Madam President,

My delegation wishes to congratulate you for your efforts in ensuring the continuity of the supervisory work of the UNICEF Executive Board despite the current challenges posed by the COVID-19. We wish you and your Bureau a successful session and assure you of our full support and cooperation.

We would also like to thank Ms. Henrietta H. Fore, Executive Director UNICEF for her statement.

Madam President,

The COVID-19 pandemic is unravelling decades of health, education and other advances for children across the globe. Schools are closed, children have missed on their immunization and more families are being pushed into poverty, with devastating effects on the health and well-being of children. Without urgent action, the COVID-19 pandemic could destroy the hopes and futures of an entire generation.

In Pakistan, we adopted an approach of “smart lockdown” in order to avoid COVID-19 related hunger and livelihood disruption as these could devastate more people than the disease itself. Our strategy of smart lockdown paid off and today Pakistan is among those, which are presented as success story in controlling the Pandemic. Our approach to deal with the health emergency was compounded by a robust economic strategy.

While we did ease some of the restrictions, but the schools and immunization for children were hard hit by the pandemic. However, as of 18 July, the Government has resumed polio outbreak and immunization response activities. Schools are also starting to re-open from 15 September in a phased manner.
We particularly appreciate the good work done by UNICEF in Pakistan during this difficult period. We hope that it will continue to facilitate the government efforts to safeguard the health and survival of the most vulnerable children by ensuring the continuity of critical services and increasing investments in education, health and child-sensitive social protection schemes.

UNICEF can also leverage its comparative advantage of extensive field presence to help developing countries overcome access to digital platforms and to share good practices on online teaching materials and interactive tools for teachers and students. These efforts will surely help member states in “building back better”.

**Madam President,**

There is no time to lose.

Without immediate funding and key lifesaving interventions to deliver essentials, strengthen health systems and maintain routine services for vulnerable children, an additional 6,000 children under five could die a day – **more than 4 children every minute** – due to the direct impact of COVID-19.

We hope that the international donors will step up and provide flexible and predictable funding to UNICEF for fighting the unprecedented impacts of Covid-19 pandemic.

**Madam President,**

Pakistan attaches the highest priority to protecting and promoting the rights of children. We believe in investing in children. They are the key to development and prosperity. My Government is pursuing a policy of reform to bring the poor and the vulnerable into the mainstream, with particular focus on development of children.

In conclusion, Pakistan, along with other members of the Board, will continue to endeavour to make its functioning more efficient and effective and work for achievement of a ‘world fit for children’.

**I thank you.**