Thank you very much for giving me the floor.

At the outset, Australia would like to sincerely thank Henrietta Fore, the outgoing Executive Director, for your tireless efforts, Henrietta, over the past three and a half years. Under your guidance, UNICEF has adeptly responded to unprecedented challenges and numerous crises, while still delivering on its core business. We wish you all the very best for your future.

UNICEF, as you know, remains a very important partner for Australia, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. We are pleased to see the organisation step up its efforts to support children at a time of increasing global challenges, as the COVID-19 pandemic endures, as long term humanitarian crises continue, and as new challenges emerge.

UNICEF is playing a critical role helping to address and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, felt by children and families globally. We commend UNICEF for its leadership shown in system wide efforts including the Global Humanitarian Response Plan and the Global COVAX Facility. We are also pleased to partner with UNICEF in the COVID-19 vaccine delivery for the Pacific and for South East Asia.

Australia acknowledges UNICEF’s rapid response to recent sudden-onset crises, such as the floods in Vietnam and the Beirut Port explosion, while also maintaining lifesaving support in response to the Syria, Yemen and Rohingya crises – and now, of course, the scaling up of programmes in Afghanistan to
support children and women, through the delivery of education, health, nutrition, and water services.

We are very pleased that Australia and UNICEF will later this year finalise a new Strategic Partnership Framework to begin in 2022. This arrangement will include multi-year core funding to align with and support the delivery of UNICEF’s new Strategic Plan – which we look forward to endorsing in this Session, and thank UNICEF for your comprehensive and consultative process to date. It will also allow us to progress collective priorities including implementing the UN Secretary General’s reform agenda, advancing gender equality, and supporting action on the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment.

We look forward to deepening our relationship with UNICEF through this new arrangement, and our continued engagement in-country and in the Executive Board.

I thank you very much.