

# **UNICEF Executive Board - General Discussion Statements Second Regular Session, New York, 6 – 8 September 2022**

**H.E. Ms. Lachezara Stoeva,  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN**

*New York, 6 September 2022*

**Madam President,**

I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of this post and wish you and all the members of the Bureau every success in steering the Executive Board to a successful session. I would also like to extend my gratitude to your predecessor Ambassador Rodrigo Carazo for the excellent way he led the Executive Board. You and the Bureau can count on Bulgaria's full support.

I thank ED Catherine Russell for the comprehensive overview of the work UNICEF is doing. Unfortunately, the picture she has painted of the situation of children depicts a very grim reality. The COVID-19 pandemic, the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, and climate change are putting additional strain to the already dire situation of many children.

As you have highlighted, ED Russel, the COVID-19 pandemic has not only had negative effects on health, it has led to disruptions on routine vaccinations of children and disruptions in education. Therefore, UNICEF's presence on the ground and efficiency in delivering assistance and protection play a crucial role in the efforts of the international community to safeguard the well-being of children.

For more than six months now, the illegal, unprovoked and unjustified military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has been depriving millions of Ukrainian children of a normal childhood, access to education and basic rights. Since the beginning of the war, over 1000 children have been killed or injured. Bulgaria currently hosts over 130 000 Ukrainian refugees, a large number of which are children. The Bulgarian government is working hard to ensure that they receive the necessary assistance. We work in close cooperation with UNICEF on a number of aspects, including on ensuring adequate excess to education.

The Transforming Education Summit is just around the corner. We need to make sure that we deliver after the Summit. Bulgaria, as a member of the Advisory Committee, has been advocating on focusing on the most vulnerable children, and on ensuring that they not only get back to school but also receive access to quality education. The Summit is only the beginning, consistent work and strong advocacy will be needed in order to translate the commitments into policies. In this regard, we look forward to continuing our collaboration with UNICEF, including through the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs, on that issue.

As we are nearing the end of first year of the new Strategic Plan 2022-2025, it is critical that UNICEF is well-resourced in order to be able to continue to deliver and to keep its innovative approach when addressing the emerging challenges children are facing. Therefore, predictable and reliable funding is crucial. Despite the scarcity of available funds, Bulgaria has maintained its

commitment to UNICEF's core resources, while also addressing the humanitarian context in specific countries.

Bulgaria will be a member of the UNICEF Executive Board as of next year and I look forward to working even more closely with you for the protection and promotion of children's rights and the well-being of children around the world.

Thank you!