

Agenda Items 2 and 3

Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF

Chair, Madam Executive Director

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union as a donor.

First off, I would like to commend the work of UNICEF and the commitment of your staff and partners in the field, in the midst of a challenging funding environment and the implementation of reforms that are transforming the humanitarian landscape. Despite funding cuts, it is crucial that UNICEF can continue protecting children, including those on the move, and ensuring that their rights are upheld.

We welcome in particular UNICEF's commitment to the UN80 initiative and we thank you for the update submitted to the Board. We agree that reforms undertaken should strengthen the UN system's capacity to reach all of the most vulnerable children. Reform should ultimately be measured by whether it improves results for children, especially in fragile and underserved settings.

We welcome UNICEF's active participation in the New Humanitarian Compact, in particular the focus on practical priorities [such as integrated supply chains, nutrition in emergencies, humanitarian diplomacy, and data interoperability, where there is real potential to improve delivery and coordination.]

At the same time, we agree on the importance of safeguarding country-level presence, specialised expertise and child-focused accountability as reforms advance. This is also in line with the new EU Joint Communication on Humanitarian Action. We look forward as well to the implementation of UNICEF and WFP's new unified approach to the treatment of acute malnutrition. We also commend UNICEF's participation in the DataQuint and we strongly support the operationalisation of a shared humanitarian data model which would improve interoperability and evidence-based programming. As these systems become more connected, how is UNICEF addressing safeguards, including data protection, privacy and exclusion risks?

The EU highly values its partnership with UNICEF on quality education, skills and opportunities for young people, including support for their transition to employment and active citizenship. We also strongly encourage UNICEF to continue strengthening

its support to equitable access to education, including in emergency settings.

Despite funding cuts, we hope UNICEF's internal reforms will enable it to pursue its mandate and remain a driving force in child protection, notably for children affected by armed conflict and migration, as well as in gender equality. This must include the meaningful participation of children and youth, girls and women, persons with disabilities and LGBTIQ+ persons.

The EU has been and will remain a major donor to UNICEF across its humanitarian and development mandate and we look forward to our continued partnership in building a better future for children worldwide.

Thank you.