



INTRODUCTION

This information note provides an update on how UNICEF has continued to support and implement UN Development System (UNDS) repositioning processes since the last Executive Board in February 2021, ensuring that youth and children's rights figure centrally in a repositioned UNDS. It includes sections on UNICEF's support to the Resident Coordinator (RC) system and system-wide efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Secretary-General's Efficiency Agenda, and delivery of results in a new UNDS. The note also outlines UNICEF's operationalization of the realignment of UN regional assets with a focus on its engagement in relevant Issue-Based Coalitions (IBCs).

1 Supporting the Resident Coordinator System

UNICEF is continuing to support the new generation of RCs and RC offices in country settings and the implementation of the country-level chapter of the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF). UNICEF has made the following progress since the last update in February:

The **Management and Accountability Framework (MAF) of the UN Development and Resident Coordinator System** is a foundational piece in the new RC system. It provides a framework for management and accountability within UNCTs as well as at regional and global levels, to ensure a consistent approach across countries in a way that remains faithful to the General Assembly resolution on the repositioning of the UN development system. UNICEF is actively engaged in ongoing UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) negotiations of the new MAF, which will include chapters relating to the global, regional and country levels. UNICEF has provided the Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG) with detailed feedback on the new MAF and continues to consult closely with other agencies to ensure alignment and coherence. For UNICEF, it is important to ensure that the MAF clearly reflects mutual accountability at all levels as a guiding principle, collective decision-making through the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) as well as accountability of UNDS Principals to their respective governing bodies. UNICEF believes that the MAF would benefit from strong recognition that UNDS entities come with powerful brands that are an advantage for the UN system as a whole and that they can continue to communicate on matters related to individual agencies' mandates. While recognizing the importance of coordination, it will be useful to describe the roles of UNCT members and RCs with regards to resource mobilization in detail and preserve UNCT members' access to stakeholders at the

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- COVAX has shipped almost 50 million COVID-19 vaccines to 121 countries by May
- Launch of second UNICEF UNDS reform survey
- UNICEF transferred USD 890,000 in levy payments in Q1 2021
- UNICEF engaged in 30 Issue-Based Coalitions across all regions
- 84% of UNICEF offices engaged in Joint Programmes
- 1800 individuals enrolled in MAPS e-course

country level in line with their specific mandates. For UNCT members it will remain important to develop strong partnerships with external stakeholder to be able to achieve programmatic results and impact on the ground.

The United Nations Development Coordination Office (DCO) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) launched the first call for expressions of interest for the **new Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) Talent Pipeline**. The RC/HC Talent Pipeline builds upon and replaces the existing Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) HC High Potential Pool and aims to create a broad, deep, and diverse pool of high-caliber candidates with potential for RC and RC/HC roles. UNICEF will be nominating staff for the RC/HC Talent Pipeline based on recommendations from Regional Directors and the Senior Staff Rotation Group. Through the UNSDG Task Force on Performance Appraisal, UNICEF has also supported the development and roll out of a **feedback tool for UN Country Team (UNCT) members to provide feedback on the performance of Resident Coordinators**. Initial findings of the first round of assessment which took place in February 2021 show that 95% of the RCs completed their self-assessment and 85% of UNCT members provided comments on RCs through the tool.

Following requests for an update on the reform implementation at country level, UNICEF is currently carrying out its second **UNDS reform survey of its Country Representatives**, building on last year's version which provided a wealth of valuable data that informed UNICEF's work on reform implementation as well as necessary adjustments to internal processes. The new survey is being developed in close consultation with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to harmonize approaches and secure a level of comparability across agency findings.

2 Funding for the UNDS

UNICEF continues to be engaged in processes to enhance funding for the UNDS, including through implementing Funding Compact provisions, engaging in Joint Programmes, supporting the Joint SDG Fund as well as funding arrangements for the RC system through the collection of the 1% coordination levy.

UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) are strongly committed to the **Funding Compact** and will share a comprehensive update on the progress of Funding Compact implementation in 2020 at the September Executive Board sessions. UNICEF is overall on track for all UN entity-specific commitments, and in some cases, exceeded the UN system-wide targets. With regards to Member State commitments, and particularly related to flexible and predictable funds, where the data shows a decline, there is still need for acceleration. Unfortunately, even prior to COVID-19, flexible funding, especially core resources, has been decreasing in comparison to earmarked funding. In the context of multilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) for core resources stagnating over the past decade and earmarking of funding increasing, UN development agencies are faced with a high risk of even fewer flexible resources, which could fundamentally shift UNICEF to a project-based rather than a mandate driven organisation. UNICEF is concerned that the COVID-19 crisis will increase earmarking, given political pressure and policy priorities to respond to the crisis. A focus on longer-term development outcomes requiring more flexible resources will be critical to achieving Agenda 2030.

UNICEF continues to register steady progress when it comes to **joint UN engagements to deliver programmes** under all Strategic Plan goal areas. Compared to its 2020 Strategic Plan target to have 72% of its field offices engaged in joint programmes, the current assessment shows that 84% of UNICEF offices are working in partnerships with sister UN Agencies in support of national priorities. While UNICEF's engagement in UN joint programmes is well above the established benchmark, it is important that country

level needs, context and funding continue driving the development of joint programmes. UNCTs should be able to also engage in other joint modalities for engagement/collaboration/partnership to deliver on joint programmatic results. **Inter-agency pooled funds** as a proportion of total UNICEF non-core resources have increased for development interventions but slightly declined for humanitarian interventions. UNICEF is currently compiling and analyzing data collected from various stakeholders as part of its ongoing **Joint Programme Assessment** and will provide Member States with the findings in due course.

As a steering committee member to the **Joint SDG Fund**, UNICEF along with member UN agencies is preparing additional support to **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)** given their unique vulnerabilities due to a lack of concessional financing, increasing debt, climate change, impact of COVID-19, devastation of their economies. While the support will be framed around integrated policy, social protection, Leave No One Behind and financing SDGs, attention will be given to support joint interventions that are more catalytic and transformative with high return on investments.

As part of the **catalytic investment component of the Joint SDG Fund** and to further expand public-private partnerships for the SDGs, four bankable Joint Programmes were identified that involved consultation between investors group and UN agencies. They will be undertaken in Fiji, Indonesia, Malawi, and Uruguay with a budget of USD 32.9 million. UNICEF will participate in the programme in Indonesia. Focus areas for these Joint Programmes include investing in coral reefs and the blue economy; public and private capital towards green and social investments; catalyzing private investment, enterprise, and SDG impact through innovative finance; as well as innovative finance for clean tech solutions.

In the first quarter of 2021, UNICEF transferred about USD 890,000 in **coordination levy payments** to the UN Secretariat, increasing the total cumulative amount paid since 2019 to USD 10.6 million. UNICEF sees the ongoing review of the Resident Coordinator system as an opportunity to evaluate the levy and analyze its efficiency as one of the funding streams for the coordination system.

3 Strengthening System-wide Support to the SDGs and 2030 Agenda

UNICEF continues to provide system-wide support to the Decade of Action in various inter-agency fora, system-wide processes, joint capacity building initiatives as well as through alignment of its country programmes with respective UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs).

The most important forum remains the UN Sustainable Development Group, the UNSDG. The group is currently discussing new updated Working Arrangements. Such an update is important to ensure that the group offers the best possible guidance for the work of the repositioned development system, particularly at country and regional level. When the group was initially created, UNICEF as well as all other members decided to join it voluntarily as a consensus-based internal UN mechanism, fully owned by all members collectively. UNICEF and other members are confident that the UNSDG will continue to operate on the principles of consensus-based decision making and collective ownership. Furthermore, UNICEF and other entities will need to retain the right to opt-out of UNSDG decisions which are deemed contrary to UNICEF's mandate or rules and regulations set by our Executive Board.

UNICEF remains very engaged in all UNSDG Task Teams, some of which the organisation continues to chair. This includes co-chairing the **UNSDG Task Team on Integrated Policy Support** together with UNDP and the International Labour Organization (ILO). As of mid-March 2021, almost 1,800 individuals enrolled in the **e-course on Integrated Policy Approaches to Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS)** that was launched as part of the Task Team's work in September 2020. UNICEF added the MAPS e-learning package to its global learning portal Agora, to make it easily accessible for staff who can add it to their staff learning plans; along with links to the **SDG Primer and UNSDCF e-courses**, which provide

UNICEF operational and planning staff with the necessary knowledge to engage in relevant inter-agency processes.

