



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

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**UNICEF Executive Board
Second Regular Session, New York, 12 – 15 September 2017 (CR 2 CB)**

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

Country Programme Documents - CPD for Bulgaria - National Statement

New York, Wednesday, 13 September 2017

Mr. President,

I would like to thank the Regional Director for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States Ms. Afshan Khan for her presentation and for her exemplary leadership focused on delivering results for children in our region, as well as the UNICEF Representative in Bulgaria Ms. Maria Jesus Conde for the excellent cooperation with Bulgarian authorities in designing and implementing policies and programmes promoting child rights. I extend special thanks also to UNICEF's Executive Director Mr. Anthony Lake for the continued support to Bulgaria's vision for building a better future for the children in our region and beyond.

The Bulgarian Government welcomes the new Country Programme Document for 2018 - 2022 which was prepared in close coordination with the Bulgarian authorities taking into consideration the priorities of the Government with respect to children.

The proposed CPD recognizes the significant progress achieved by Bulgaria in the childcare reform, early childhood development, education, access to justice, prevention of violence against children, etc., as well as the increased technical and financial assistance that Bulgaria is providing to other countries for advancing child rights.

Bulgaria is strongly committed to promoting child rights and child participation and has been recognized as a leader in the region in child care in recent years. The positive example of Bulgaria has been successfully shared with countries in our region and beyond which strengthens UNICEF's horizontal cooperation as well. Building on those achievements Bulgaria has the ambition to become a Regional Hub for UNICEF - a priority that underpins the new CPD and I would like to reiterate Bulgaria's strong determination to realize this potential in the best interest of children.

All child policies in Bulgaria follow a 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 with disabilities, as well as children on the move. Following the principle that a child is first a child the Bulgarian Government grants refugee and migrant children the same rights as Bulgarian children.

Mr. President,

The strong partnership that has evolved over the years between the Bulgarian Government and UNICEF is instrumental for ensuring sustainability of results for children in my country. As a valued partner in all major national initiatives concerning children, UNICEF contributes significantly to the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of child-focused policies and programmes. UNICEF has played a crucial role also for establishing fruitful partnerships with the civil society, social partners, the private sector and media to advocate for child protection and raise awareness about child issues.

The previous programming period witnessed a growing number of individuals and corporate partners supporting the realization of child rights in Bulgaria. Some strategic corporate partnerships are recognized as best practices for integrated corporate engagement and corporate social responsibility, both in Bulgaria and worldwide.

Mr. President,

The Government of Bulgaria has played an active role in promoting child rights internationally as a member of UNICEF Executive Board in 2013 - 2015 and Vice-President of the Board in 2014, as well as a co-founder and co-chair of the Group of Friends of Children and the SDGs at the UN. Child rights were at the centre of Bulgaria's Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe whose Strategy for the Rights of the Child was launched in Sofia in April 2016. Child rights remain high on the agenda for the upcoming Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first semester of 2018. Bulgaria has highlighted child rights as a main priority in its bid for a Human Rights Council seat for the period 2019 - 2021.

Mr. President,

I would like to reaffirm Bulgaria's strong support for UNICEF's work worldwide. Bulgaria has significantly increased its contributions to UNICEF recently and I am proud to say that currently the largest part of Bulgaria's humanitarian and development assistance is realized through UNICEF.

Bulgaria looks forward to a continued close partnership with UNICEF in the best interest of children with the aim to further promote child rights at national, regional and global level.

Thank you, Mr. President!