

UNICEF Executive Board 2026 Annual Meeting 16-19 June 2026

Item 3: Annual Report for 2025 of the Executive Director of UNICEF

Statement of Türkiye

Mr. President,

Madame Executive Director

We thank UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell and the entire UNICEF team for their unwavering commitment and leadership in responding to the growing humanitarian challenges affecting children worldwide.

We take the floor with a deep sense of duty, reaffirming that Türkiye's commitment to UNICEF's core values remains unchanged. In a world increasingly affected by conflicts, inequalities and humanitarian crises, UNICEF's unique mandate remains as essential as ever.

Therefore, we welcome UNICEF staff's resilience in these increasingly challenging times.

At a time of growing pressure on the multilateral system, effective international cooperation remains indispensable. At the same time, national ownership and strong partnerships with governments at the country level are critical to ensuring sustainable and lasting results for children.

As highlighted in the Executive Director's report, funding cuts could lead to up to 5.4 million additional preventable deaths among children under the age of five by 2030. The consequences of such reductions are not abstract; they are measurable, tangible and preventable. Therefore, ensuring adequate, predictable and sustainable resources for UNICEF remains of critical importance.

We believe that Member States have a significant role to play in enabling UNICEF to deliver on its mandate. Türkiye continues to provide voluntary contributions to the Organization and calls upon all Member States with the capacity to do the same.

The protection and promotion of children's rights remain among Türkiye's highest priorities. Preventing all forms of violence and abuse against children is one of our key strategic objectives.

At the national level, the rights of the child are safeguarded under the Child Protection Law, enacted in 2005. Furthermore, the Child Rights Strategy Document and Action Plan 2023–2028 aims to foster a more inclusive society for children while strengthening protective and preventive services.

In April 2025, Türkiye joined the Pathfinding 2.0 initiative launched under the leadership of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children, which aims to develop more effective, inclusive, and sustainable solutions in ending all forms of violence against children.

At the international level, Türkiye is also party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and three Optional Protocols to the said Convention, which contain a comprehensive set of international legal standards for the protection and well-being of children.

Furthermore, Türkiye co-sponsored the resolution at the UN to dedicate an international day (11 October) to the girl child to recognize girls' rights and unique challenges they face. As in previous years, Türkiye co-organized the events to commemorate the international day at the UN in October 2024.

Türkiye gives particular attention to the rights of the girl child and takes comprehensive measures aimed at increasing girls' education rate as well as ending early and forced marriages.

Our determination in ending violence against children is not only evident at the national level, but also clearly and strongly expressed at international platforms.

As a long-standing partner, Türkiye stands ready to continue its effective cooperation with UNICEF in advancing the rights, protection and well-being of children worldwide.

Since its launch, Türkiye has been a staunch supporter of the UN80 Initiative and commends UNICEF's active engagement in the ongoing reform efforts.

We reiterate the central governance role of the Executive Boards in considering and recommending, within their remit, any proposed restructuring. We therefore underline the importance of an inclusive process based on open and substantive engagement with Member States.

We believe that efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in the use of resources should remain guiding priorities, and we encourage UNICEF to continue contributing actively to system-wide reform processes.

Thank you.