



United Nations

Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund

**Report on the first and second regular
sessions and annual session of 2022**

**Economic and Social Council
Official Records, 2022
Supplement No. 14**



Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund

**Report on the first and second regular sessions and annual
session of 2022**



United Nations • New York, 2022

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Part one	
First regular session of 2022	
I. Organization of the session	7
A. Adoption of the provisional annotated agenda, timetable and organization of work	7
B. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF	7
C. Election of officers of the Executive Board	11
II. Deliberations of the Executive Board.	11
A. UNICEF programme cooperation.	11
B. Oral report on UNICEF follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the forty-seventh and forty-eighth meetings and two special sessions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Programme Coordinating Board	12
C. UNICEF humanitarian action	13
D. Joint evaluability assessment of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All, and management response	15
E. Plan for global evaluations, 2022–2025.	16
F. Update on the implementation of the recommendations made in the independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and the report of the Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority	17
G. UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020 and report of the Board of Auditors, and management response.	18
H. Private Fundraising and Partnerships: 2022 workplan and proposed budget	19
I. Report of the visit of the UNICEF Executive Board	21
J. Other matters	22
K. Adoption of draft decisions.	22
L. Closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board.	22

Part two	
Annual session of 2022	
I.	Organization of the session 25
A.	Adoption of the provisional annotated agenda, timetable and organization of work 25
B.	Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF 25
II.	Deliberations of the Executive Board 27
A.	Annual report for 2021 of the Executive Director of UNICEF 27
B.	UNICEF humanitarian action 31
C.	Annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021 34
D.	UNICEF programme cooperation 35
E.	Evaluation reports and management responses 36
F.	Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2021, and management response 38
G.	UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2021 annual report to the Executive Board, and management response 38
H.	Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system 39
I.	Private Fundraising and Partnerships: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2021 40
J.	Update on the World Bank instrument to facilitate sustained investment in private sector fundraising 41
K.	Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association 41
L.	Other matters 42
M.	Adoption of draft decisions 42
N.	UNICEF Staff Team Awards and closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board 42
Part three	
Second regular session of 2022	
I.	Organization of the session 44
A.	Adoption of the provisional annotated agenda, timetable and organization of work 44
B.	Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF 44
C.	Proposed programme of work for the Executive Board sessions in 2023 48
II.	Deliberations of the Executive Board 48
A.	UNICEF programme cooperation 48
B.	Structured dialogue on financing the results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 49
C.	Update on the progress achieved through the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership 51

D. Report of the accountability system of UNICEF	52
E. Update on oversight matters	53
F. UNICEF Strategic Plan, updated financial estimates, 2022–2025.....	54
G. Other matters	55
H. Adoption of draft decisions	55
I. Closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board.....	55

Annexes

I. Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2022	57
II. Report of the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP held on 3 June 2022	70

Part one
First regular session of 2022

Held at United Nations Headquarters from
8 to 11 February 2022

I. Organization of the session

A. Adoption of the provisional annotated agenda, timetable and organization of work

1. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work ([E/ICEF/2022/1](#)).
2. The Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 56 observer delegations, including 2 intergovernmental organizations, 2 international organizations, 7 non-governmental organizations and 4 National Committees for UNICEF, had submitted credentials, in accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure.

B. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF

3. The President welcomed the members and observers of the Executive Board to the first regular session of 2022. He acknowledged the new Executive Director, stating that the Board and Bureau looked forward to accompanying UNICEF in its work for children. He presented his colleagues on the Bureau and thanked the members of the 2021 Bureau for their work.
4. The President said that UNICEF was admired in his country, Costa Rica, where it had provided access to the polio vaccine and other types of support through an increasingly solid cooperation over several decades.
5. In developing the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, UNICEF had taken a major step forward. A multisectoral and cross-cutting focus would ensure that, in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Decade of Action, UNICEF would focus on the totality of children's needs through partnerships between the Member States, among other things.
6. Fourteen country/multi-country programmes would be considered during the session, the outcome of joint work with the respective Governments, analysis and on-the-ground learning, and reflective of national ownership. For the first time in several decades, child poverty had increased significantly. One hundred million more children than in 2019 had been deprived of their basic needs. During the discussion of the new programmes, several panellists and UNICEF experts would discuss the role of social protection as a fundamental strategy to reduce poverty.
7. In 2020, UNICEF had allocated almost 91 per cent of its budget to programmes that addressed the rights and the needs of children. Accelerated fundraising efforts were required and digital means had been used to attract additional donors. UNICEF was also using alternative and innovative financing mechanisms, or using existing ones in a new way, to obtain more resources.
8. Ongoing conflicts, the effects of climate change and the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic were worsening an extremely serious food crisis in many countries and for millions of families. UNICEF continued to call for increased programme contributions and was working with partners and Member States to ensure urgent, flexible and predictable funding to help to mitigate hunger and famine.
9. As the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan continued to deteriorate, UNICEF had assisted health centres with medical supplies and heating materials for the winter, and supported community-based schools that reached 246,000 children, more than half of them girls. Cash transfers reached 160,000 families in 2022 alone. Given predictions of more than 1 million children in Afghanistan dying of hunger during the winter, time was of the essence and heroism was required in order to attend to their needs.

10. UNICEF played a leading role in vaccine procurement and supply processes, and provided specialized support in humanitarian and fragile settings. As at 26 January 2022, UNICEF, in cooperation with the Pan American Health Organization, had shipped 1.1 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses to 144 countries. UNICEF had also supported vaccine distribution in 145 countries. The process of coordinating the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine had become an urgent need, particularly in view of the challenge of reaching 70 per cent coverage by the middle of 2022, as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). UNICEF technical capacity at the global and regional levels would be instrumental in leading the process.

11. The President said that he would preside over the Board in a spirit of openness and constructive dialogue. He encouraged continuation of the UNICEF tradition of keeping the rights, well-being and needs of children at the centre of deliberations, and uniting around the goal of achieving meaningful results for all children.

12. The Executive Director thanked the President and members of the Executive Board. She said that she was honoured to join the UNICEF family and was committed to championing the rights and well-being of children. She acknowledged and thanked the previous Executive Director for her leadership during the past four years, particularly in guiding the UNICEF global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

13. The Executive Director said that for the past seventy-five years, UNICEF had stood for the powerful truth that every child had the right to grow up healthy and strong, be nurtured and protected, and be educated and prepared to contribute to their societies. She affirmed that UNICEF was in an excellent position to deliver on its mission, which was critical because the needs of children were greater than ever before.

14. She noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had amplified the impact of other crises facing children, and that UNICEF had mounted an historic global response to help those in need. Children should not have to bear the cost of the pandemic for the rest of their lives, and should be at the centre of global, national and local response and recovery plans.

15. The Executive Director acknowledged the significant efforts made by the organization over the previous four years to improve educational and economic opportunities for children and young people. She said that she looked forward to working with partners to build on that legacy, and to strengthen support for girls, which had been a focus of her career in public service.

16. The Executive Director said that the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 was a blueprint for achieving sustainable change for children and accelerating progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The goals of the Strategic Plan would require bold thinking and action, as well as better coordination and cooperation across the United Nations and with partners, including the National Committees for UNICEF.

17. She emphasized the importance of exploring new funding streams and working more closely with partners in every sector to mobilize resources for children. She said that while the financial outlook of UNICEF was very strong, core resources should be increased because they were essential to helping the organization adapt to rapidly changing circumstances and needs.

18. The Executive Director paid tribute to UNICEF staff, whom she said would be critical in helping the organization achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan. She committed to ensuring that UNICEF staff had the support they needed to deliver for the world's children. She also reiterated her support for continuing efforts to

transform the organizational culture of UNICEF. She said that she would soon begin visiting UNICEF country offices.

19. The Executive Director concluded by thanking the members of the Executive Board for their guidance and their commitment to children. She said that she looked forward to meeting with members individually, learning from them, and working with them to help make the world more worthy of its children.

20. The President opened the floor to general statements.

21. Delegations congratulated the Executive Director on her appointment and extended a warm welcome to the UNICEF family as she began her new role. They looked forward to working together with her, and assured her of their support and engagement as she began her important role, particularly during the current challenging times for children around the world. Delegations also thanked the previous Executive Director for her inspiring leadership throughout the years and commended her for her service and tireless efforts to bring transformative change to the lives of children everywhere.

