

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Yoseph Kassaye, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations on behalf of the African Members of the Executive Board of UNICEF. Second Regular Session. 6-8 September 2022, New York.

1. Thank you, Madame President.
2. On behalf of the African members of the Board, allow me, at the outset, to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of the UNICEF Executive Board. We would like to assure you of the Group's support in discharging your responsibilities.
3. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Members of UNICEF Executive Board.

Madame President,

4. Our world continues to grapple with multiple challenges, both natural and manmade. The negative impacts of climate change continue to ravage the livelihood of societies, particularly children. Drought and floods are putting the lives of millions at risk all around the world. Conflicts and rising costs of food and energy are straining

the livelihoods, particularly the most vulnerable. These and many more challenges are draining the resources of member states thereby restricting their ability to effectively respond to the needs of children.

5. In this regard, the work of UNICEF is critical in providing the necessary support to enable member states address the challenges surrounding children.

Madame President,

6. The protracted drought in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, which is the worst of its kind, as highlighted by the Executive Director, is one that desperately requires the attention and action of UNICEF as it continues to impact the lives of millions, especially children. In addition to the challenges of hunger and malnutrition, the drought has exacerbated displacement, school disruption and exposed children to various health challenges.

7. Furthermore, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are still lingering impairing the socio-economic development of many developing countries. The African Group takes note of the strong equity gap in COVID-19 vaccine distribution as indicated in the 'Update on the Progress Achieved through the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery

Partnership'. The report indicates only eighteen per cent of the population in low-income countries and thirteen per cent 13 in countries dealing with humanitarian emergencies are fully vaccinated. This is a strong indication of the lack of strong immunization infrastructure in these countries. Overcoming those gaps requires efforts not only from UNICEF but also from other development partners who need to scale-up their support in financing health systems and social projects in the global south, particularly in Africa.

8. Finally, Madame President, we cannot continue with the business-as-usual of doing things in addressing these multifaceted crises which are undermining children's wellbeing and rights. While we appreciate the efforts of UNICEF to respond to the numerous emergencies, adequate and timely mobilization of resources is extremely critical if we are to collectively and timely address the challenges surrounding children, particularly in effectively responding to humanitarian emergencies in the world.

I thank you.