Statement by the Permanent Mission of El Salvador to the United Nations on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)

UNICEF EXECUTIVE BOARD: ANNUAL SESSION

New York, 13th June 2017
Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Member States of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

We congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau for your leadership and hard work. CELAC countries would like to recognize the efforts made by UNICEF in preparing the relevant documentation to be considered by the Board and the information provided by the Executive Director, Mr. Anthony Lake, in his presentation.

We express our strong commitment to the promotion, protection and respect of all Human Rights, without any discrimination, as a fundamental basis for sustaining the democratic life of our nations. We underline the importance of implementing measures aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of vulnerable people, at the same time, we will promote gender equality, decent work and will work to eradicate child labor in our region as part of actions aimed at prioritizing the rights of children and adolescents as subjects of law.

In this regard, the situation of children and adolescents is a priority for Latin American and Caribbean countries. The leadership of our region is well recognized in advancing the agenda on the rights of the child. Nevertheless, we should keep in mind the challenges we still face in reaching all goals and international commitments related to the well-being and rights of children.

We also recognize that investing in all children and youth is imperative for building the human capital required to turn demographic transitions into grown dividends that reduce poverty and generate prosperity.

Education is a human right, a social investment and one of the most important public good to achieve the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its SDG’s, ensuring that no one is left behind including our children and adolescents. This human right is the mean to guarantee to present and future generations more and better opportunities in a globalized world. We believe in the importance of improving the quality and equity in education in order to ensure the social inclusion of children, adolescents and young
people in all education services from primary to higher education in order to eradicate poverty and inequality.

Mr. President,

CELAC appreciates the presentations by the agency on the draft UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018 to 2021, along with all related documents including the integrated budget 2018 to 2021, the Results Framework, the Gender Action Plan 2018 to 2021 and cost recovery policies. The group wishes to emphasize that the strategic plan should be aligned with the QCPR and the 2030 Agenda. CELAC looks forward to the full adoption of the draft Strategic Plan in September 2017.

Our countries reaffirm the commitment to promote gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, as necessary conditions to achieve full realization and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms including the right to development, in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, we reiterate our support to UNICEF Gender Action Plan.

Moreover, we recently celebrate the first review of the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, which was adopted the last year. In this sense, we have committed to taking all appropriate steps to progressively eliminate new HIV infections among children and to ensure the elimination of mother-to-child HIV transmissions. The support of UNICEF, in coordination with UNAIDS, WHO and PAHO is crucial to our national and regional efforts in order to achieve those commitments.

We recognize that bullying, including cyberbullying, can take both direct and indirect forms, from acts of violence and aggression to social exclusion, and that, although rates differ from country to country, bullying, online or in person, can have a negative impact on the rights of the child and is among children's main concerns, affecting a high percentage of children and compromising their health, emotional well-being and academic work. We acknowledge the need to prevent and eliminate bullying among children everywhere and therefore, we request UNICEF to continue to advance on measures to support States in their efforts to prevent and protect children from any form of bullying.
As a region integrated mostly by middle income countries, we still have important challenges to fully protect the rights of children. We are working to address vulnerabilities resulting from poverty and inequality, but also from cultural and social factors, particularly racial and ethnicity discrimination and gender inequalities. Progress achieved is also exposed to different risks, such as the effects of global financial crisis, natural disasters, and multidimensional challenges resulting from violence, organized crime and human and drug trafficking, which mostly affect groups and peoples in vulnerable situations.

We are concerned by the situation of mass migration of accompanied and unaccompanied children, including adolescents. We are aware that this migration may be the result of diverse causes and factors, and therefore, we recognize the importance of coordinating efforts among countries and international organizations, such as UNICEF, to address this situation.

We attach great importance to international cooperation and the right to development, as well as supporting the design, implementation and evaluation of national public policies promoting the well-being of children and adolescents.

Therefore, CELAC strongly supports the work of UNICEF in its contribution to national efforts to achieve the internationally agreed goals related to childhood, particularly the provisions of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. In country presence of UNICEF is very important to this effect; it makes it possible to create synergies with stakeholders for international cooperation efforts, including South-South and triangular cooperation, to enhance national and local development initiatives.

Mr. President,

We take note with concern on the decline of official development assistance (ODA) allocated to Middle Income Countries, particularly in Latin America, as well as the trend of the UN Development System to reduce its activities and programs in our region. Middle Income Countries are still facing significant challenges related with poverty and inequalities; in this regard we strongly need support to avoid backlashes in the progress already made. Therefore we call for the reversal of this trend and request the UN Development System to continue holding a universal, holistic, transparent and
interlinked approach to development, particularly in the context of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

In this regard, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean firmly believe that UNICEF should continue to have a role in addressing the particular development needs and goals of all developing countries, including Middle-Income Countries, and CELAC landlocked developing countries, least developed countries and Small Island Developing States. We also recognize the growing experience of UNICEF in working with and in countries transitioning from middle-income to high-income status and the fact that significant populations of children in those countries are still affected by multiple development gaps. UNICEF should continue working with those countries and promoting innovative models of engagement that take into account national contexts.

We reiterate the need to ensure and strengthen the involvement of UNICEF in our region, including through Country Offices presence.

CELAC Members believe that the principles, scope and goals set forth by the General Assembly through the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) should form the backbone and be taken into account at all times at the implementation of the Strategic Plan, which should be focused in the development mandate given to UNICEF. The last QCPR resolution contains operational mandates that UNICEF and other relevant intergovernmental bodies have the obligation to implement and follow up in a flexible, coordinated, integrated and timely manner in order for them to respond to national development needs and priorities in accordance with their respective mandates.

CELAC members reiterate the need to strengthen efforts to implement programmes for realizing child rights in early childhood with equity, involving the support of international organizations through the development of specific early childhood programmes, and to further enhance the efforts of the international community to improve cooperation to assist developing countries in achieving all internationally agreed development goals. Early childhood development policies and strategies, including adequate nutrition, should be supported as a way to break the cycles of poverty with the aim to eradicating poverty and hunger in order to achieve sustainable development.

The Member States of CELAC also recognize the humanitarian actions that UNICEF
implements and the need for integration of this humanitarian work with long-term development goals.

Mr. President,

We welcome the extension of the Programme 2017-2021 for the Eastern Caribbean Area, and for Brazil, Belize, Honduras, Jamaica and Peru as well as take note with appreciation of the one year extension of the Country Programme for Nicaragua.

CELAC countries look forward to the further strengthening of transparency, accountability and governance of the United Nations Development System. In that regard, the inclusiveness of its governance structures, reflecting equitable representation of each region of the world, is of extreme importance.

We reiterate that CELAC countries will continue to have an active and constructive participation in this Annual Session, aiming to contribute to the elaboration of the next Strategic Plan, to be adopted in September and express our commitment with UNICEF to improve the situation of all children of the region and the world.

I thank you.