



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

by

H. E. Mr. Michal Mlynár

**Permanent Representative of Slovakia
to the United Nations**

at the

First regular session of the Executive Board of UNICEF

**9 February 2021
New York**

-Check against delivery-

Thank you Madam President,

First, I would like to congratulate you and other bureau members for assuming your functions, and we look forward to working with you as well as with other Executive Board members, as Slovakia joins the Board for the first time.

We thank the Executive Director Fore for her opening remarks and we commend her work together with UNICEF staff both in New York and abroad. Their tireless efforts and commitment, while overcoming challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, proved once again to be the cornerstone of assistance to children worldwide.

As the Executive Director stated herself, in March last year, “our world changed entirely”. The pandemic took its toll on children, and together with imposed lockdowns, it stripped them of their right to education, nutrition, healthcare, social contacts and physical activities. They face domestic violence, hunger, discrimination while their future and prospects are in question. The role and activities of UNICEF are needed more than ever.

2021 marks the 75th anniversary of UNICEF, and we shall use this important milestone as an opportunity to look-back on lessons learned while planning for the years ahead. Let me assure you of Slovakia’s strong commitment to the UN Development System reform, and we stand ready to help in its implementation as reflected in the upcoming UNICEF Strategic Plan.

UNICEF is one of the key multilateral partners for Slovakia, and we are proud that one of the 33 UNICEF National Committees is in Slovakia. In 2019, our foreign minister Miroslav Lajčák signed a Memorandum of Understanding between UNICEF and the Government of Slovakia, to further expand our partnership advocating for children's rights to protection, education, health and nutrition around the world. The MOU strengthens our joint efforts in development and humanitarian assistance as outlined in the Medium-Term Strategy for Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic for years 2019-2023 and in the UNICEF Strategic Plan.

Madam President,

Since UNICEF is funded exclusively by voluntary contributions, Slovakia is always glad to support the Fund by voluntary contributions, and we have done so for many years in the past. I am pleased to confirm, that this year again, the Slovak Government has decided to contribute financially to UNICEF's activities. Slovakia will continue to support UNICEF also in the future as it remains our key partner in addressing various crises around the world.

Thank you!