Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

It is my honour to address the Executive Board and present to you the draft Country Programme of Cooperation for Libya 2019 – 2020 and draft Gulf Area Programme of Cooperation 2019-2023 covering the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
Both Programme Documents were developed following extensive consultations with the governments concerned and are informed by their respective Vision Statements and National Development Plans and commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Development.

The country consultations involved also UN country teams, and civil society.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, allow me to brief you in more details on the draft Gulf Area programme.

The main goal of the 2019-2023 Gulf Area programme is to further deepen programmatic engagement and strengthen strategic partnerships with government, civil society, the private sector, and society at large to accelerate the realization of children’s rights.
The five countries under this programme have a combined population of 13.8 million children. They are high income countries and have made impressive gains in reducing child mortality and significantly increasing secondary education.

Despite progress, some disparities between social groups within and across countries persist and affect the rights of children.

To address these disparities, and to reach the most marginalized groups, the Gulf Area programme of cooperation will focus on four strategic priorities: (1) Early Childhood Development; (2) Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse; (3) Data and evidence on children; and, (4) Leveraging partnerships, commitments and resources for children.

Efforts in Early Childhood Development aim at especially vulnerable children, to receive an integrated package of multi-sectoral services,
ensuring adequate care in a nurturing environment where their nutrition, health, and education needs are met.

UNICEF GAO Programme of Cooperation is aligned to related United Nations programmatic partnerships and UNICEF continues to contribute to and capitalize on opportunities such as Voluntary National Reviews, enhancing guidelines and best practices on measuring and reporting SDG progress in the Gulf countries.

The programme will also strengthen institutional capacity on the early identification of children with disabilities so they can thrive and can be fully integrated into society.

Together with other UN Agencies, UNICEF will support all countries in the strengthening of data systems and use of evidence to support policies and budgets for children. These efforts will also directly support the Sustainable Development Goal monitoring and reporting and aim at generating greater outcomes for children through the optimization of the countries’ resources.
This APD aims finally at deepening and expanding strategic partnerships and commits to better leverage resources from Gulf countries for children in their countries, the MENA Region and globally.

For UNICEF to deliver its intended commitments to the partnership for children in GAO, we will require a projected budget of $9.2 million from other resources and we are pleased that all Governments have already signalled or committed their own resources towards the successful achievement of the Programme.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates, let me now move to the proposed Programme of Cooperation with Libya.

The government of National Accord in Libya and UNICEF and have jointly developed this 2-year bridging country programme document (CPD) 2019–
2020, which is in line with the Libya United Nations Strategic Framework (UNSF).

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

Libya had made great progress in meeting its Millennium Development Goal targets prior to the 2011 revolution. However, due to political developments, economic crisis and armed conflict, progress for children and their families has been stalled, even reversed.

The Libyan population is estimated at 6.5 million: with 40 per cent children. The most vulnerable groups are concentrated in areas that experience ongoing conflict or have large numbers of internally displaced persons. Libya is also a country of transit for migrants and asylum-seekers, whom are often exposed to high risks, especially children, in particular when Unaccompanied and Separated.
To address disparities, and to reach the most marginalized groups, the strategic approach in the new programme of cooperation will be to embrace and integrate humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts. By building capacity of all stakeholders, basic services in targeted municipalities will become more equitable and child-friendly, while overall the protective environment for children will be strengthened.

Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

The proposed programme of cooperation will focus on three strategic priorities: (1) Support to basic social services; (2) Protective environment for children and adolescents; and (3) Evidence-based policy reform.

To support basic social services, the programme will prioritize conflict-affected areas, internally displaced persons and regions impacted by migration by building the technical capacity of government partners as well
as service providers in health, nutrition, WASH and education to provide direct services to the vulnerable populations.

Libya Country Programme of cooperation will specifically contribute through joint programmes under United Nation Strategic Framework results on sustained basic social services, governance strengthening, as well as Humanitarian Response Plan. The Flagship programs include 1) comprehensive approach to programming for young people within the context of the development - humanitarian nexus with UNFPA; and 2) developing common strategy to strengthen the health system with WHO, UNFPA, IOM and the World Bank.

We will also invest in galvanizing a protective environment for children and adolescents by modelling and scaling up community-based child protection, psychosocial and reintegration services. Priority groups for such services are the most vulnerable boys and girls, including survivors of all forms of violence, children with disabilities, children on the move and children associated with armed conflict in targeted municipalities.
To do so, UNICEF will engage in dialogue with all stakeholders across the political spectrum and ethnic divides. The programme will aim at investing with the Libyan authorities in evidence-generation, and leveraging other resources through promising partnerships with the United Nations partners and Bretton Woods institutions in support of child-centered policymaking, planning and budgeting.

Mr President, Distinguished Delegates,

For UNICEF to deliver its intended commitments to the children in Libya, we will require a projected budget of $40 million, out of which $1.7 million in Regular Resources only, which is to be complemented by $38.3 million in other resources and additional significant resources to support the humanitarian response.

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