Bismillahir Rahnumair Rahim

Hon'ble Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,
Executive Director,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum and Good Evening to you all.

The world of our children is challenged by the adverse impacts of the recent global economic crisis, global warming and climate change, and consequent shift in population.

The economic crisis, the worst in 80 years, has also increased food and fuel prices and consequently, poverty and malnutrition affected the children, particularly of the LDCs. Many die and many survive with physiological and psychological scars. Most are from least developed countries, which are richest in children but poorest in child survival.

UNICEF’s report on “State of the World’s Children” 2010 depicts a dismal state of the world’s children, particularly in health care vis-à-vis poverty. A study indicates 2.7 percent of the population or 78 million people in 11 countries, including my own, end with less than one dollar per day after paying for health care.

The Report, however, provides new hopes and aspirations as well, such as a new business model based on equity–focused strategy.

This, if adopted, would improve the wellbeing of most deprived children, accelerate progress of health related MDGs and be financially more affordable. This would also reduce expenses of families of deprived children, and will be more cost effective than the current approaches to poverty and hunger reduction, child mortality and maternal health.

UNICEF has also a new initiative “Taking an equity focused approach to achieving the MDGs: Right in Principle, Right in Practice”, which conforms to “Intergenerational Equity” and which was agreed to at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. My government endorses this approach as the right way to achieving the MDGs for children.

Indeed, UNICEF could mobilize the international community, governments and local NGOs to use low cost techniques as was done in the 1980s with growth monitoring; oral rehydration for children’s diarrhea; breastfeeding; and immunization against six deadly childhood diseases.

To mention, Oral Re-hydration Therapy (ORT), which the medical journal “The Lancet” states as “potentially the most important medical advance of the 20th century”, was invented...
while treating cholera in refugee camps during Bangladesh’s War of Liberation in 1971. More such low cost techniques need to be found to ensure that the equity approach has the right kind of tools at its disposal.

**Distinguished delegates,**

We applaud UNICEF’s persistent endeavor to improve the wellbeing of children, especially in the developing and least developed countries. In South Asia and Africa, UNICEF is a household name where we welcome its role in contributing to development achievements at the country level.

We also deeply appreciate the financial contribution to UNICEF by interested countries, corporations and private individuals such as the Billion dollar donation to children’s cause by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, reflecting our shared belief that “Children are to have ‘first call’ on society’s resources, in good times and bad”.

Enhanced strategic partnerships with the private sector, civil society and NGOs would also be useful in UNICEF’s responses in emergency humanitarian situations, as well as in peacetime.

Here, I would like to stress that UNICEF, the primary custodian of children’s right to survival, protection and development, must strive for effective implementation of the equity approach to make the MDGs a reality for every child.

UNICEF possesses the moral authority as well as the intellectual capability to accomplish the job. It is also fortunate to have an experienced Executive Director like Dr. Anthony Lake and I warmly congratulate him on his appointment, and look forward to his strong leadership in introducing the new business model.

With him at the helm of affairs, and our commitment and collective support of the organization’s proactive activities through its dedicated professional staff, we shall no doubt achieve the goals set for our children.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh, as President this year, and Vice-President next year, would work to facilitate UNICEF’s implementation of its mandate by providing inter-governmental advisory oversight to the organization’s work, in accordance with the overall policy guidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, and the Economic and Social Council.

I conclude with a quote from our revered poet and Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore, who once said, “Every time a child is born, renews my faith that God has not given up on man”.

Let us collectively strive and succeed in translating this promise into reality.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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