



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BULGARIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**UNICEF Executive Board
Annual Session, New York, 13 – 16 June 2017 (CR 3 CB)**

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

General Statements

New York, Tuesday, 13 June 2017

Mr. President,

I would like to thank the Executive Director Mr. Anthony Lake for a comprehensive annual report and for his valuable insights.

2016 was particularly challenging for children with the growing number of humanitarian crises. O DFG t hard work and efficiency in delivering help and protection to the most vulnerable was instrumental for achieving results for children even in the most difficult contexts. Over the years UNICEF has contributed immensely to improving children s safety, strengthening the rights of every child and advancing the child agenda around the world.

Bulgaria supports these efforts and has significantly increased its contributions to UNICEF. The largest part of Bulgaria s humanitarian and development assistance is realized through UNICEF.

Bulgaria commends UNICEF for the successful implementation of the current Strategic Plan and the progress made in the seven outcome areas and the cross-cutting priorities. The Bulgarian Government welcomes the proposed new Strategic Plan and highlights the importance of strengthening the human rights aspects. The transparent and consultative process of preparing the new Strategic Plan is laudable.

Bulgaria is strongly committed to promoting children s rights in all its national policies and its global action.

All national policies related to children follow a human rights based approach taking into consideration the best interest of the child principle and the specific needs of every child, with a particular focus on children and youth with disabilities.

The active involvement of civil society, social partners, media and the private sector is crucial for the success of all child related efforts and for securing funding.

With the increased migrant and refugee flows in recent years Bulgaria has remained a strong supporter of children's rights following the principle that a child is first a child and should be protected in all circumstances. The Bulgarian Government grants refugee and migrant children the same rights as Bulgarian children, including free of charge education, healthcare and other services, which is crucial for their smooth integration in society.

As co-chair of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs and a strong advocate for children Bulgaria continues to actively promote children's rights in all intergovernmental processes.

In recent years Bulgaria has achieved significant progress in child protection and has been recognized as a leader in the region in child care. UNICEF is a valuable partner in those efforts. The positive example of Bulgaria with regard to deinstitutionalization and protection of migrant and refugee children is successfully shared with countries not only in our region but in other regions facing similar challenges which contributes to strengthening horizontal cooperation in UNICEF as well. Bulgaria has the ambition to become a regional hub for the promotion of children's rights which is reflected as an underlying principle in the new Bulgaria Country Programme Document to be considered by the UNICEF Executive Board in September.

Thank you, Mr. President.