

**Statement by Mr. Prakash Gupta, First Secretary, on Agenda Item 13
during Pledging Segment at the First Regular Session 2013 of the UNICEF
Executive Board on February 7, 2013**

Mr. President,

India's close and productive association with UNICEF dates back to the agency's inception and is based on our strong and abiding faith in the relevance of UNICEF's message and mandate.

As home to one fifth of the children in the world, India is steadfastly committed to the cause of ensuring the basic needs of children in India and beyond, and helping create protective and nurturing environments for children to reach their full potential.

Mr. President,

As outlined in our Statement at the Plenary Session of the First Regular Session, 2012 was the second year running, when we reported no new cases of polio, and WHO declared that polio was no longer an epidemic in India, which was a significant milestone in our polio eradication effort. We are also pleased to report the universalisation of Integrated Child Development Services Scheme, the launching of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme and further expansion of flagship programmes like National Rural Health Mission and Sarva Siksha Abhiyan.

The Government of India and the UNICEF country programme of cooperation is one of the largest and most diverse UNICEF supported country programmes globally.

In this regard, I wish to inform the Board that the Government of India **has already pledged US \$900,000 to UNICEF for the year 2013**. The announcement to this effect was made by India at the 2012 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities held on 14th November, last year.

To conclude, we would like to once again express our sincere appreciation for UNICEF's efforts in fulfilling our common vision, for an early realisation of children friendly environments universally.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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