



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
B U L G A R I A  
T O T H E U N I T E D N A T I O N S**

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**UNICEF Executive Board  
Second Regular Session, New York, 14 - 16 September 2016 (CR 2 CB)**

**H.E. Mr. Georgi Panayotov, Ambassador,  
Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN**

**General Statements**

***New York, Wednesday, 14 September 2016***

**Mr. President,**

I would like to thank the Executive Director Mr. Anthony Lake for his insightful presentation and to commend him for his able leadership and his strong commitment to children. UNICEF's dedicated work is instrumental for bringing real change for children and for improving children's quality of life in all parts of the world.

**Mr. President,**

One year after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development the world still holds the hope for a better future for children who were for the first time recognized as true agents of change in international affairs. As co-chair of the Group of Friends of Children and SDGs Bulgaria continues to strongly advocate for integrating children's human rights in all aspects of development with the firm conviction that children should be at the heart of all global action.

**Mr. President,**

This year marks also the 70th anniversary of UNICEF - seventy years in which the world has become a better place for children thanks to UNICEF's tireless work and dedicated efforts to reach every child everywhere. UNICEF has made an enormous contribution for the protection of children and the advancement of children's agenda worldwide which is commendable.

Despite the great progress for children in the last seventy years, inequality still persists in far too many places. With the growing risk of conflicts and natural disasters in different parts of the world we are facing unprecedented humanitarian crises that affect children adversely. As the Executive Director highlighted in his presentation we need to act upon our commitments now in order to achieve tangible results for children and strengthen the faith in the institutions.

**Mr. President,**

The protection of children is a key priority for Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Government has established a set of measures for promoting the rights and well-being of all children, especially children with disabilities.

Bulgaria has achieved significant progress in the process of deinstitutionalization which enters its final stages. The Government implements targeted measures for the prevention of child abandonment by supporting families with children and providing foster care and social services in the community, including through an innovative system of integrated services for early childhood development which ensures better access to child care centers, quality education and advanced healthcare services for small children.

UNICEF is a valuable partner in those efforts and has played a crucial role in all major national initiatives related to children's rights, including by forging fruitful partnerships with the civil society, the private sector and media to advocate for child protection. UNICEF's presence in Bulgaria is instrumental for achieving sustainability of results for children.

In view of the above and considering also the universality and best interests of the child principles inherent in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Bulgaria reiterates its full support to UNICEF's work in countries transitioning from upper-middle-income to high-income status and the continuation of UNICEF's programmatic engagement in high-income countries.

Bulgaria highly appreciates also the work of the Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and expresses full support for the CPDs of the countries in our region. I would like to commend especially the Director of the Regional Office - Madame Marie-Pierre Poirier - for her strong commitment to the promotion of children's rights in our region and in particular for her immense contribution to addressing the challenges related to the unprecedented mass migration in Europe.

Being a transit and a host country of thousands of migrants and refugees Bulgaria is making every effort, in cooperation with the EU, UNICEF and other partners, to ensure good living conditions for all those fleeing from the scourge of war and seeking refuge by paying particular attention to the specific needs of migrant and refugee children, especially unaccompanied children.

**Mr. President,**

The integration of children and youth with disabilities is an important part of the child care reform in Bulgaria. As President of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the period 2017 - 2018 Bulgaria is determined to further advance the human rights of children and youth with disabilities at global level, including through promoting inclusive education and expanding the opportunities for every child to reach their full potential.

**Mr. President,**

I would like to reiterate Bulgaria's full support to the work of UNICEF and to assure you of my country's strong commitment to the promotion of the human rights of children at national, regional and global levels.

**Thank you, Mr. President.**