

Agenda Item 2
Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and
the Executive Director of UNICEF
Oral question

Madam Executive Director, Madam President,

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

We align with the joint statement delivered by Denmark. We appreciate your intervention and the opportunity to raise questions.

First, let me congratulate UNICEF with its 75th anniversary and for “being there” over the years to support children all over the world. We value in particular UNICEF’s quick response to the pandemic and results achieved so far, and we commend UNICEF staff for their strong commitment during these challenging times.

As you know, the EU has responded quickly through a joint “Team Europe” approach and so far, the EU and its Member States have mobilized 38.5 billion euros. The EU also initiated a Vaccines Initiative together with a Pledging Conference to ensure global and equitable access to vaccines, which raised 15.9 billion euros, of which 11.9 billion by EU Member States, the Commission and the European Investment Bank.

We can only overcome this pandemic together. In our response the Access to Covid-19 Tools – Accelerator and particularly the COVAX facility plays a key role in ensuring fair and equitable worldwide access to vaccines, but also diagnostics and therapeutics.

We encourage UNICEF to also continue with a strong “One UN” approach and ensure a maximum of synergies with other aid organizations, including the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

As you rightly said, the pandemic has upended the lives of children. We are very concerned by the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis, especially on children already at risk such as girls, children on the move,

children with disabilities, children deprived of liberty and unaccompanied children. You mentioned four key needs to support children during the pandemic (distance learning, immunisation, water and mental health). We appreciate the examples you provided on how you work with partners on these issues and would welcome hearing more about the lessons learned and best practices so far, particularly in implementing UNDS reform and strengthening the nexus approach, and how these lessons learned will inform the new Strategic Plan and programming for building back better.

Thank you