22. Delegations underscored that the Executive Director was joining UNICEF at a time when millions of children globally were still affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, by climate change and by an historic number of protracted crises, which threatened to reverse decades of development and humanitarian progress. Several delegations commended the UNICEF response to the pandemic, with one highlighting that UNICEF had stayed and delivered for every child during the challenging and unprecedented circumstances presented by the pandemic. Another delegation said that the response to contain, mitigate and overcome the pandemic and its consequences necessitated dealing with pre-existing inequalities and should include an increase in international cooperation. The delegation expressed confidence that the work of UNICEF would advance towards promoting multidimensional, coordinated steps that focused on the most vulnerable sectors and on those who had been forgotten.

23. Several delegations acknowledged UNICEF for its leadership role and continued focus on enabling equitable access to vaccines, including through joint efforts with other partners to establish the Global COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Inter-Agency Coordination Structure. The delegations expressed support for the creation of the Assistant Secretary-General position in UNICEF, with many recognizing the organization's unmatched experience and expertise, including its broad footprint across countries and its ability to access hard-to-reach populations.

24. A delegation noted that in Africa, COVID-19 vaccine supply continued to be a pressing issue, with only 11 per cent of the population vaccinated, while administering vaccines had become a challenge, with only 64 per cent of the total vaccine supply administered to date. Enhancing vaccine infrastructure in Africa should be a strategic focus area because investments in vaccine infrastructure could have a positive effect in the enhancement of structural health facilities. Another delegation emphasized that the role of UNICEF in scaling up the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines should not impact regular services, and that signature programmes for children, especially the routine immunization programme, should continue with the same scale and urgency.

25. Efforts by UNICEF to ensure the safe return to schools for all children and young people as the world recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic were highlighted by several delegations. A delegation underlined that the children in the countries of the Global South had been the hardest hit due to the lack of access to online education and distance learning platforms. Another delegation underscored that education remained a prerequisite to realize the Sustainable Development Goals and that the pandemic had

revealed a fundamental digital divide between countries, with those countries that lacked information and communication technology infrastructure being left further behind. No time should be wasted in enhancing digital connectivity to improve the education of children, and well-coordinated efforts to respond to the health and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 must be the priority to get the progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals back on track and ensure learning continuity. Another delegation said that smart investments were needed in education technology to close the digital divide and leapfrog infrastructure deficits in schools.

26. A delegation emphasized that the disruption in education and the widening gap among countries to education access as a result of the pandemic was affecting girls in particular, as they were usually the first to be forced out of school and in many instances forcibly married. Several other delegations also noted that as schools reopened, special attention should be paid to the well-being of children, particularly adolescent girls, who had been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

27. The Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 was welcomed by delegations as a road map to guide the work of UNICEF in further improving the lives of children. In implementing the Strategic Plan, delegations said that UNICEF must take into account the need to address major challenges such as nutrition, eradicating poverty, access to primary health care, children’s vaccinations, sexual and reproductive health services, access to education, digital inclusion, eradicating child labour, addressing climate change, the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the physical and psychological health of boys and girls, and gender-based violence that affected girls throughout the world. Two delegations highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of boys and girls who were victims of armed conflicts, with one delegation emphasizing the need to promote an integration process that provided repair and was oriented towards the future. Delegations also urged UNICEF and Member States to further prioritize protection from sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse, and to continue to enhance accountability and emphasize a victim- and survivor-centred approach.

28. A delegation encouraged UNICEF to closely align the implementation of the Strategic Plan with the situation of programme countries, respecting their ownership and supporting their priority areas to further assist them in achieving inclusive post-pandemic recovery, implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Another delegation highlighted that the Strategic Plan gave voice to more than 200,000 children and young people all over the world who had been consulted during its creation. Two delegations expressed support for the participation of young people in decision-making and as agents of change, and acknowledged the impact of their efforts, especially related to climate.

