

Statement by Mr. Mahesh Kumar, First Secretary, at the 2nd regular session of the UNICEF Executive Board on September 14, 2016 at UNHQ, New York

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank Executive Director for his statement wherein he very appropriately focused on the relation between rights and results.

Mr. President,

India attaches high importance to promoting the rights of children.

Education, health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene have been the priority areas of intervention. Elementary education is a fundamental right in India and government has achieved full access to and gender parity in primary education, and the focus is now on affordable and quality education up to the secondary level. Prime Minister also recently launched the BBBP-'Educate daughters, save daughters' campaign to focus on the well being of the girl child.

The Mother & Child Tracking System leverages IT for ensuring delivery of full spectrum of healthcare services to pregnant women and immunization services to children under 5 years of age. The National Food Security Act of 2013 has special provisions for children and provides for age appropriate meal, free of charge to meet the nutrition needs of children. India today is free from polio and 'maternal neonatal tetanus'.

The 'Clean India' campaign focuses on achieving nationwide cleanliness and sanitation by 2019, including sanitary toilets in schools, enhancing the prospects of the education of girl child. A new scheme Sabla aims at all round development and self-reliance of adolescent girls.

Mr. President,

India has a long history of association with the UNICEF to protect and promote child rights. And in this regard, we strongly emphasize on national capacity building, and adequate funding assistance, including fulfilling of pledged ODA commitments by the developed countries.

We take note of the consideration by UNICEF to leverage the South-South Cooperation. However, it is also imperative to continue to emphasize on North-South Cooperation as South-South Cooperation cannot substitute it.

The needs of children across the world are acute. We need to address all aspects of child rights including poverty eradication, education and health.

The continuing decline in the share of regular resources is a matter of concern and needs to be addressed with transparent voluntary predictable and sustainable funding.

While implementing country programmes the UNICEF country teams must aim to address national priorities and attempt to harmonize the goals of UNICEF with the national governments for a stronger national ownership and increased alignments with internationally agreed commitments.

We are happy to note that UNICEF intends to align the work of the different parts of the organization. We are also appreciative of the emphasis given by UNICEF strategic plan to take into account the recommendations of the QCPR resolution of 2012. We also look forward to a revitalized QCPR 2016 which is essential for catalysing UN efforts towards supporting members states in the achievement of SDGs.

Mr. President,

I take this opportunity to place on record India's appreciation of UNICEF for the commendable efforts to protect and promote the rights of child, and also to renew our commitment to work with UNICEF, to achieve 'A World fit for children'.

Thank you.
