United Nations Children's Fund
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Statement by

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Agenda Item 5 d):

Programme and policy matters

UNICEF programme cooperation

Regional Summaries of Midterm Reviews of Country Programmes

Bosnia and Herzegovina
Mr. President, Madame Regional Director,

Thank you very much for organizing this meeting in framework of the UNICEF Executive Board second session in regard to discuss the UNICEF Regional Summaries of Midterm Reviews of four CEECIS country programs, including Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) is a part of the Country Programme Action Plan which has been agreed between the Council of Ministers of BiH and UNICEF for the period 2010 — 2014. The MTR includes external evaluations and reviews of joint programmes as well as consultations with institutions at the State, Entity, Cantonal and Municipal levels, civil society, international organizations, private sector, media and children. We appreciate the constructive cooperation and discussions with the UNICEF team, as well as developed outcomes and recommendations given therein.
Despite significant achievements many challenges remain, we are aware of this fact and we are working on it. National capacity and willingness to advance the child rights agenda are both growing with the increasing demand to meet international standards, strengthening national capacities and systems to monitor realization of the rights of the child. We recognize that more support and co-operation is needed to meet higher standards in social inclusion and gender equality, in line with the international frameworks of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In this context we wish to underline that even if Bosnia and Herzegovina is an upper-middle-income country and a potential candidate for membership in the European Union, the genuine partnership with the UNICEF leads to addressing the major problems that children are facing today. Therefore, the UNICEF presence and support in my country are still needed and very much appreciated.
The institutions on all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the UNICEF team continue to develop partnership and co-operation with the aim to supporting and strengthening education, health, social welfare and justice reform processes, revision of the legal frameworks, the development of standards and guidelines for child protection and inclusion as well as consistent fulfillment of obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina - including full implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and its additional protocols.

In order to advance social protection, our institutions in collaboration with partners are working on the reform of the social protection system in order to address and harmonize realization of children’s rights and benefits across the country. Even though we are on the path to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals, combination of economic crisis and governance issues has slowed the momentum of reforms having negative effect on social inclusion. Among the most vulnerable within the population are children, especially those with disabilities, displaced children, Roma children, unemployed adolescents and the elderly.
The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted in July 2011 the Action Plan for Children of Bosnia and Herzegovina, defining the necessary priorities and measures during the period 2011-2014. The Action Plan provides, for its effective implementation, that all stakeholders in their activities find additional opportunities to improve the level of children's rights in the country. The implementation of the Action plan requires transparent communication with the NGOs and civil society sector, families and individuals. Inclusion of all segments of society entails a multidisciplinary and cross-cutting approach in the design of actions and measures aiming to improve the situation of every child.

In addition, within the Ministry of Human Rights, in early 2011, for the first time, the State-level expert team to monitor implementation of the Revised Action Plan on the Educational Needs of Roma was established.

A particularly important among these issues is non-discrimination, notably the prohibition of corporal punishment at home and in institutions, where a stronger public awareness is required. Also, specific activities are foreseen in terms of reporting and monitoring, in order to ensure adequate response to violence against children and their abuse, including domestic violence.
Aiming to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and in particular the recommendations given by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina took action to fulfill this obligation in due time.

As I mentioned before, my country is continuously working to adopt and implement legislation and policies for the improvement and special protection of the rights of the child, including the right to education. We also very closely follow the matter of the issuance of the Identity number (Unique Master Citizen Number) for the newborn children. In order to bridge the current legislative gap, the Council of Ministers has adopted Temporarily Decision for issuance of the Identification Numbers that will be in force for the 180 days, until when the State Ministry, i.e. Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be working on a permanent solution of this matter.
Mr. President,

We continue the fruitful partnership with the UNICEF and work more closely on our common commitment to ensuring protection for our children, especially for our most disadvantaged children. Bosnia and Herzegovina stands ready to contribute to all efforts aimed at securing the survival, protection and development of children, which are universal development imperatives for human progress.

Thank you.