29. A group of delegations underlined that the new strategic plans of the four funds and programmes provided each agency with a blueprint to contribute to a stronger and more impactful United Nations development system and to lead efforts to deliver system-wide results for greater coherence, efficiency and effectiveness in contributing to the realization of the 2030 Agenda. The group said that it looked forward to learning how UNICEF would report in a more harmonized manner on results jointly achieved with entities in the United Nations development system based on common and complementary indicators, as requested in Executive Board decision 2021/14. The group was ready to provide support in that process and also hoped that the indicators would demonstrate continued progress in implementing joint and collaborative programming at country levels. Another delegation encouraged a recommitment to effective multilateral development, in alignment with the United Nations development system and the strategic plans.

30. Noting the achievements made by UNICEF with regard to private fundraising and partnerships, a delegation expressed hope that the organization would implement

its workplan for the fulfilment of its fundraising goals. The delegation also noted efforts made by UNICEF in the area of internal management, and highlighted the positive recognition from the Board of Auditors. The delegation hoped that UNICEF would effectively implement recommendations contained in the auditor report, as well as continue to optimize its workflow and make its work more effective and efficient at the organizational level.

31. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their helpful and instructive comments, and emphasized that she appreciated their engagement and their commitment to the well-being of children worldwide. She said that she had paid close attention and taken notes on all of the comments that had been made. She expressed appreciation for the warm welcome and reiterated that she looked forward to meeting everybody in person.

C. Election of officers of the Executive Board

32. The Executive Board elected as President the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations, Rodrigo A. Carazo, and as Vice-Presidents: the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of Slovakia, Michal Mlynár; Lebanon, Amal Mudallali; and Ethiopia, Taye Atske Selassie Amde; and the Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations of Denmark, Marie-Louise Koch Wegter.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. UNICEF programme cooperation

(a) Country programme documents

33. The country/multi-country programme documents for Belize, Eastern Caribbean Area, El Salvador, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana and Suriname, Honduras, Jamaica, Malaysia, Maldives, Mozambique, Peru, Thailand and Viet Nam were considered by the Board. In his introductory remarks, the Director, Programme Group, shared the focus of the session and highlighted the urgency of prioritizing children, particularly those living in poverty and exclusion, in collective efforts towards an inclusive and sustainable recovery from the pandemic. He stressed the need for social protection to remain a strategic pillar of investment, particularly essential to preventing future crises.

34. The Director, Social Policy and Social Protection, then gave a presentation highlighting the critical contribution and lead role of UNICEF in scaling up social protection, child poverty reduction and leveraging public finance for children.

35. Following was a brief video highlighting UNICEF work to combat child poverty in more than 140 countries, and lead role in social protection systems and public finance for children. This was followed by two panel discussions involving speakers from Government,¹ the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and youth, and reflecting the countries presenting programmes to the Board. Around the theme of reducing child poverty through policy and programme, the panellists detailed their experiences across different contexts in reducing child poverty, leveraging financing for children and scaling up inclusive and shock-responsive social protection systems, and the critical role UNICEF had played and continued to play in supporting those critical efforts.

¹ Among the panellists were six government ministers.

36. The representatives of the country/multi-country programme document-presenting countries expressed their appreciation for the cooperation with UNICEF, many of them commending the consultative process used in developing the draft documents and noting that the documents aligned with national priorities. Several representatives expressed their commitment to strengthening social protection, thus reducing child poverty and improving child well-being, and acknowledged efforts by Governments, UNICEF and other development partners.

37. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/1 on a no-objection basis (see annex I).

(b) Extensions of ongoing country programmes

38. The President stated that in accordance with Executive Board decision 2009/11, the Board had been informed of the first two-month extensions of the country programmes for the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic; and the 10-month extension of the country programme for Morocco, following a two-month extension.

39. The Executive Board was requested to approve the 11-month extension of the country programme for Afghanistan, following a two-year extension and a three-month extension; the one-year extension of the country programme for Algeria, following a one-year extension and a two-month extension; and the six-month extension of the country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic, following two previous one-year extensions; a nine-month extension; a three-month extension; a two-month extension; a four-month extension; and an eight-month extension.

40. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/2 (see annex I).

