

Annual Session of the 2021 UNICEF Executive Board

Statement by Ambassador Hyunjoo OH,

Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the UN

10:00-12:00, Tuesday, 2 June 2021

Mr. President,

First of all, congratulations on your assumption of the prestigious role as the President of the UNICEF Executive Board, As a bureau member, I would like to render my full support and look forward to working with you as a one team. I also would like to thank Madame Fore and her team for their uninterrupted service and support to children around the world despite the enormous challenges caused by the ongoing pandemic. It is moving and heartwarming to see that UNICEF staff deliver vaccines to countries in need.

In the hope that we move forward with the lessons learned from our joint response,, I would like to highlight the following three points.

First, we must work together to ensure equitable access to and timely distribution of COVID-19 vaccine.

COVID-19 has exacerbated health inequalities, and the global pandemic poses an unequal to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of children and their families. Bearing our commitment to leaving no child behind in mind, the Republic of Korea is pleased to note that UNICEF is playing a leading role in the COVID-19 Supply Chain System Criteria, especially, the procurement and distribution of vaccines in the COVAX Facility. We are assured that UNICEF can lead the success of this important mandate, delivering 2 billion vaccine doses to more than 180 countries by the end of 2021. For its part, the Korea has supported strengthening health systems, promoting equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines through its commitment to the COVAX AMC, as well as building resilience against shocks.

Second, we need to make best use of what we have learned and achieved during the pandemic.

The post-pandemic recovery could take years to come, and this arrival could come much later to the most vulnerable. To mitigate the unequal recovery from the pandemic, it is essential to fully galvanize our findings and lessons from the pandemic. In this connection, I would like to take note that UNICEF has provided innovative ways including distance learning through coordination with the health, WASH, and child protection sectors during school closures. I look forward to hearing more about these achievements, as well as the way forward to equalize future opportunities for the children.

Lastly, we should redouble our collective and efforts to resolve underlying causes of the fragile situation.

COVID-19 has proved that our coordinated response to humanitarian crises can indeed serve as a concrete grounding to deal with the unprecedented global challenge. In this connection, I am pleased to note that the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-25 has affirmed its strategic approach for new cross-cutting programmes on resilience, peacebuilding, and sustaining peace. Given the great importance of the H-D-P nexus, Korea looks forward to further strengthening its partnership with UNICEF to address the root cause of vulnerabilities. I thank you. /END/