



REPUBLIC OF CUBA
Permanent Mission to the United Nations
315 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016

**Item 2 Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the
Executive Director of UNICEF**

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Pedro Luis Pedrosa Cuesta, Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of Cuba to the United Nations
2021 First regular session of the UNICEF Executive Board
9 February 2021**

Ms. President,

I thank the Executive Director for her valuable and comprehensive statement and the members of the Bureau for the preparations and documentation provided for this session.

My delegation highly appreciates the commitment and work done by UNICEF over the past year to provide a broad and coordinated response to support our countries in light of the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize the continued support of UNICEF to our national for the promotion of education, health and the participation of every child and adolescent in Cuba, in particular in the difficult context of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Ms. President,

The well-being of our children is an inherent purpose of the Cuban social project. Health care and education services are universal and free of charge for all our population at all levels, including our children.

Cuba is among the 35 countries in the world with the lowest infant mortality rate. By the end of 2020, infant mortality rate was 4.9 per 1,000 live births. Child survival rate, during the first five years of life, has been over 99 percent for the last 20 years. The entire child population is vaccinated against 13 diseases, including six that remain eliminated and severe malnutrition in children is absent in Cuba. We have achieved universal pre-school education, with 99.5 per cent of children under 6 years of age integrated into the education system.

Ms. President,

With regard to the next UNICEF's Strategic Plan, taking into account the current context posed by the COVID-19 and the scope and goals to be accomplished in the next four year cycle, we consider this will be the most ambitious

Plan that UNICEF has ever undertaken. In this regard, my delegation will engage actively and constructively during its consideration and approval, in order to ensure that the final document supports the well-being of children and adolescents, in particular those who are living in the most vulnerable conditions.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my delegation's full support to the work and mandate of UNICEF, both in Cuba and in the rest of the world, and the call to continue strengthening its presence in developing countries.

Thank you.