



STATEMENT BY MS. REVA NAYYAR, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT, MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT, ON AGENDA ITEM NO. 4 MEDIUM TERM STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2006-09, INCLUDING MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AT THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION 2005 OF THE UNICEF EXECUTIVE BOARD ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2005

Mr. President,

We deeply regret the pain and suffering caused to the people affected by the recent hurricanes Katrina and Rita. On behalf of the Government and people of India, we would like to convey our sympathy and support to the Government and people of the USA.

We thank the Executive Director for the enormous effort that has obviously gone into the preparation of the document on UNICEF MTSP 2006-2009. The philosophy of the MTSP is incorporated in the title of the document itself – “Investing in children, the UNICEF contribution to poverty reduction and the Millennium Summit agenda”.

We have provided our detailed comments during the discussion of the draft MTSP for 2006-2009 at the Annual Session of the Executive Board, and earlier during the informal consultations held prior to the Annual Session. We hope that UNICEF will remain mindful of our comments and observations.

We would once again reiterate the primacy of national ownership, leadership and coordination by national authorities for ensuring the success of UNICEF's programmes at the country level. We also believe that the MTSP priorities provide overall framework while the details for each country programme would be worked out on the basis of national priorities.

We agree with the overall approach of the MTSP. The Government of India-UNICEF Country Programme of Cooperation being in the mid-term review stage, we are using the MTSP focus areas and targets to guide the adaptation of the country

programme for the remainder of the cycle. Moreover, recognizing the criticality of promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding and optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding practices, India became one of the first countries in the world to harmonize its legislative framework with the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding 2002 through an amendment in 2003 to its existing legislation. Updated National Guidelines on Infant and Young Child Feeding were developed in 2004 and these now form the core of nationwide programmes in the Reproductive and Child Health Programme, as well as the Integrated Child Development Services. Efforts are also underway to address child protection issues in line with the targets set out in Focus Area 4 of the MTSP. Among the child protection initiatives are:

- The formulation and launching of the National Plan of Action for Children. The plan sets out clear goals, objectives and strategies so that every child can survive, grow, develop, and be protected;
- Legislation as set out in the Offences against Children Act for Children to address issues related to different kinds of abuses that they face;
- Setting up of a National Commission for the better protection of child rights and for promoting the best interest of children;
- Release of the Hindi version of the handbook on Child Protection aimed at equipping Parliamentarians with the knowledge of various aspects of child protection.

Mr. President,

The report highlights the increasingly complex environment under which UNICEF will be pursuing funding strategies during the MTSP period. It also correctly points out that the success of the MTSP depends in large part on the regular and predictable growth of total income, especially regular income and that it is the regular resources that enable UNICEF to support its programmes for children. We agree that adequate and predictable regular resource income would put UNICEF in a better position to obtain and use additional other resources. Although we are not a donor country, India has done its bit by increasing its contribution to UNICEF recently and we hope that donor countries would also contribute to the success of the MTSP 2006-2009 by enhancing their contributions to UNICEF regular resources.

In this context, it is a matter of concern that the proportion of regular resources as part of total UNICEF income has deteriorated in recent years. We note that UNICEF proposes to develop benchmarks, targets and indicators with key donors which will be built into funding work plans to increase regular resources and ensure adequate financing of MTSP. The income trends outlined in the report highlight the importance of concerted effort to reverse the decline of regular resources as a share of overall contributions received. Total contributions to UNICEF over the period 2002-2004 grew by 36%. During this period contributions to regular resources grew by 12%, to other resources/regular by 57% and to other resources/emergency by 63%. Considering that the favourable exchange rate for major donor currencies to the US dollar contributed significantly to the increase in UNICEF's income during this period, the rather small increase of 12% in regular resources does not provide any room for complacency. The

report also predicts a linear trend for other resources (regular) because of the extraordinary growth in 2004 on account of significant contributions for Iraq.

We believe that UNICEF is making a positive contribution to the cause of the world's children. The priorities of the MTSP 2006-2009, the five focus areas and the specific key results identified under each key area have been arrived at after considerable discussion. The success of implementation of this MTSP would depend in large measure on the availability of adequate resources, and regular resources would certainly play an important role.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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