Agenda Item 2
Statement on behalf of the Nordic Countries delivered by the Danish PR
H.E. Ambassador Martin Bille Hermann, at the
Opening Session of the Second Regular Session

Madam Executive Director, Dear Henrietta,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Nordic Countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. We align ourselves with the joint statement delivered by New Zealand.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation and gratitude for the strong commitment and remarkable dedication you have shown over the past 3,5 years to UNICEF and more importantly to the world’s children.

Henrietta, you have often referred to UNICEF and the Executive Board as a family.

It is difficult to say goodbye to a close family member and even more to the matriarch and head of “our” family.

As a family we have achieved many accomplishments that we can be proud of.
Together we have celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. This year we are celebrating the 75th anniversary of UNICEF.

Under your leadership, UNICEF has become an increasingly innovative organisation – from using drones to deliver vaccines or big data to map schools. You have increased public private partnerships and bolstered UNICEFs finances to the benefit of children all over the world. And you have underscored the importance of flexible funds, which allows UNICEF to deliver and adapt swiftly at country level.

Under your leadership UNICEF “stayed and delivered” in many of the world’s most difficult and volatile settings. We would in particular like to acknowledge UNICEFs swift and agile response to the ongoing situation in Afghanistan and your advocacy for women and girls’ rights to education and to be part of society on equal terms with boys and men.

UNICEF also managed to stay and deliver for every child during the challenging and unprecedented circumstances presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. We appreciate the continued focus on enabling equal access to vaccines and the efforts to ensure safe returns to schools for all children and young people. UNICEF has been a key partner in battling the pandemic worldwide and will continue to be an essential partner as we hopefully move beyond the pandemic in the years to come.

UNICEF is not only a key partner to member states, but also to the UN system. You have been a true leader in championing children’s rights worldwide, and in coordinating joint efforts. We commend your commitment to UN reform, and to ensuring it manifests at country level.
We also wish to express our gratitude for the work you have done on gender equality, empowerment of women and girls and on combatting Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment - both within UNICEF and for the children that UNICEF serves. You, yourself are a shining example of what women and girls can accomplish, if they are given the chance. You are a role model for girls and young women across the globe.

Under your leadership, UNICEF has developed an ambitious Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 and a comprehensive Gender Action Plan. Both are essential to realizing the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for every child. UNICEF’s mandate and strengths are key and children’s rights need urgent attention in today’s world. We wish to express our appreciation for the inclusive and consultative process in developing these frameworks and their strong focus on gender equality, climate, innovation and human rights. You can count on our full support to both the Strategic Plan and the Gender Action Plan and we look forward to implementing them together with UNICEF and your successor.

It has been a true honor and privilege working with you. Thank you for your service to UNICEF and your leadership of our family. Now you must devote your time and energy to your “real” family and we wish you and your loved ones all the best for the future.

Thank you.