordination with the African Union and UNICEF. We look forward to our continued strong partnership with UNICEF to ensure equitable access to COVID-

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19 vaccines globally.

Second, we should keep in mind that children suffer most from poverty and inequality aggravated by COVID-19. My delegation commends UNICEF's continued commitment to resolve learning poverty worsened by COVID-19. We believe that innovative approaches including digital learning are essential to equalize future opportunities for children. Korea has been supporting UNICEF in its efforts to ensure quality learning for marginalized children. We look forward to further enhancing our partnership with UNICEF to build resilience in education against the pandemic.

Lastly, Korea strongly believes that effective monitoring and evaluation is as important as implementation of the mandate. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the overall direction of the Plan for Global Evaluations 2022-25, which is expected to contribute to the deepening of organizational accountability and learning. We would like to hear more about how key guidance on the work of UNICEF, such as in the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-25, the 2030 Agenda, and the 2020 QCPR, is reflected in the evaluation plan.

Thank you. /End/

(Time limit: 3 minutes)