In addition, an **updated version of the SDG Acceleration Toolkit** was finalized, with an online searchable platform released at the end of March 2021. The toolkit is a compendium of tools for analysing system interconnections, enhancing policy coherence, ensuring that no one is left behind, identifying risks and building resilience. It was originally designed to provide UNCTs, policy experts and Governments with access to existing tools for accelerating progress toward the 2030 Agenda, and now also includes tools to support the immediate socio-economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as effective recovery planning and implementation.

In terms of driving inter-agency initiatives on delivering on the SDGs, UNICEF is an active member of the **new Working Group on Artificial Intelligence (AI) under the High-Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP)** and contributed important inputs on the ethics of AI to the discussion. UNICEF is also fully engaged in the newly formed **inter-agency UN Partnerships Group**, with its first meeting co-hosted by the Deputy Secretary-General jointly with the Office for Partnerships (UNOP), UN Global Compact (UNGC) and DCO and which builds on the best practices of the existing informal Community of Practice on Communications. The group aims to amplify support, synergy, and systematize information sharing among UN leaders and experts across the UN system to unleash the power and potential of SDG 17. UNICEF is fully engaged in this Group and plans to play a significant role in initiating and convening global partnerships as a way to deliver on the SDGs and Decade of Action.

Strengthening system-wide analysis, planning and reporting through Cooperation Frameworks

UNICEF has made further strides to ensure that **UNSDCFs** and its programming are harmonized with Cooperation Framework guidance and practice and aligned with QCPR mandates. This includes providing organization-wide guidance containing formal requirements to reflect verbatim UNSDCF outcomes in programme documents, as well as giving orientation on how to best align the process of developing a Country Programme Document (CPD) with the UNSDCF country process. Specifically, organizational guidance requests UNICEF country offices to clearly align CPD outcomes with UNSDCF outcomes; participate in the UNSDCF visioning exercise, strategic prioritization and development of the theory of change; highlight the critical need to address the realization of children's rights in achieving the SDGs; take up core roles within UNCT to move at the desired pace; as well as submit CPDs to the Board together with UNSDCF strategic priorities, outcomes and outputs, if applicable.

Moreover, UNICEF HQ holds regular consultations with the seven Regional Offices to gather lessons and share advice on the ongoing processes of UNSDCF and CPD development in various country offices.

4 Shared Business Operations and Common Premises

UNICEF strongly supports efforts to maximize programmatic gains through **efficient and high-quality back office operations and a cultural change in its corporate business operations** as part of the UNDS reform. UNICEF continues to co-chair the UNSDG Business Innovations Group (BIG) – formerly the Business Operations Task Team (BOTT) – and is working closely with DCO and other agencies to implement the various strands of operational reform – Business Operations Strategy (BOS), Common Back Offices (CBO), Common Premises (CP) and Efficiency Impact Reporting. UNICEF supports the further roll-out of Mutual Recognition and has included an indicator in the draft strategic plan's result framework to measure inclusion of the mutual recognition principle in policy frameworks.

UNICEF welcomes the findings of the **Efficiency Impact Task Team's first cross-UN report on efficiencies** for 2019 and 2020, which it could contribute to substantively through its chairmanship of both the

Efficiency Impact Task Team and BIG. The report highlights significant UN savings of a total of USD 101 million over the last year – approximately 32% of the USD 310 million annual target set by the Secretary-General. The overwhelming majority of efficiency gains for 2019 and 2020 stems from entity-specific initiatives and not from system-wide endeavors. While some of the reported savings are notional amounts in terms of cost avoidance and not available for re-investment, other agency specific monetary efficiency gains should continue to be used for program implementation and reinvested within the incurring agency and must not cover costs of coordination.

UNICEF continues to provide clear and solid support to Country Offices in implementing BOS and is on track to achieve the UN Reform target on schedule. We are also actively participating in the Common Back Office roll-out process, but progress is proceeding more slowly than originally planned. UNICEF has also achieved the 50% target for Common Premises and will continue to support UN entities in achieving that target system-wide where robust business cases exist.

