Thank you, Mr. President.

1. On behalf of Bangladesh delegation, I warmly congratulate you and all the newly-elected members of the Executive Board and assure you of our sincere support and cooperation during your presidency of the Board.

2. I also convey our sincere appreciation and thanks to the Executive Director of the UNICEF, Dr. Anthony Lake, for his outstanding leadership in steering the organization very efficiently. Bangladesh wishes him continued success in his endeavours. We deeply appreciate his statement today before the Board. It has given a detailed overview of the challenges faced by the children across the globe and the strategies of the UNICEF to address them.

3. Children remain the most vulnerable section of the society. Poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, diseases etc. continue to affect the children in their worst forms in the developing world particularly in the least developed countries. In recent years, the marginalization of the children has been compounded by the impacts of climate change. They also get exposed to the risks of exclusion in the conflict zones more than the adults. Pervasive violation of the rights of children remains a matter of serious concern for all of us. In the face of persisting inequalities among the children, the works of the UNICEF to protect the children and promote their rights, particularly in the emergencies and the humanitarian contexts, are indeed commendable. In this regard, we fully endorse the five priorities outlined by the Executive Director.
The development of the children alone largely indicates at the overall development of a country. The facts that still more than 3 million new-borns and half million women continue to die annually from child-birth related causes, six million children die from preventable diseases every year and millions are out of school are disturbing for us. MDGs provided a good opportunity to put our acts together to address the vulnerabilities of the children. The least developed countries have achieved significant progress in realizing the goals relating to the improvement of the conditions of the children. There is an increase in net school enrolment, but retention at the primary level, quality of education and transition from primary to post-primary education remain key challenges in basic education. More than one-third of under-five deaths are attributable to undernutrition in the least developed countries. Adequate nutrition is essential in early childhood and is intrinsically linked with economic growth and human development of a community. Our collective resolve to implement the new set of SDGs would contribute to protect our children from their multifaceted vulnerabilities. Here the role of the UNICEF is crucial in addressing malnutrition, immunization, education and so forth. We commend its efforts and innovative ways to respond to the needs of the children of different countries. However, in the backdrop of growing food insecurity and complex humanitarian emergencies, we reiterate our call to UNICEF to broaden its programmes for young children and forge more robust partnership with other agencies to help the least developed countries.

Mr. President,

The new QCPR provides strategic guidance to the UNDS to align it with the messages of the 2030 Agenda. The UNICEF Strategic Plan for 2018–2021 should by guided totally by the new QCPR so that it is in a better position to respond to the needs of the most disadvantaged children of the programme countries, particularly in the least developed countries. UNICEF must be able to attract more flexible and predictable multi-year funding to be more ‘fit for purpose’ in supporting the implementation of Agenda 2030. We are happy to learn that UNICEF has been consistently able to raise revenue from the private sector in last few years. We hope it would continue to leverage resources from private sector and other stakeholders for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Also, it should engage in collaborative partnership with other UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies according to their respective mandates and comparative advantages. The Strategic Plan must reflect UNICEF’s commitment to bring in meaningful changes in the lives of all children in the context of the SDGs. We welcome that the Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 will have a Results Framework that includes Indicators, baselines and targets.
Mr. President,

6. Bangladesh has made considerable progress in protecting and promoting child rights in Bangladesh. Our success in achieving the MDGs particularly in the areas of reducing child mortality, declining malnutrition among children and primary school enrolment may be noted. It is a great joy for children in Bangladesh to get new books free of cost at the beginning of the new year. Every year on the 1st of January government distributes free text books to all the students of primary and secondary levels across the country through festivity. This year "Text book Festival Day" was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the capital by handing over new books to the students and more than 360 million new books printed in four colours were distributed among more than 44 million students.

7. We recognize the role of UNICEF as a dependable partner in our development efforts. The major areas of UNICEF support in Bangladesh are child protection, child survival and inclusion, education, emergencies, impact of climate change on children, advocacy, and partnership and communication. The current Country Programme (2017-2020) involves young children and their mothers, boys and girls of primary school age, and adolescents as agents of change. It focuses Life Cycle Approach in programme implementation recognizing needs of children at different ages to foster better outcome for children and adolescents.

8. We reaffirm our full support and cooperation to the UNICEF in undertaking its mandate for the children of the world.

I thank you.