

Joint Statement
First regular session of the UNICEF Executive Board
9.-12. February 2021
Item 4. Updated road map to the development of the UNICEF Strategic Plan
2022- 2025
Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway
Odd-Inge Kvalheim

Madam President, Executive Director

I have the pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States and my own country Norway

We would like to thank UNICEF for preparing for a comprehensive, sound and not least well-planned process for the development of a new Strategic Plan for the period 2022-2025. The update of the roadmap that we have been presented today is an excellent example in this regard.

We appreciate the open, informative and consultative process. We especially welcome the plan to engage with children and young people in consultations throughout the development of the Plan.

The new Strategic Plan is developed in the midst of a pandemic that has had a disproportionate negative effect on the welfare of children. At the same time, it is realized that the pandemic has revealed, amplified and deepened inequalities that were already there. In light of this, our delegations support UNICEF in keeping to its strategic priorities and retaining key programmatic areas for the upcoming period.

We encourage a long-term vision for the strategy which will enable phased strategic planning and enduring partnerships up to 2030, while at the same time allowing flexibility to confront emerging threats. We understand the need for adaptations, particularly when confronted with the uncertainties that Covid-19 has created and continues to create. The pandemic has also demonstrated an urgent need for flexible and predictable funding in order to quickly adapt and respond where it is needed the most.

Continuity, consistency, and acceleration in UNICEF's mission is needed for the upcoming strategic period in order to reach the child-focused SDGs by 2030. We acknowledge that under the current Plan, UNICEF has come far in creating a solid, transparent and fit-for-purpose strategic framework. This has been confirmed both by the Mid-term Review and most recently in the Evaluation of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

Our delegations would like to highlight a few essential issues that we will follow with interest in the time to come:

- We appreciate that a gender lens will be applied. We also welcome the ambition of being gender transformative, and not only that a gender-responsive approach is further accentuated, in line with UNICEF's ambition for the forthcoming Gender Strategy. An explicit focus on

structural barriers, harmful practices and transformative actions should be at the core of the Strategic Plan.

- Furthermore, we commend UNICEF for taking on a human rights-based approach, that put children's rights at the center, and that this will be mainstreamed in the next Strategic Plan.
- We welcome steps to better link humanitarian action and development work. We call for a true nexus approach to enhance UNICEF's dual humanitarian-development mandate, and we encourage the integration of joint conflict analysis and conflict-sensitive programming at the country-level. We are looking forward to seeing how this will be reflected in the Strategic Plan and its monitoring framework.
- We welcome a stronger focus on Outcome-levels results, underscoring real changes for children's welfare. We also encourage Outcomes that have clear and distinct thematic orientation which will incentivize soft earmarking in line with Funding Compact commitments.
- We recognize that flexibility on output-level results is needed to adapt to the individual country settings. However, a future results framework should not be detached from UNICEFs unique contribution to results in countries. We encourage UNICEF to improve the system for reporting on performance in the corporate results framework (IRRF), to further strengthen the accountability aspect of the new Strategic Plan.

I thank you.