5 Delivering results in a new UNDS

UNICEF is fully committed to taking the implementation of the **Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) mandates** forward, and has reflected them, where relevant, in its draft Strategic Plan. UNICEF stands ready to provide system-wide leadership in delivering QCPR mandates in areas such as education, supply, procurement and data related to the protection of the rights of youth and children. It is also working with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and other agencies to integrate system-wide indicators for measuring QCPR implementation in its Strategic Plan results framework.

To further reinforce a **reform oriented organizational culture**, UNICEF continues to keep colleagues across the organization informed about new developments related to all aspects of the UN reform. Senior management has engaged in an inclusive dialogue with relevant staff at country, regional and global level to solicit feedback on implementation of QCPR mandates, as well as other ongoing processes such as the Multi-Country Office (MCO) and regional reviews, key reports and the MAF. UNICEF continues to build organization-wide capacity on operationalizing reform mandates, including through updating its intranet page on reform, provision of webinars on mutual recognition, newsletters on programmatic and operational developments around the reform as well as by making relevant online learning courses accessible to all staff.

Regarding the implementation of outstanding reform mandates, UNICEF continues to lead the **MCO stream on data and analytics**, and has led sessions with RCs and UNCTs from MCOs in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific to develop recommendations on how the UN could collectively support governments in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) on data issues.

UNICEF actively supports the **realignment of UN regional assets** to better support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is fully engaged in Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCP), Issue-Based Coalitions (IBC) and Peer Support Groups (PSG) across all regions and supports the roll-out of common back offices. It is participating in the establishment of strong knowledge management hubs, including both SDG gateways and rosters of expertise, the strengthening of regional capacities on data and statistics and enhancement of regional results-based management.

- In **East Asia and the Pacific**, UNICEF is engaged in all five IBCs in the Asia and Pacific region on climate change mitigation and air pollution, inclusion and empowerment, building resilience, people mobility and urbanization, and human rights and gender equality. It co-chairs the IBC on inclusion and empowerment together with ILO.

- In **Eastern and Southern Africa**, UNICEF is engaged in all seven Opportunity IBCs (OIBCs) for Africa and is working to further define the role of OIBCs with other relevant entities, to ensure they add practical value to the work of the UN system. This includes the establishment of an Africa Data/Statistics Strategy through the OIBC on data and statistics, a thematic focus on water-energy-food nexus and climate/disaster resilience of the OIBC on climate. The Africa Knowledge Management (KM) Taskforce produced tangible results by strengthening information sharing among agencies, for example through the development of the Africa COVID-19 KM Hub - which is widely used since 2020 - as well as a survey exploring KM norms, systems and practices of all entities, which allowed the Taskforce to drive forward joint initiatives on various streams of work identified through the survey.
- In **Europe and Central Asia**, UNICEF is engaged in seven of the eight IBCs and co-chairs three. UNICEF partnered with the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to establish a government-led Task Force of the Conference of European Statisticians on Data for Children, Adolescents and Youth, and supported engagement between the IBC on Food Systems and the Government-led Regional Partnership on Nutrition network, which UNICEF established. UNICEF is also contributing regional specific inputs related to children and adolescents to the Global Food Systems Summit through the Food Systems IBC; and to COP26 through the Environment and Climate Change IBC. The UN system conducted a review of IBCs that were already operating prior to the reform and came up with several recommendations, including the need to strengthen knowledge and demand of the IBC service offer; allocation of resources and clarifying accountability to deliver on results; recognize the role of IBCs to ensure that regional perspectives are represented in global events; encourage cross-fertilization between IBCs (for example between the IBCs for Gender, Youth & Adolescents and Climate Change) and ensure complementarity with other regional entities, notably UNECE and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).
- In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, UNICEF is engaged in four IBCs on crime and violence, human mobility, climate change as well as equitable growth and leads and respectively co-chairs the IBCs on human mobility and crime and violence. The IBC on human mobility for example is coordinating the review of the Global Compact on Migration and has developed joint messages to support migrants during COVID-19, focusing on addressing xenophobia, supported by UNICEF with the provision of valuable communication packages. With UNICEF support, the IBC on crime and violence has prepared a technical note on the consequences of crime and violence during the COVID-19 pandemic in support of UNCT's advocacy and communication strategies across the region and has disseminated a technical note on the human rights dimension of cyber violence and its impact on vulnerable populations. UNICEF is also active in the regional group on statistics with the aim of joint strengthening of regional capacities on data and statistics.
- In **South Asia**, UNICEF is engaged in all Asia and Pacific IBCs, including for climate change mitigation and air pollution, building resilience as well as human rights and gender. It co-chairs the IBC on inclusion and empowerment and leads several activities in the IBC for human mobility and urbanization, including studies and research.
- In the **Middle East and North Africa**, UNICEF is engaged in five IBCs on migration, humanitarian-development nexus, food security, climate action and environment, gender justice and equality as well as quality social services and community resilience and co-convenes two on adolescents and youth (together with UNFPA) and social protection (together with ILO).
- In **Western and Central Africa**, UNICEF is engaged in four of the seven Opportunity Issue Based Coalitions (OIBCs). It plays a very active role in driving forward the work of the coalitions on strengthening data; education and health for youth and adolescents, including gender dimensions;