B. Oral report on UNICEF follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the forty-seventh and forty-eighth Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Programme Coordinating Board

41. The Associate Director, HIV/AIDS, Programme Group, presented the oral report.

42. Several delegations acknowledged UNICEF contributions to the Global AIDS Strategy, 2021–2026 and welcomed the resultant increased focus on children.

43. A delegation commended UNICEF for continuing HIV programming during the COVID-19 pandemic. It said that with the support of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UNICEF and other partners, the country had achieved positive results, including halving the number of AIDS-related deaths since 2010.

44. Another delegation welcomed UNICEF commitment to advocate for coherence and institutional youth-led responses across prevention, treatment and care, all critical to meeting the objectives of the Global AIDS Strategy. It said that HIV prevention and treatment programmes that did not recognize the diversity of populations and their unique needs would not successfully curb the spread of HIV.

45. A group of delegations urged increased investments to support the health and well-being of adolescent girls and young women, emphasized the need for violence prevention and urged scale-up of combination prevention packages. It welcomed the toolkit developed by UNICEF in support of country work and the report's focus on the importance of resilient, high-quality health systems. The group urged greater integration of HIV into universal health coverage, and health and social protection

programmes at country level, and that such programmes embed a human rights approach. The group recommended that UNICEF ensure that sufficient financial and human resources were allocated to implement its responsibilities in the UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework and requested an update at the following Board session.

46. A delegation urged enhanced inter-agency cooperation at the country level, particularly regarding preventive measures. The delegation sought information on how UNICEF worked internally to integrate work on adolescents in all programme areas, and how adolescent HIV prevention was integrated in areas such as mental health, education, child protection and social protection. It asked how UNICEF intended to enhance a multisectoral approach in terms of adolescent health generally, and on HIV prevention in adolescent girls and young women specifically.

C. UNICEF humanitarian action

(a) Update on UNICEF humanitarian action

47. The item was introduced by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, and presented by the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes.

48. Several delegations underscored that the report “Strengthening UNICEF’s humanitarian action, The Humanitarian Review: findings and recommendations” was an important element in fulfilling the mission of UNICEF to support children in humanitarian crises, and they commended the transparent approach to the review process and the implementation of the change it recommended. Welcoming the presentation on the Humanitarian Review, a group of delegations called on UNICEF to regularly update the Executive Board on its progress. In carrying out the recommendations, UNICEF was encouraged to systematically implement accountability to affected populations throughout humanitarian programmes; include more information on expected efficiency gains and savings; and provide greater clarity regarding reforms pertaining to data collection and analysis, as well as its role in strengthening humanitarian system reform. Furthermore, the group said it would welcome a progress report and status matrix on the 70 recommendations and the results achieved, since the update noted that only 50 per cent were under way.

49. Two delegations asked for further information on plans to address key challenges outlined in the Humanitarian Review, including the cultural shift that was needed on how UNICEF and its staff perceived humanitarian action. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, emphasized a clear commitment from leadership in the organization in recognition that humanitarian needs were increasing, with children in the middle of those crises. It was understood that it was imperative for UNICEF to be a leader in humanitarian action for children. UNICEF responded to more than 300 crises per year, and that figure was even higher for 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Humanitarian action was an integral part of UNICEF, as more than 50 per cent of UNICEF annual expenditure in the field was humanitarian in nature, and there was certainly a willingness and eagerness from senior staff and representatives to engage in principled humanitarian action and to obtain greater knowledge and understanding of how to manage the humanitarian space.

50. Commending UNICEF for its meaningful contribution to deliver humanitarian assistance, another delegation said that urgent mobilization of funding and resources remained critical to prevent child deaths. As the world grappled with multiple threats posed by conflict, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, fair and equitable distribution of vaccines must remain the priority. Decisive actions to overcome the hardships being faced were needed for a better recovery and a more sustainable world for present and future generations.

51. A delegation noted the important steps that UNICEF had taken in 2020 to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian settings, and thanked UNICEF for its work on addressing the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. UNICEF was encouraged to continue improving the quality of its humanitarian response by ensuring that adequate humanitarian resources and capacity-building were in place in all responses, and to articulate priorities for the additional funding sought to implement the recommendations of the Humanitarian Review. Using examples from Afghanistan and Yemen, the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, highlighted the preparedness funding challenges while noting that UNICEF continued to learn and improve from every emergency, applying new knowledge to the next emergency.

