



**STATEMENT BY MRS. REVA NAYYAR, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT
OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT, MINISTRY OF HUMAN
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, ON AGENDA ITEM 8: UNICEF
HEALTH AND NUTRITION STRATEGY AT THE FIRST REGULAR
SESSION 2006 OF THE UNICEF EXECUTIVE BOARD 16-20 & 23
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Mr. President,

We thank the Executive Director for the report outlining the joint Health and Nutrition Strategy for 2006-2015, which defines the proposed UNICEF contribution to national efforts to accelerate health and nutrition action. We like the logical format of the report and the pragmatic approach that it outlines.

India welcomes this new integrated health and nutrition strategy. We believe that it comes at an appropriate time given the rapidly changing global health and nutrition environment. The strategy clearly sets out the strategic results, the guiding principles, and the implementation approaches that will contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, with specific emphasis on goals 1, 4, 5, and 6. We have taken note that the proposed strategy also complements other major strategies, including the new UNICEF water, sanitation and hygiene strategies for 2006-2015 and that UNICEF recognizes the complementarities that exist in the areas of education, especially school health programmes and early childhood development.

The strategy aims to work with partner countries continuing to exercise effective leadership over their development policies and strategies. It emphasizes that donors need to base their overall support on the national development strategies, institutions and procedures of partner countries. The strategy also highlights the importance of leadership by the government of the programme country. In this context, we note that national statistics and data would be one of the major information sources for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the joint strategy. We have also noted that the use of the lifecycle approach will be another guiding principle for the strategy.

Mr. President,

The policies and programmes of the Government of India on health and nutrition reflect very closely the approach that is articulated by UNICEF in this new strategy.

India has launched the National Rural Health Mission (2005-12) that seeks to provide effective health care to rural population. One of its main goals is to assure universal access to public health services, access to integrated comprehensive primary health care and an increased and more equitable coverage of health and nutrition services, including immunization, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene.

The integration between the Reproductive Child Health Programme/National Rural Health Mission and the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is being strengthened, in order to achieve a more effective delivery of essential basic health, nutrition and child development services. An example is the Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses (IMNCI) programme, which has an integrated package of Health and Nutrition interventions. This programme has demonstrated the effectiveness of a mix of community and health facility based activities. Evidence indicates a decrease in neonatal mortality, improvement of service delivery and treatment through systematic referral, and community recognition of skilled health workers.

The experience in India has shown that it is of crucial importance to assure service delivery in every community as well as to achieve the desired care behaviour in households. It is useful to have village based health and nutrition workers - the two-worker model. Community involvement and responsibility in planned service delivery are important and a good and effective communication between the community and the village workers has been found to be useful. The new UNICEF strategy includes community level work, and a core package of interventions has been suggested. In view of our experience, we would like to underline the importance of community empowerment and suggest that this aspect should receive prominence in this strategy.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate India's support for the Health and Nutrition strategy, and to commend UNICEF for the efforts that have gone into developing this strategy.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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