

UNICEF Executive Board, First Regular Session

7-9th February 2023

Joint Statement on behalf of the Bureau delivered by H.E. Mr. Krzysztof Maria Szczerski,
Permanent Representative of Poland

Madame President

Executive Director Catherine Russell

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor of delivering this statement on behalf of the four Bureau-members, Argentina, Denmark, Rwanda, Tajikistan and my own country Poland.

I take this opportunity to express our profound gratitude to Mrs. Russell, for her comprehensive statement, which testifies to UNICEF's significant efforts and the important role UNICEF continues to play for children during these challenging times. UNICEF is charting an ambitious course to address these global challenges under Mrs. Russell's visionary leadership and we thank you for that.

We would also like to express our deep appreciation to all UNICEF staff for your tireless efforts towards achieving the SDGs for all children. We commend UNICEF's continued response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including through the procurement and delivery of vaccines, while addressing new challenges, including the food security crisis on the Horn of Africa, the war in Ukraine and the global learning crisis.

The exceptional circumstances in which we live today, threaten to undermine the well being and healthy development of children and require collective action. It is in times like these that we need to leverage the enormous strengths of UNICEF – and the entire United Nations system. This is exactly what UN reform is all about: a well coordinated, efficient and accountable UN development system. It requires that the UN organisations work together and deliver as one and we as a Bureau will do our part in striving for increased collaboration through cross-board coordination.

Please allow me to highlight some of the most urgent issues facing the world's children today, which UNICEF in cooperation and collaboration with its partners is well positioned to address:

First: For the first time in several decades, child poverty has increased considerably. One hundred million more children have been deprived of their basic needs, such as health, education, nutrition, which are not being fully met. The cost of inaction will be measured in children's lives.

Second: As you yourself said, Madame Executive Director, too many children are not learning, either because they are out of school or because the quality of the education they receive is

simply not good enough. Basic learning skills form the foundation of all higher learning. They are the platform on which children build better futures for themselves, their families and communities. We must help children and young people catch up on learning lost during the pandemic, while transforming education systems so that **all** students, regardless of gender, reach their full potential.

Third: Of all the challenges children face in the world today, none is more far-reaching than the intensifying impact of climate change. There is an urgent need to better adapt and address the effects of climate change, which affects the most vulnerable children and communities the most. We as a Bureau support UNICEF's prioritization of climate change and mitigation and the development of a climate action plan.

Madame President let me conclude by reiterating that you can count on the full support of the Bureau to assist UNICEF in doing what UNICEF does best - deliver on results for every child.

Thank you.