52. A representative of the ChildFund Alliance emphasized that while 2022 posed immense challenges to the safety and well-being of children and their families worldwide, and particularly in Afghanistan, children and their protection must remain at the heart of all humanitarian action, and everybody had a role to play in the protection of children.

(b) Establishment of an Assistant Secretary-General position in UNICEF to head the Global COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Inter-Agency Coordination Structure

53. The item was presented by the Associate Director, Health, Immunization, Programme Group. By the fourth quarter of 2021, the supply of COVID-19 vaccines had surpassed absorption capacity in many countries due to a host of global and in-country delivery challenges. Globally, insufficient funding was a critical issue affecting vaccine delivery, with estimates showing almost \$3.5 billion needed to reach the goal of 70 per cent global COVID-19 vaccination coverage by mid-2022. A funding gap of \$1.9 billion remained, and global-level coordination was lacking.

54. The Assistant Secretary-General would lead a senior inter-agency team to pivot the global COVID-19 vaccine efforts to focus on delivery and country support, working with Heads of State and global stakeholders over a two-year period to secure the political commitment and funding needed to get vaccines into arms. The post would be funded by other resources already mobilized for the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine.

55. A delegation said that the proposal required an emergency decision, given the millions of lives at risk. The already functioning coordination structure would benefit from UNICEF leadership.

56. A group of delegations expressed appreciation that the post would also report to WHO and regularly update the Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance Board COVID-19 vaccination delivery support steering committee. The group cautioned that an inflation in the number of permanent Assistant Secretary-General positions could pressure the UNICEF budget, and thus expressed its support for a time-bound post for two years, funded from resources specifically contributed to address the pandemic.

57. A delegation welcomed the establishment of the temporary steering committee of the Gavi Board, and shared its expectation that the new coordination structure at UNICEF would work closely with the committee to coordinate on strategic decision-making and resource allocation. The delegation also noted its appreciation to UNICEF Supply Division, which had delivered more than 200 million doses of vaccines donated by the country.

58. Another delegation expressed appreciation to UNICEF for fully communicating with the members of the Board on the creation of the post and listening to their views. The delegation hoped that the members would be informed of progress in the selection and appointment process for the position.

59. The Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, said that the following months would be critical. He confirmed that the position would be time-bound and funded from COVID-19 resources. UNICEF would keep the Board informed throughout the process, including by organizing a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General.

60. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/3 (see annex I).

D. Joint evaluability assessment of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All, and management response

61. The Director of Evaluation presented the joint evaluability assessment of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All ([E/ICEF/2022/4](#)), followed by the Director, Health, Programme Group, who presented the management response ([E/ICEF/2022/5](#)). Dr. Peter Singer, Special Adviser to the World Health Organization Director-General and Senior Lead of the Sustainable Development Goal 3 Global Action Plan secretariat, was present and available as needed.

62. Delegations welcomed the assessment and the update on progress made in implementing the assessment's recommendations. A delegation expressed appreciation for the opportunity to revisit and clarify the objectives and operational model of the Global Action Plan in light of COVID-19, and to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation framework. In the current pandemic context, improved coordination and concerted action among global health and development partners had never been more critical than it was now, and by better streamlining their investments, Global Action Plan partners could play a critical role in helping countries build stronger and more resilient health systems and health emergency preparedness capacities. For its part, UNICEF was well positioned to play a key role in advancing the Global Action Plan objectives, given its wide-ranging support to countries as well as the vital role it played in the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic response.

63. A delegation noted that the assessment's findings underlined the value of early evaluability assessments with regard to improving coordination, results orientation, and monitoring and accountability of multi-agency programmes and action plans. UNICEF was encouraged to continue promoting and participating in joint evaluations of multi-agency engagements as envisioned in its plan for global evaluations, 2022–2025, and to share the results of such assessment findings broadly within the United Nations system, including with the Executive Board. The Director, Health, Programme Group, underlined that to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, UNICEF and the other United Nations agencies, together with civil society, Governments and other multilateral organizations, would continue to play an important role in joint programming and coordination to ensure that countries were pursuing their goals towards accomplishing the health-related targets. No single entity on its own could ensure that a Sustainable Development Goal would be achieved because the Goals were very much interlinked.

