Thank you, Madame President, for giving me the floor, and for your leadership during these challenging times.

At the outset, I want to acknowledge the importance of the UNICEF and our unequivocal support to the Executive Director H. Fore and all the staff of UNICEF at the headquarters and on the ground. We deeply appreciate and praise your dedicated work and tireless efforts to save lives and to improve the wellbeing of children around the world.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, the year 2020 will remain in our conscience as a year of dramatic changes, and painful loss. At the same time, as with any challenge - comes an opportunity to fight back and come up better prepared, stronger, and more resilient for future challenges.

This year we have witnessed the capabilities of UNICEF to react, mobilize, and implement rapid response facing an unfolding dramatic crisis at a major scale both geographically and in scope. UNICEF has once again proved its capacity, efficiency, and flexibility.

While we discuss strategic guidelines outlining the activities of UNICEF for a few years to come. We have to ensure not only the possibility to address the increasing needs for children and societies around the world, but also to be fully prepared for possible requirements to mitigate possible decrease of financial resources.

Madame President,

The pandemic has increased the vulnerability of many groups and societies. As the data shows that most insecure and vulnerable people suffer the most. We have to maintain a long-term perspective of needs and risks to address – healthcare, malnutrition, vaccinations access to water, and hygiene. We observe the danger that the advancement in these areas achieved in decades might be lost within a year.

While the remote learning is not an equivalent to an in-person studies, in many different circumstances its combination with an in-person education might be the most accessible and effective mean to ensure access and continuity of the educational process. Children who already had limited access to education before the pandemic, are effected the most by the current crisis today. Our priority must remain to minimize this gap.

Mental health and wellbeing will remain one of the biggest challenges and we appreciate the increased focus of UNICEF to this area. During socioeconomic turmoil, children and
especially girls are the most vulnerable. Lack of social communication and interaction with their peers, insecurity and anxiety are threats to children and youth around the world.

Madam President,

This year we have also witnessed a tragic explosion in Beirut with horrific consequences for many in Lebanon. We praise the swift, robust, and organized reaction of UNICEF in cooperation with other UN Agencies. This and other examples show the importance to further increase the level of cooperation among different UN Agencies, together with other partners. The implementation of UNDS reform is instrumental in this regard.

The increased use of modern technologies in cooperation with other social partners also opens new opportunities to increase efficiency, accessibility, data collection, and targeted response. We stress the importance of further scaling up the use of modern technologies.

Madam President,

My delegation stands ready to constructively cooperate and contribute to the work of the Executive Board. I look forward to the successful outcome of this session under your able leadership.

I Thank You,