UNICEF Executive Board
Second Regular Session, New York, 9 – 12 September 2014 (CR 3 CB)

H.E. Mr. Stephan Tafrov, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the UN

Statements and Comments on Agenda Items
Agenda Item 1: “Opening Statements”

New York, Tuesday, 9 September 2014

Mr. President,

I would like to thank the Executive Director Mr. Anthony Lake for his presentation and to commend his able leadership in protecting children all over the world and especially those affected by humanitarian crisis. Over the years UNICEF has made significant progress in many areas related to child protection, and humanitarian assistance is an important part of this endeavour. As a lead agency on humanitarian emergencies UNICEF has contributed immensely to improving children’s safety and safeguarding children’s lives, often under extremely difficult circumstances.

Bulgaria supports the Strengthening Humanitarian Action Initiative and welcomes the progress achieved so far as highlighted by the Executive Director in his statement this morning. The Initiative helps increase efficiency and effectiveness within the Organisation and creates the necessary prerequisites to improve UNICEF’s ability to respond to crises and thus to be able to better protect children in humanitarian emergencies and critical situations.
My country welcomes the proposed integration of emergency response and development cooperation. The recent strengthening of the UNICEF management will facilitate the smooth transition from handling humanitarian situations to implementing long-term development policies. It may be noted that humanitarian action and crisis response contribute to achieving the development goals in the long term as the two are interlinked and mutually influential. Progress in development priorities is often the result of resilience and capabilities built while reacting to emergencies in times of crisis. Unfortunately, in recent years we have been witnessing a scaring tendency of growing risk of conflicts and natural disasters all over the world which call for renewed global commitment for adequate response, especially when it comes to children.

Bulgaria welcomes the increased visibility given to humanitarian action in UNICEF’s new Strategic Plan for the period 2014 – 2017. It is important also to strengthen key humanitarian partnerships with other relevant stakeholders and Bulgaria encourages UNICEF’s growing collaboration with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme in this direction.

Mr. President,

The Government of Bulgaria is strongly committed to the protection of children and the advancement of children’s rights. Specially designed child-related strategies and policies have been developed and implemented by the Bulgarian Government with the aim to better protect children and enhance children’s well-being, especially of those belonging to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, including children with disabilities.

Children-centered policies are focused on a number of priority areas, including securing the right of the child to grow up in a family, speeding up the process of deinstitutionalization and promoting good parenting, as well as providing high-quality services for children and families, ensuring access to quality education and healthcare for all children, investing in early childhood development, ending violence against children, creating a better future for children with disabilities and advancing children’s rights in every aspect of life.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which has proved its significance as the most effective tool for the advancement of children’s agenda and the improvement of children’s quality of
life everywhere in the world. The implementation of the Convention is crucial for ensuring children’s protection and for securing a better life for every child.

This important anniversary should be used also as a reminder that despite the progress achieved for children in the last 25 years in many areas, still a lot remains to be done to reach out to every child everywhere and Bulgaria will continue to cooperate with UNICEF for a renewed global action in the best interest of children.

Mr. President,

UNICEF’s focus on strengthening national ownership and accountability and working with civil society to advocate for child protection is commendable. Bulgaria welcomes UNICEF’s efforts to expand and strengthen partnerships with the private sector nationally and globally for achieving better results for children.

In shaping the post-2015 development framework Bulgaria cooperates closely with UNICEF to include children and young adolescents in the discussion with the firm belief that children’s rights have to be at the heart of any post-2015 development agenda.

To conclude, let me once again emphasize the support of my country to UNICEF and the high appreciation to UNICEF’s leadership and staff for their strong commitment to children. Bulgaria highly values its partnership with UNICEF and looks forward to continuing to strengthen and expand this fruitful cooperation in the best interest of children.

Thank you, Mr. President.