Statement by Prakash Gupta, First Secretary, on Agenda Item 11 during Pledging Event at the First Regular Session 2012 of the UNICEF Executive Board on February 9, 2012

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 earlier indicated in ED’s report, in January this year, we reported no new cases of polio in the last one year, 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 2012. The announcement to this effect was made by India at the 2011 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities held on 8th 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.