



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

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UNICEF GENERAL DEBATE OPENING STATEMENT

STATEMENT BY MR. CLAUDIO NARDI

DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President, Madam Executive Director,

We wish thank the Secretary of the Executive Board and his team for organizing the annual session. We also wish to commend them and the country teams in Sri Lanka and the Maldives for the perfectly organized field visit, in which Liechtenstein proudly participated.

Mr. President, Madam Executive Director,

As UNICEF marks its 80th anniversary, we commend eight decades of indispensable leadership and commitment to the promotion and protection of children's rights worldwide. Over the past decades, remarkable progress has been achieved. Since the year 2000, under-five mortality has been cut in half, stunting has been reduced by 57 Million cases and immunization now saves an estimated 4.2 Million lives every year.

Yet, this anniversary comes at a moment of deep concern for children. As UNICEF's Annual Report makes clear, many of these hard-won gains are under increasing pressure and, in some areas, risk being reversed. The report states plainly that the year 2025 was "catastrophic for children". The

report underscores that children continue to bear the brunt of armed conflict, climate shocks and deepening inequalities. At the same time, abrupt and significant reductions in official development assistance are constraining life-saving programmes when needs are growing. The report warns that current funding cuts could result in Millions of preventable child deaths and leave Millions more children without access to education.

We therefore welcome UNICEF's efforts to adapt to an increasingly challenging operating environment through internal reforms, including the Future Focus Initiative, as well as its leadership and engagement in the UN80 initiative and the broader reform of the United Nations development system. UNICEF's strong financial position gives it both the opportunity and the responsibility to lead by example, share its expertise and deepen cooperation across the UN system to strengthen development and humanitarian action.

UNICEF's role in keeping children at the centre of international action is more important than ever. This is clearly demonstrated in its Annual Report, which shows that progress remains possible and that multilateral action continues to make a tangible difference. In 2025 alone, UNICEF responded to 414 humanitarian emergencies across 101 countries and territories, supported 27.8 Million out-of-school children in accessing education and reached nearly 10.4 Million adolescent girls at risk of child marriage with prevention and care interventions.

Mr. President, Madam Executive Director,

Let me assure you that Liechtenstein remains committed to supporting UNICEF and to promoting a rights-based and adequately resourced multilateral response for children.

I thank you.