

**UNICEF Executive Board
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Item 5 / Annual Report on UNICEF's Humanitarian Action**

Joint Statement delivered by Germany

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I deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and my own country, Germany.

First, we would like to express our appreciation for UNICEF's indispensable contribution to the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank UNICEF staff and local partners for their immense efforts. Continuing to deliver in existing and new crises while at the same time mounting an unprecedented global pandemic response and vaccine rollout is a truly impressive accomplishment.

While COVID-19 will, hopefully, be tackled globally and collaboratively, we have seen a steady increase in the share of UNICEF funds spent for humanitarian action over the past years. Humanitarian needs have escalated and the climate crisis will continue to increase the number and scale of disasters. We acknowledge that predictable and flexible funding is important to facilitate both long-term planning and the ability to act swiftly.

We value UNICEF's dynamic, learning and self-reflecting approach to improving its approach to risks and crises and to increasing needs. The new CCCs, the humanitarian review and a range of valuable evaluations, most recently on the Nexus evaluation and WASH in protracted crises, provide a great basis for continuous improvement.

We fully support UNICEF in taking the lessons learned from its COVID response as a guide for improving future responses. With a view to staffing and processes, the response holds lessons on how to cope with increasing humanitarian workload, including fast recruitment, surge mechanisms, remote programming and rapid assessments. We encourage UNICEF to further evaluate its response, share lessons learned, and continue to improve inter-agency coordination in emergency responses.

UNICEF places a very welcome emphasis on humanitarian action in the Draft Strategic Plan, promising to apply a humanitarian lens to all analysis and approaches. We would

like to learn more about how UNICEF intends to structurally adapt its set-up, processes and staffing to foreseeably increasing humanitarian needs, especially with regards to climate-change induced disasters, localization and about UNICEF's role and commitment to implement the HDP nexus. Ensuring the continued respect for the humanitarian principles in the provision of humanitarian assistance must equally be at the heart of efforts.

One key area continues to be risk-informed programming. There is a need for highly contextualized, dynamic, comprehensive and gender-responsive risk assessments. With UNICEF's welcome commitment to strengthen its contributions to building and sustaining peace, as called for by the QCPR mandates on the HDP nexus, in-depth conflict analysis also becomes more important. UNICEF will need to continue strengthening staff capacities for such analyses and make sure programming is dynamically responsive to risks and corresponding resilience capacities as well as to identified pathways to supporting peaceful societies and social cohesion. Looking ahead, we would welcome more updates on UNICEF's work along the nexus and especially on social cohesion in future reports.

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Equally important is the need for UNICEF to continuously prioritize gender-responsive and inclusive approaches in its humanitarian responses. This is critical to address the specific and intersectional needs and priorities of vulnerable and marginalized individuals, particularly women and girls, and ensure that they are consulted and are able to meaningfully participate in making and implementing decisions that affect them. We welcome the renewed focus on commitments including ending gender-based violence and stronger engagements with women-led humanitarian organizations and we strongly encourage their effective implementation at the field level.

Another key factor for improving and future-proofing humanitarian programming in line with the HDP nexus is the localization agenda. UNICEF has been leading by way of example. During the COVID response, the number of local partners has increased and community-driven approaches have become ever more crucial. Strengthening the capacities of local partners, particularly women-led organizations, does therefore equally gain in importance, including with regards to safeguarding against financial or SEA and SH-related risks. We encourage UNICEF to continue expanding its efforts in this regard. Where possible, this should include fostering quality and equal relationships with local civil society and NGO partners which make use of local knowledge, strive to prioritize meaningful participation of women and girls and go beyond contractor relationships.

Addressing humanitarian needs in a manner that contributes to reducing future needs requires quality, sustainable and durable approaches wherever possible. UNICEF's work on WASH in crises is an example in this regard. Successful programming of this type requires dedicated technical skills as well as skills on social and environmental standards and new kinds of partnerships, including with private operators. We encourage UNICEF to continue to build that staff capacity and to expand such approaches to other areas, where possible. Ultimately, implementing durable, self-sustaining and resilient approaches in crises means to have an exit strategy for every such programme and to thereby hopefully enable communities themselves to cope better when the next shock hits.

Mr. President, I would like to conclude by again thanking Mr. Fontaine and his team for their efforts and commitment to continuously improve UNICEF's humanitarian action through cycles of learning and reflection. This is what makes UNICEF a true global leader in humanitarian response. It is also a key factor for achieving the ultimate goals of the HDP nexus and, more fundamentally, the SDGs in the years to come.

We stand ready to continue supporting UNICEF in these endeavours.

Thank you.