leveraging technologies and climate change and fostering resilience. UNICEF is also contributing to all three regional UN Reform Task Groups on the knowledge management hub, on regional reporting frameworks, and on common back offices to support countries with the implementation of the Efficiency Agenda. The OIBCs have proven to be a useful platform to support joint advocacy around financing and partnerships on education, civil registration and vital statistics digitization, digital learning as well as leveraging the momentum around the COVAX Facility to foster joint work on primary health care.

UNICEF also supports the strengthening of the **system-wide evaluation (SWE)** function through the continuing secondment of a senior staff to EOSG. As a member of the Advisory Committee of the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (COVID-19 MPTF), UNICEF has supported its lessons learned and evaluability assessment exercise. The UN socio-economic framework and socio-economic response plans (SERPs) were noted as useful instruments to bring the UN together, with varying relevance across different countries, demonstrating the need for instruments that are fit to a given country context. Recommendations include conducting an assessment of the substantive contribution of Joint Programmes to the wider UN response to COVID-19, a system-wide evaluation of the UN response to COVID-19 as a whole, to potentially merge the COVID-19 MPTF with the Joint SDG Fund as well as to strengthen accountability between RC offices and UNCTs.

Strengthening joint programmatic impact for the SDGs through UNDS reform

UNICEF's commitment to the joint programmatic impact and collective results through the UNDS reform was demonstrated through its strong engagement in the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, in addition to the WHO-led public health response and the OCHA-led Global Humanitarian Response Plan at country, regional and global levels. UNICEF has also continued to implement global agreements and initiatives with different UN agencies.

UNDS Socio-Economic COVID-19 Response

UNICEF has actively engaged in the UN Development System's integrated and multidimensional programming approach by working through inter-agency coordination mechanisms to inform and respond to socio-economic challenges emerging or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the UNDS, UNICEF has contributed to significant results in the five pillars of the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, the OCHA-led Global Humanitarian Response Plan and the WHO-led public health response. In so doing, it has leveraged its humanitarian and development mandates, and increasingly strengthened the linkages between those to support risk informed programmes that are resilient to shocks.

As part of the UN framework for the socio-economic response, UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank have adapted the Post Crisis Assessments and Recovery Planning mechanism to produce COVID-19 Recovery Needs Assessments (CRNAs), providing national governments with needed analytic tools, trainings, and resources for accessing and mitigating the massive socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 while ensuring a safe and equitable recovery. Since April 2020, CRNAs have been applied in at least 10 countries across all UNICEF regions. Those have informed country-level UNCT-wide plans in support of national COVID response and recovery strategies.

