



REPUBLIC OF POLAND

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Annual Session of the UNICEF Executive Board in 2023

Item 4: Annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Krzysztof Szczerski,
Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations**

New York, 13 June 2023

Madam President,

As a proud member of the UNICEF Executive Board Bureau, and a country hosting the UNICEF Emergency Response Office established after the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Poland would like to take this opportunity to commend the outstanding humanitarian actions undertaken by UNICEF throughout the year 2022, as detailed in the Annual Report.

We welcome this update, which provides a comprehensive overview of UNICEF's activities around the world. The report serves as a testament to UNICEF's unwavering commitment to making sure that every child has their needs met.

We are gravely concerned about the worsening humanitarian situation globally, in particular the growing vulnerability of children in crises and emergencies, from drought in the Horn of Africa, devastating flooding in Pakistan, crisis in Afghanistan, conflicts in Ethiopia and Yemen, to war in Ukraine. But we are also thankful to UNICEF, its staff and partners on the ground, for their consistent efforts to provide those in need with life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection under these very challenging circumstances.

As a representative of a country neighbouring the war zone, I would like to highlight UNICEF's activities in Ukraine, where it has played a crucial role in addressing the urgent needs of children and their families resulting from the ongoing Russian aggression.

The report points, among others, to UNICEF's commendable efforts to address the mental health and psychosocial needs of children and their families in Ukraine. By implementing innovative programs, UNICEF has helped to alleviate the traumatic impact of the conflict and foster resilience among the affected population. Such interventions are vital for restoring hope and building strength and resilience so that the children of Ukraine can achieve a brighter future.

The report also underscores UNICEF's commitment to inclusive education, aiming to ensure that all children, regardless of their background or circumstances, have access to quality education. In Ukraine, where countless schools have been damaged or destroyed, UNICEF's support has been instrumental in creating safe learning environments and providing educational materials for children in war-affected areas.

We also commend UNICEF's life-saving help to those children and their families who sought refuge in neighbouring countries, including my own. In this context, we reiterate the need to provide sustainable support aimed at long-term activities already ongoing. More than a year since the beginning of war, we are constantly confronted with the dire humanitarian needs that can be exacerbated at any moment, as we have just witnessed after the destruction of Nova Kakhovka dam and subsequent flooding. It is even more likely as the civilian infrastructure – including educational and health-care facilities – is treated by the aggressor as a military target.

Madam President,

Poland emphasizes the need for thorough documentation, monitoring, and reporting on any violations of the rights of a child, as well as ensuring accountability for perpetrators and just satisfaction for the victims. It concerns especially the unlawful deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia, as well as their illegal adoption and other actions aimed at changing their national and cultural identity.

Let me conclude by reiterating that you can count on the full support of Poland to assist UNICEF in doing what it does best – providing concrete, measurable and tangible help to every child.

Thank you.