



STATEMENT BY MRS. LOVELEEN KACKER, JOINT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT, ON AGENDA ITEM 3: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; PROGRES AND ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST THE MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN AT THE ANNUAL SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNICEF 2006 5-9 JUNE 2006 ON JUNE 5, 2006

Mr. President,

We thank Executive Director for presenting a report on progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan. The report has received our interest and attention.

We congratulate the Executive Director, and UNICEF more generally, on the results achieved for children in support of the Millennium Summit agenda. The emphasis of the report on measuring results and clearly documenting the lessons learned in various regions and countries is welcomed and very informative.

The strategies and corresponding results related to reducing infant and child mortality are in line with Government of India's approach through the National Rural Health Mission. The Mission is an articulation of the commitment of the Government to raise public spending on Health to 2-3% of GDP. It aims to undertake architectural correction of the Health system to enable it to effectively handle increased allocations and promote policies that strengthen public health management and service delivery in the country. It seeks to improve access to rural people, especially poor women and children to equitable, affordable, accountable and effective primary healthcare. The Goals of the National Rural Health Mission are reduction in Infant and Maternal Mortality Rates; universal access to public health services such as Women's and children's health, water, sanitation and Hygiene, immunization and Nutrition; prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases, including locally endemic diseases; access to integrated comprehensive primary healthcare; population stabilization, gender and demographic balance; revitalization of local health traditions; and promotion of healthy life styles.

Regarding the nutritional status of children, we concur with the report on the need to continue to focus on improving the nutritional status. We are expecting a significant improvement in the situation of children in India in the near future through the universalisation of the Integrated Child Development Scheme and other initiatives. There is added emphasis on convergence of services under various schemes and programmes viz. health, education, safe drinking water so as to achieve the desired impact. An analysis of child budgeting in India shows a steady upward trend, which is very encouraging.

Mr. President,

For eliminating iodine deficiency disorder (IDD), there has been an increase in consumption of iodized salt from 37% in 2003 to 57% in 2005-06. We welcome the focus by UNICEF on this important area.

The Government of India welcomes the high priority given to education, and also recognizes the need for increasing enrollment. With significant increase in government resources in 2006-2007 to the tune of US \$ 4 billion under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan programme (Education for All) we expect significant increase in enrolment rates and improvement in quality of the education system as a whole. A National Programme for education of girls at elementary level is also being implemented for children in difficult circumstances, including out of school girls, drop out girls, working girls, girls from marginalized social groups, girls with low levels of achievement to gain quality elementary education and to develop self esteem of girls through a community based approach. Mid-day Meal Scheme is also one of the important schemes of the Government aimed universal enrollment and retention.

Mr. President,

We note that UNICEF has acknowledged the need for greater attention to child protection issues. In India, we have taken a proactive stand on this. Towards this end, over the last one and a half years, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, has undertaken several initiatives, including enactment of Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act 2006 for setting up of a National Commission at national and Provincial Commissions at the provincial level, formulation of the National Plan of Action for Children-2005 and preparation of the Offences Against Children's Bill - 2006. Government of India has also proposed the introduction of an Integrated Child Protection Scheme with large outreach addressing issues of children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection. A national level study on child abuse has been initiated with the objective of obtaining an in-depth picture of the prevalence, nature and causes of abuse against children and formulating recommendations for appropriate action, including effective remedies and

preventive and rehabilitative measures at the national level. The Government of India is of the opinion that the results of the study would complement and strengthen the findings of the global study on violence against children.

In conclusion, we appreciate the continued efforts of UNICEF in fighting for the survival, development and protection of the world's children.

Thank you, Mr. President.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)