Mister President, distinguished delegates, I am pleased to present the UNICEF country programmes of cooperation with South Sudan, Burundi, Lesotho and Namibia for your consideration.

These four country programmes are fully aligned with the national priorities and UN partnership frameworks in the respective countries, and contribute to the UNICEF Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The country programmes being presented today reflect very different contexts for children, ranging from middle to low income, with varying levels of progress over the past several years:

- Significant progress has been made in Namibia and Lesotho in attaining free and universal primary education, making strong social sector investments. Notable progress has also been made in Namibia in secondary education and addressing high HIV prevalence.

- Burundi has had solid achievements in free primary health care for children under the age of five and for pregnant women, as well as in universal primary and lower secondary education.

- Efforts continue in South Sudan, albeit with slower progress.

At the same time, children in these countries continue to experience multiple deprivations, including:

- High under-five mortality, except in Namibia, marked by stagnating routine immunization coverage in three of the four countries;

- Chronic malnutrition among children under the age of five, with alarming levels of severe acute malnutrition in South Sudan;

- Poor water supply, sanitation and hygiene in Burundi and South Sudan, with frequent and persistent cholera outbreaks; and urban and rural
disparities in access to water and sanitation services in Namibia and Lesotho;

- Varying levels of access to early learning services and high primary school drop-out rates, with over 2 million primary school-aged children estimated to be out of school in South Sudan;

- Child protection concerns, particularly violence against children in South Sudan where more than half the child population is estimated to have been affected by conflict.

**SLIDE Programme Strategies**

The UNICEF country programmes being presented are designed to specifically respond to each country context. They will use a mix of strategies, including

- Strategic partnerships with government institutions, civil society and private partners;

- Multi-sectoral interventions that improve effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery;

- Capacity and resilience building, with a focus on communities, systems and partners;

- Behaviour change communication and community mobilization;

- Prioritizing and mainstreaming adolescent-sensitive approaches;

- Strengthening the linkages between humanitarian and development programming to ensure an integrated approach to emergency preparedness, humanitarian action and longer term resilience and system building;

- Expanding the evidence-base to inform decisions, budgets and programmes for children;

- Coordination and collaboration with the UN family in programming and ongoing reforms; and

- Management excellence for results, including programme excellence, value for money and efficiency gains, development and growth of staff, and excellence in organizational culture and behaviour.
Allow me to turn briefly to each of the four countries.

The overall goal of the country programme in South Sudan is to safeguard and protect vulnerable children and women, with a primary focus on saving lives and alleviating suffering. The programme aims to increase access to basic services, empower the next generation, and support recovery and resilience of communities. The proposed country programme has several priorities:

- Increasing the use of maternal, neonatal and child health services, with special attention to lifesaving interventions;
- Increasing the use of nutrition services, with focus on severe acute malnutrition;
- Increasing the use of sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services;
- Increasing access to education and improved learning outcomes for children, including community peace-building education for young people, and skills for employability;
- Reducing children and young people’s exposure to violence, exploitation and abuse, with focus on children associated with armed groups, and child survivors of gender-based violence; and
- Supporting the establishment of a conducive policy environment, and a durable social protection system.

The overall aim of the country programme in Burundi is to ensure that girls, boys and women, especially the most vulnerable, have access to and benefit from good quality, equitable and age-appropriate services, and build resilience to shocks and emergencies. The proposed country programme has the following priorities:

- Increasing the use of essential health and nutrition services, with focus on reducing chronic malnutrition rate;
- Increasing access to early learning and quality primary education;
- Ensuring access to child protection systems and protective measures, including in humanitarian situations;
- Increasing access to sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene services, including in humanitarian settings;
• Strengthening the empowerment and participation of adolescent girls and boys; and

• Strengthening the analysis of child poverty and public spending, and supporting establishment of a national social protection system.

**SLIDE: Namibia Country Programme 2019-2023**

The overall goal of the country programme in Namibia is to contribute to national efforts that enable children and adolescents to realize their rights by progressively reducing disparities and inequities. The proposed country programme has three main priorities, delivered through an integrated life-cycle approach focussing on:

• Improving child survival and development;

• Strengthening adolescent development, learning and participation; and

• Promoting a safe, resilient and supportive environment for all children, adolescents and their families.

**SLIDE: Lesotho Country Programme 2019-2023**

The objective of the country programme in Lesotho is to support children and adolescents with opportunities to survive, develop and reach their full potential. The country programme has three main priorities, delivered through an integrated life-cycle approach, with emphasis on:

• Improving young children’s health, nutrition and early learning;

• Strengthening adolescent health, HIV prevention and support, learning and protection; and

• Supporting a social policy and social protection environment that effectively reduces child poverty.

**SLIDE: [Zoom out] Concluding remarks**

Mister President, UNICEF in South Sudan, Burundi, Lesotho and Namibia is well positioned to make a significant contribution to the realisation of children’s rights in the four countries, in partnership with government, civil society, donors and other UN agencies. We value the extensive support we have from the national partners in the countries, and our Executive Board members.

Thank you for your attention. I look forward to your comments and questions.