

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Muhammad Abdul Muhith, Ambassador &
Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations at the
Second Regular Session of the UNICEF Executive Board, 2022**

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I thank you, Madam President. I am delighted to see you chairing this important meeting. As this is my first statement at the UNICEF Executive Board, I would like to reiterate the steadfast commitment and support of Bangladesh for the programmes and policies of UNICEF.

I also thank the Executive Director of UNICEF Ms. Catherine Russell for her briefing on the efforts of the UNICEF to tackle the challenges of learning and vaccination faced by the global children in the face of the triple crises of conflict, climate change and the covid-19 pandemic.

Before the onset of the pandemic, in Bangladesh we ensured 100% enrollment for the children in the primary schools. We also achieved gender parity in the primary and the secondary schools. More than 80 per cent of our children under 12 were fully immunized with regular vaccines. However, many of these gains are now under threat. Most of the vulnerable countries are also facing the same scenario.

Against this backdrop, let me highlight a few specific issues which, we believe, will help us to ensure sustainable future for every child, everywhere:

First, vaccine divide persists as most of the children in the developing countries are yet to be vaccinated. We must remain alert so that our COVID-

19 vaccination drive does not derail our routine immunization initiatives. UNICEF needs to be equipped with necessary finances to ensure the smooth functioning of the routine immunization programmes along with the Covid vaccination drive.

Second, as poverty is rising again, many children in developing countries may face further challenges in accessing the education system. The situation may be particularly hard for the 1.6 billion children whose schooling has already been disrupted by the pandemic. To transform these children and youth into employable human resources, we must expand demand-driven and industry-responsive education that enable an ecologically sustainable transition for these countries. Hopefully, the upcoming 'Transforming Education Summit' will provide valuable guidelines in this regard.

Third, digital connectivity and access to digital tools and equipment are now a necessary stepping stone towards an effective and modern education experience. Keeping this in mind, UNICEF plans to reach 3.5 billion children by 2030 with world class digital learning. To achieve this, international community must mobilize resources so that we can ensure inclusion of all learners in this programme by eradicating the digital divide.

Finally, almost 259 million children, adolescents and youth remain out-of-school, mostly in the vulnerable countries. We must ensure their unhindered access to quality inclusive education, free from violence and discrimination. We must ensure comprehensive care services for them, including adequate nutrition and healthcare within the school settings.

I thank you all.

