



Statement

by

**H.E. Dr. Amal Mudallali**

Permanent Representative of **Lebanon**

to the United Nations

at the

**UNICEF Executive Board**

First regular session **2022**

New York, February 8, 2022

*Check against delivery*

***Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations  
866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 531, New York, NY 10017***

Dear Ambassador Carazo,

I would like to start by congratulating Ms. Catherine M. Russell on her appointment as Executive Director of UNICEF. We are lucky to have such a leader at this critical time for children around the world. I assure you Madam Executive Director of our full support.

I would also like to bid farewell to Ms. Henrietta Fore and thank her for her leadership throughout the years.

Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of the Executive Board of UNICEF, and to thank Ambassador Rytis Paulauskas for his work and dedication as President of the Board in 2021.

I would like to extend our gratitude to the bureau members for their tireless efforts throughout the past year.

Mr. President,

It is my pleasure and honor to be speaking as Vice President of UNICEF Executive Board, after being elected to represent the Asia Pacific region in 2022.

I am delighted to be part of the 2022 Bureau alongside you Mr. President, and my colleagues Ambassador Michal Mlynár of Slovakia, Ambassador Taye Atske, of Ethiopia, and Ambassador Marie-Louise Koch Wegter (DPR of Denmark) as Vice Presidents.

Mr. President,

Couple of days ago, the tragedy of Ryan, a little boy from Morocco, gripped the whole world. Ryan fell in a well. And despite all the efforts, which literally moved a mountain to rescue him, and despite the prayers of the world, he did not make it. May his Soul Rest In Peace.

The way the world came together as one and embraced the 5-year-old boy reminded us all of the values of humanity.

This tragedy should be a lesson to us all that we must do everything in our capacity and deploy all efforts to protect and save all the Ryans of the world who fell in wells of poverty, conflicts, and rendered homeless around the world. We must save our children everywhere in the world because they are our future.

Mr. President,

As we celebrate this year UNICEF's 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are proud that the word UNICEF around the world is synonymous to compassion, care and love of children. In addition to its stellar name, UNICEF plays a crucial role in protecting children around the world, and we pledge to continue working with you all to rebuild and reimagine a better future for every child.

Mr. President,

Lebanon is proud to be serving on the bureau of UNICEF board this year, which testifies once more to the importance Lebanon attaches to the role and mission of UNICEF.

Our partnership with UNICEF dates back from its inception and in 1948 UNICEF opened its first outpost in the Eastern Mediterranean in Lebanon.

Mr. President,

The COVID-19 pandemic left considerable impact on Children around the world, affected poor children in developing countries more profoundly than others. From developmental issue to hunger and malnutrition, lack of access to health care and treatments, to disruption in education and the widening gap among countries in education access. More than 616 million students are still affected by school closures, according to UNICEF. While school closures have affected children in general, girls have been particularly hit, as they are usually the first to be forced out of school and in many instances forcibly married.

We should ensure that school gates open and open in a safe way for our children and ensure every child's right to go to school and benefit from the fundamental right to quality education. We also have to protect children from the other pandemic of Fake news and disinformation. Children are as a victim to this pandemic as their parents, but even more. We need to focus on defeating this pandemic also for the sake of the children.

Mr. President,

We commend UNICEF on its leading role in procuring and supplying COVID 19 vaccines, and we call on UNICEF to continue this crucial work that focuses on vaccine equity to ensure a more equitable distribution of COVID 19 vaccines especially for low and middle-income countries.

We also commend the excellent work done by the UN on strong and diverse partnerships between UNICEF and international partners especially with the international financial institutions. We support UNICEF in strengthening these partnerships and elevating them to strategic levels for only by working together with partners we can guarantee continued and robust support for children's wellbeing, and we can fulfill their increasing needs due to the multiple challenges that the world is facing today.

Mr. President,

Finally, allow me to reassure you of our full support and to reiterate that we will diligently work with bureau members to assist UNICEF in its mission to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfill their potential.

Thank you.