UNICEF has taken a lead role with WFP and other UN agencies in working through UNCTs in support of Government's efforts to scale up access to basic services and significant growth of social protection work across UN bodies. In the context of the social protection pillar of the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 which is co-led by UNICEF and WFP, conducted a lessons learnt exercise in February 2021 which was shared with the UNSDG Task Team and disseminated to all RCs and

UNCTs. The findings highlighted the value of delivering social protection as 'One UN' for greater impact. As an example of coordinated engagement, the Joint SDG Fund was able to support 36 countries to address humanitarian and development social protection actions through national systems. This resulted in national capacity building and in enabling the repurposing of funding to address critical needs.

UNICEF has co-led with the World Health Organization (WHO) and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) the **Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) pillar** of the COVID-19 response which, building on each organization's technical assets, developed a strategy for risk communication in breaking chains of transmission and mitigating the pandemic impact in other sectors. Through close collaboration with WHO, IFRC and the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN), a second strategy, RCCE.2, developed in December 2020, elaborates the coordination guidance further and established a collaborative partnership between the organizations which aims to deliver mechanisms to build community resilience mobilizing community-centered approaches. These large-scale RCCE campaigns and adolescent and youth engagement efforts in places such as Colombia, Yemen and India, have contributed in generating trust and confidence in COVID-19 responses, especially at the community level.

To ensure expert driven, collaborative, consistent and localized RCCE support, the Collective Service was established as a collaborative partnership between the IFRC, UNICEF, WHO, with support from GOARN and key stakeholders from the public health and humanitarian sectors. The strengths of each partner are leveraged to deliver the greatest impact, reduce duplication and increase effectiveness of localized action. It aims to deliver the structures and mechanisms required for a coordinated community-centred approach that is embedded across public health, humanitarian, and development response efforts in a systematic and sustainable structure.

UNICEF is a key partner in the **Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A)**, a ground-breaking global collaboration to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. COVAX – the vaccine pillar of ACT-A - has shipped almost 50 million COVID-19 vaccines to 121 participating countries as of 29 April 2021.

Update on Strategic UN Partnerships

UNICEF's strategic partnerships with other UN agencies contribute to translating the UN reform into practice, in support of the SDGs and efforts of national governments. These collaborative actions focus on: (i) themes where partners can see acceleration of results and impact at very large scale; (ii) areas that would be transformational in the way partners work; (iii) leveraging existing capacities and building on areas of ongoing work that have the greatest potential; (iv) areas that reduce duplication of efforts, parallel tracks and overlap, and will yield specific efficiency gains and savings; and (v) ways that UN partners can help maximize the convening role of national partners, and help build systems, as better partners and members of UNCTs. Following are examples of progress since the last Executive Board (February 2021):

Health: H6, a joint venture of WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UN Women and the World Bank, has been providing **coordinated support to countries in maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health**. It reduced overlap and improved efficiency of programmes in countries. In 2020-2021, the H6 facilitated the transition of Every Women Every Child (EWEC) - an initiative to catalyze a political movement to advance the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents everywhere - to the SDG Global Action Plan (SDG GAP) to integrate it better in country-level SDG action and thus enable a more efficient global health architecture.

Protection: Despite the significant decline in recent years in the prevalence of child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), the overall numbers remain high with the situation further compounded by the

COVID-19 pandemic. In response, UNICEF continued to implement two of the largest **global programmes on child marriage and FGM** with UNFPA – the Global Programme to End Child Marriage and the Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation. In addition, the Spotlight Africa Regional Programme was also launched with UNFPA, UN Women and UNDP which is positioned to strengthen Africa’s Response to addressing violence against women and girls, sexual and gender-based violence, harmful practices as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights including FGM and Child Marriage. This robust programme was implemented at the continental level and in 28 countries resulting in the following highlight results: 16 million people participating in education, communication and social mobilization platforms promoting the elimination of FGM and 6 million adolescent girls reached with child marriage-related prevention and care interventions. In support of the UNCTs and RCs and keeping the ambition of leaving no one behind, technical guidance was developed and rolled out to guide countries towards COVID-sensitive programming; in addition to documentation of emerging good practices of effective support to COVID-19 national responses.

UNICEF also continues to lead (with UNDP and UNDESA) the UN Legal Identity Agenda (UN LIA), promoting a **“One UN” approach to civil registration, vital statistics and identity management**. Last year, the UN LIA Task Force issued guidance to UNCTs to accelerate implementation at the country level, as well as recommendations to maintain civil registration and vital statistics systems (CRVS) functioning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through multi-agency collaboration in support of the UNCTs, UNICEF supported the completion of 10 country assessments to advance the implementation of the LIA agenda.

