

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MANJEEV SINGH PURI, DEPUTY PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO UN AT THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF  
EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNICEF ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2012

**Mr. President,** let me take this opportunity to complement you for your committed leadership in steering the discussions at the helm of this Executive Board, in a most purposeful and constructive manner.

Allow me to express my felicitations to the Executive Director Anthony Lake for an extremely informative statement. The Executive Board Meeting is very timely and important as it provides an opportunity to reaffirm our collective commitment to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of children all over the world.

**Mr President,** India is a country with home to the largest number of children in the world. And each of these children, epitomises to us, the potential of our nation. It is with this considered conviction that we place the highest importance in investing in them to the best of our abilities and resources, in their well being, their health, education, all round growth and in ensuring that they develop to their fullest potential.

In UNICEF, our Government has found a most reliable and trusted partner to take our initiatives jointly forward. My delegation compliments UNICEF for its initiative "Child Survival - Call for Action" and we remain committed to its success. We also welcome the focus of UNICEF to place children at the heart of sustainable development, especially by focussing on initiatives in primary education, early childhood care and child nutrition.

Government of India and UNICEF are also in the process of finalizing the next country programme action plan (CPAP) for 2013-17 based on the approval of the draft Country Programme Document (CPD) by the Executive Board at the Annual Session earlier in June 2012. We hope that the next phase of programme cooperation with UNICEF will contribute to informing policies and programmes to meaningfully advance the rights of children and adolescents in India. We are committed to pursuing stronger child-centered social policies and placing children at the centre of planning, governance and poverty-alleviation efforts of the Government.

We also note with appreciation the proactive engagement in multi stakeholder partnerships and coordination mechanisms undertaken by UNICEF to promote children's issues in the development agenda. In collective partnerships with our Government, civil society and private sector, UNICEF has successfully reached out to more than 85 million women in India with integrated health, nutrition and WASH (water sanitation and hygiene) interventions.

Our efforts to improve the early childhood care and education (ECCE) outcomes through commensurate investments, is an important area where, we believe, UNICEF can continue to contribute with the requisite technical assistance.

Government of India is also in the process of launching a strengthened and restructured Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Programme with enhanced budgetary allocations with a key focus to accelerate the early childhood development outcomes including the nutrition outcomes. We believe that UNICEF can play a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of the programmes of Government by providing systematic analytical, technical and strategic supports at the critical levels of programme implementation.

**Mr President**, before I conclude, allow me to also reflect on some key issues in the development agenda of UN's discourse that we would like to flag for the consideration of the Board:

**First**, it is pertinent to frame the discussion in the QCPR process by forging synergies and strengthening partnerships within the overall policy framework of the UN System. However, some basic paradigm differences do remain in the contours of the development approach, which must be premised on the principle of "No one size fits all".

**Second**, poverty eradication still remains the over-riding priority for developing countries, and therefore within the QCPR process, we also need to place this recognition right upfront, that poverty eradication should continue to be the primary focus of UN's development agenda even for the next four years, as we still have a large majority of the global population struggling to survive in abject levels of poverty and deprivation.

**Third**, within UNICEF, we need to leverage the success stories from South South cooperation framework to the benefit of children, especially in the South, where they need it the most. One facet of India's joint initiative with countries of the South, has been along with Brazil and South Africa, in the form of the IBSA Trust Fund, under which we have already implemented some projects with a special focus on children, include a construction of a Hospital for Children with special needs in Cambodia and delivery of safe drinking water in Cape Verde.

Also, UNICEF country teams, while implementing country programmes must also aim to address the national priorities and attempt to harmonise the goals of UNICEF with the national governments so that it does result in stronger national ownership and increased alignment with the UN system.

To conclude, Mr President, my Government remains committed to ensuring the success of UNICEF in achieving the hopes and aspirations of children all over the world, for in their success lies the future of our nations.

**Thank You.**

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