Statement of the Eastern European Group at the High-level meeting of the General Assembly on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Mister President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a particular honour for my delegation to take the floor on behalf of the Eastern European States to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which constitutes the standard in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child. This high-level meeting gives us an opportunity to take stock of the achievements in ensuring the protection and well-being of children, to reflect on remaining implementation gaps and redouble our efforts to undertake additional measures to ensure children’s rights.

Twenty-five years ago the Convention was the first international treaty which recognized the child as a subject of rights and became the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history, obliging States to take responsibility to ensure full protection of rights of the Child. The Convention is a major milestone in ensuring children’s right to life, survival and development, protection and empowerment. The Convention, with its holistic approach to child development, largely contributed to creating the conditions for the children around the globe to grow in an environment with access to health, nutrition, safety and security. The implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocols will mark another significant step in advancing the child protection agenda.

Mister President,

We have Madam Anna Komorowska, the First Lady of Poland in this room today to celebrate with us this commemorative date. I would like to welcome her along with other distinguished guests. Her presence proves the great importance that Poland and our group as a whole attach to promotion and the protection of the rights of the child.
Excellencies,

Since the adoption of the Convention, States have worked intensely to improve domestic legislation, standards and policies to better protect children. As a result, we have much to celebrate. As outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on “Status of the Convention on the Rights of the Child” (A/69/960), significant progress has been achieved in the past quarter century in all dimensions of the child protection agenda, nevertheless the remaining implementation gaps and pressing global challenges demand stronger commitment to the cause of children’s protection and empowerment.

Child mortality, one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), remains the most serious challenge of our time. In recent years, the global rate of under-five mortality has been almost halved and the new HIV infections among children under 15 years have declined by 35 percent, but we need to continue striving to ensure higher standard of healthcare for children to provide them with timely access to the appropriate health care and rehabilitation services.

Violence against children remains a major challenge. Millions of children continue to suffer various forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect. We need to take more effective steps to address its root causes. Particular concern goes to the children affected by the armed conflicts, who bear the burden of war and its atrocities.

Children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to poverty, marginalization and exclusion. They often lack the access to protection and assistance, and are more likely to be victims of violence.

Education is critical for the development and empowerment of children. Much has been achieved to this end, however the widespread inequities affecting the poorest and most vulnerable children persists to be a huge barrier for the realization of children’s full potential.

In this regard, we take the opportunity to commend UNICEF’s leadership in the protection of children and the promotion of children’s rights. Over the years UNICEF has made significant progress in many areas related to child protection and has contributed immensely to improving children’s lives and advancing the children agenda around the world. We reiterate our commitment to continue to cooperate with UNICEF for a renewed global action in the best interest of children.

Mister President,

Today, on the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention, we would like to reiterate our strong commitment to the advancement of the rights of the child. We have to aim for an ambitious, rights-based Post-2015 development agenda which is fundamental for ensuring that children feel safe and have opportunities to realize their rights. We need to implement our existing commitments and seek for innovative ways to advance the rights of the most marginalized. Let us strive to live up to the expectations of those who will be shaping our future tomorrow.

I thank you.