WASH, Climate and Environment: UNICEF has strong partnerships to advance **water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)** within the UN system. Examples include collaboration with UN-Water (currently as Vice-Chair) and with WHO on the Joint Monitoring Program to track global progress towards SDG 6 as well as joint initiatives on WASH in health care facilities. UNICEF is fully supporting UN-Water’s SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework to unify the international community for sustainable WASH for all and has worked in partnership on the Hand Hygiene for All initiative with WHO, World Bank, ILO, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and others.

Social Policy and Social Protection: UNICEF works closely with other UN agencies at global, regional and country level to effectively deliver results in **social protection**, child poverty reduction, public finance for children, local governance and urban development. In terms of child poverty and social protection, UNICEF and WFP led the development of the Social Protection Pillar of the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, as well as the preparation of the Joint Statement of the Social Protection Interagency Board (SPIAC-B), in close coordination with ILO and other UN agencies, while being an active member of the steering committee of the Universal Social Protection 2030 group. At regional and country levels, UNICEF usually plays a leading and coordination role for strategic policy and programmatic processes, including in the context of the implementation of SDG Fund’s Social Protection and Financing windows, as well as the coordination of national and regional coordination Social Protection Groups. ILO and UNICEF are partners on universal social protection, social protection measurement, SDG reporting and country and regional policy and programmatic collaboration. Scaling up shock resilient social protection system and mobilizing innovative financing for country’s INFFs is also a joint priority of the newly agreed UNDP-UNICEF Flagship partnership.

Gender: UNICEF works closely in partnerships with other UN agencies to deliver on the **gender equality targets in the SDGs** and advance the UN reform agenda. UNICEF continues to be a member of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, the UNSDG Task Team on Gender Equality, the UN Task Force on Violence Against Women and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, among others. At the country level, UNICEF is an implementing partner in all Spotlight Initiative countries and

works with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, on the human papillomavirus, gender and equity, and is represented in the UN Joint Global Programme on Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control.

Financing for Development: UNICEF and UNDP continue working on a **global financing flagship initiative** that encompasses global and regional development financing ideas in areas that leverage their collective strengths and existing country level partnerships in response to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and beyond. The flagship has a focus on supporting national partners in addressing SDG financing gaps and ensuring inclusive and sustainable recovery, public finance management, work on integrated national financing frameworks, and stronger alignment of private sector reform and innovative financing towards SDGs.

Youth Engagement: UNDP and UNICEF are strengthening their **collaboration on youth**, with the Asia flagship initiative to advance the empowerment of young people, with a focus on meaningful youth engagement and entrepreneurship now being rolled out. The initiative aims to reach 14 million young people in five countries with a view to reaching 60 million young people in 12 countries. Two joint flagships in Africa on youth entrepreneurship and digital technologies for climate resilience are being consolidated covering sub-Saharan Africa, and additional flagships in other regions in the pipeline.

6 Conclusion

Looking ahead, UNICEF is preparing for its active and constructive engagement in a number of key coherence and reform processes. First, we are looking forward to a successful conclusion of the intra-UN discussions and negotiations on the UNSDG Working Arrangements and the new Management and Accountability Framework. We recognize the fundamental importance both documents will have for the further rollout of the reform.

Internally, we are also gearing up for the second annual survey of UNICEF representatives on the reform. Results which we anticipate receiving in the early summer months, will inform our discussions with DCO and other agencies on the reform rollout. In principle, we would also be happy to make results available in the context of the RC System Review which may benefit from factual findings of agencies such as UNICEF.

The RC System Review is obviously the next big milestone in intergovernmental reform discussions. ED Fore is part of an informal Advisory Group on the review which the DSG has created. UNICEF remains committed to supporting the review through the deliberations in the Advisory Group or any other appropriate forum.

Overall, the organisation's focus will remain on optimal support to Governments in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Better and better integrated programmatic action at country level in ever closer cooperation with other agencies continues to be our main aim.
