

Group Statement on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR)

UNICEF Executive Boards, First Regular Session

12 February 2021

Introduction

Thank you Madame President and Madame Executive Director.

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the following 38 Member States: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States, and my own country, the United Kingdom.

Madame Executive Director.

The 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) provides the UN Development System with critical direction to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), at a juncture when progress on the SDGs is at high risk of backsliding.

For the first time, the QCPR text includes strategic direction on: climate and biodiversity issues, digital technologies, persons with disabilities, violence against women and girls, sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment, and youth. This landmark achievement sets the tone for greener and more inclusive development as the world comes together to respond to and recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

QCPR M&R Framework

To make the most of what the QCPR can achieve, we must have a monitoring and reporting framework underpinning it. We know that the Funds and Programmes will be collaborative partners in developing such a framework that can be used over the next four years to monitor progress on this ambitious agenda.

The new QCPR Monitoring and Reporting framework should be focused, with a clear set of evidence-based indicators that individual agencies will incorporate into their respective results frameworks.

The indicators should have clear baselines and ambitious milestones and targets.

Reform

The Covid-19 pandemic has placed additional strain on the Development System and its resources. We thank all Agencies and their staff for their intensive efforts during this challenging period. The pandemic has truly tested the ability of the system to adapt and work together - in some places exposing weakness - and in others strength.

The QCPR reaffirms the importance of implementing key UN reform initiatives. These reforms are critical for improving the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of the UN Development System. We encourage all entities to fully support the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator System. Empowered Resident Coordinators are best placed to facilitate collaborative planning and programming across the UN system, with a greater focus on results and impact on the ground. They can also help progress the unfinished business of regional reform. As Member States we expect Agencies to play their part in consolidating the reforms, including ensuring full implementation

of the Management and Accountability Framework, increasing efficiencies through harmonised business operations and aligning their activities with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

The new cycle of the Strategic Plans of the Agencies will have to anchor their work to the pillars of the reform. In this context, we urge all Agencies to define system-wide coherence as a priority objective in their strategic plans, identify key points from the QCPR that require further action and ensure that implementation of these reforms are central to the system-wide results' framework. All agencies must ensure that their policies, guidelines and regulations are aligned with the reforms.

Climate

We are encouraged by the QCPR's new instruction to the system to make progress on the interlinked agendas of climate and biodiversity. This includes a commitment for UN Development System entities to mainstream climate and environment-responsive approaches in their programmes, to support programme countries in achieving their Paris Agreement commitments, and to reduce their own environmental footprint. This year is critical for addressing the climate crisis and we expect meaningful progress in this area, including at COP 26.

Inclusivity

Agenda 2030 seeks to create a socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met. The QCPR reflects this, with a focus on the poorest and most vulnerable, to ensure no one is left behind. This includes all children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants. In responding to the Covid-19 pandemic we must build back better for all, ensuring a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient recovery. This includes mainstreaming the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy and supporting countries through catalysing partnerships to achieve the SDGs. It also means considering the specific challenges of developing countries and learning from the pandemic response so far, in order to better provide assistance going forward. Member States have encouraged cooperation between the UN Development System and programme countries in order to improve digital inclusion, a call we echo today.

We welcome the participation of civil society, the private sector and other multilateral institutions, as an essential condition of inclusivity in the dialogues with the Development System at headquarters and in the field.

Achieving global sustainable development and the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda is impossible without gender equality. We wish to additionally highlight the importance of accelerating gender mainstreaming and gender equality expertise throughout the system; the critical significance of girls' education; and the full realisation of human rights. Policy must be informed by data and statistics, disaggregated by income, gender, age, race ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

Nexus

The QCPR resolution calls upon all Development System entities to enhance coordination with humanitarian and peace and security entities, reinforcing the importance of the nexus for sustainable development and sustaining peace. In order to sustain peace and prevent conflict, agencies should engage in early, joint, risk-informed analysis and planning, and ensure a conflict sensitive approach. Strengthening the leadership of Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators is key to improve the impact of the UN in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Conclusion

We look forward to the update the agencies will provide at the Annual Board Session on the QCPR Implementation and we welcome an open and continued dialogue on how the ambitious targets will be met as part of the new strategic plans, in support of the achievement of the SDGs.