

Remarks During UNICEF Executive Board First Regular Session 2023

Ambassador Chris Lu
U.S. Representative for UN Management and
Reform
New York, New York
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Thank you, Madame President. And congratulations to my friend, Executive Director Cathy Russell, on a successful first year leading UNICEF.

At the outset, let me express our deep sadness at the heartbreaking loss of life across Türkiye and Syria and extend our condolences to those affected.

The U.S. is committed to providing support in the response efforts, and we are pleased by the assistance that UNICEF is providing.

This latest tragedy is the most recent example of UNICEF's steadfast advocacy and efforts to address the needs of our most precious population – youth and children. As UNICEF's largest contributor, the United States appreciates UNICEF's commitment to the health, well-being, and quality education for all children, including those forcibly displaced. We are also grateful for UNICEF's leadership to address child wasting and its partnership in the Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food "Call to Action," announced last fall by USAID Administrator Power.

Today, we would like to highlight several areas of interest.

First, we join UNICEF and other Member States in condemning in the strongest terms the Taliban's edicts that ban women from universities and from working for NGOs, this on top of an existing ban on girls from secondary school. Equal access to education and work is an essential component for the vitality and resiliency of populations, including all young adults and children, regardless of gender. We call on donors, UN agencies, and humanitarian partners to take a strong, unified stance against the

replacement of women with men in humanitarian aid delivery.

Second, the U.S. believes that inclusive partnerships that put local partners in the driver's seat are critical to effective, equitable, and sustainable development and humanitarian assistance. In this regard, we eagerly await UNICEF's localization strategy.

Third, we commend UNICEF on the launch of its Disability and Inclusion Policy and Strategy and welcome further discussion on its implementation, including in programming.

Finally, the principles of transparency, accountability, oversight, and efficiency – including as it relates to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment – are at the heart of thoughtful results-oriented program delivery. We call on UNICEF and the Executive Board to continue prioritizing these principles as we identify ways to strengthen the effectiveness of our work together.

Thank you.