64. On behalf of WHO, the Special Adviser to the WHO Director-General congratulated and welcomed the Executive Director and noted that the agenda item had been well situated in her opening remarks, when she had spoken of coordination and cooperation within the multilateral system to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. The Special Adviser emphasized that a collaboration structure had been built, and that the Global Action Plan was a platform to understand, analyse and improve collaboration in a multilateral system to better jointly support countries to accelerate progress on the Goals. He noted the importance of optimizing and managing the incentives for collaboration among multilateral agencies, such as joint funding and monitoring programmes.

65. A representative of the NGO Committee on UNICEF noted appreciation for the efforts that had been put into developing the new Strategic Plan, despite the difficult

climate posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and welcomed the initiatives outlined in the five focus areas, underpinned by the Sustainable Development Goals.

66. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/4 (see annex I).

E. Plan for global evaluations, 2022–2025

67. The Director of Evaluation presented the document ([E/ICEF/2022/3](#)), which had been prepared in accordance with the revised UNICEF evaluation policy and relevant Executive Board decisions.

68. A group of delegations welcomed the plan for global evaluations, 2022–2025, and said that it was an important tool for organizational learning, accountability and development. The group expressed appreciation for the increase in evaluations related to humanitarian action, as well as the integration of gender and humanitarian lenses into all evaluations. In response to a question by the group and two other delegations about how such integration would translate into results on the ground, the Director of Evaluation said that it could be done at the country and regional levels as well as the global level, incorporating a lens that looked at scenarios that were not currently in emergencies and whether adequate preparedness was already in place. In terms of gender, he said that it was necessary to examine the extent that UNICEF programmes were meaningfully incorporating a gender lens, instead of just disaggregating data.

69. The group of delegations commended efforts by UNICEF to set up different funding mechanisms, such as the impact catalyst fund or the continued use of the Evaluation Pooled Funds, to facilitate the numerous activities mentioned in the workplan. However, the group expressed concern that those instruments had not been provided with the means required in the proposed budget. Another concern was that the expenditures for evaluation did not meet the established target of 1 per cent of programme expenditures. The Director of Evaluation said that the plan presented an indicative budget. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, added that UNICEF was committed to meeting the target and that internal discussions were being held to see how that could best be done. Going forward, there was also hope of increasing investment regarding efforts at the inter-agency level from an evaluation angle.

70. A delegation commended UNICEF for its continued engagement in the ongoing development of the United Nations system-wide evaluation function and its commitment to continue developing evaluation partnerships with non-United Nations partners. The delegation hoped that UNICEF would succeed in mobilizing the necessary funds for putting in place such an ambitious programme, considering that a large part of the planned evaluations was to be funded by other resources. Another delegation underlined the importance of ensuring that questions on integrating cross-cutting issues were included in all evaluation topics. UNICEF was encouraged to examine how the plan could shed light on the organization's mainstreaming of gender equality, human rights, climate change and other relevant issues across all types of programming.

71. A delegation commended the increased focus on supporting national evaluation capacity development and the ability of UNICEF to conduct evaluations at the decentralized level. A question was asked regarding the initial thinking of the Evaluation Office in enhancing national capacity. The Director of Evaluation responded that, as noted in the plan for global evaluations, it was important for UNICEF to link efforts with counterparts in other agencies to boost the ability of Governments to engage in the generation and analysis of evidence around their own work towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

72. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/5 (see annex I).

F. Update on the implementation of the recommendations made in the independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and the report of the Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority

73. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, introduced the update (E/ICEF/2022/6), followed by the Senior Adviser, Child Safeguarding and the Principal Adviser, Organizational Culture, who presented an overview.

74. Several delegations commended UNICEF for its work in those areas. During the general statements, a delegation urged UNICEF to consider the specific challenges and needs of children born of sexual violence in conflict in its policies and programmes. Another delegation underscored the importance of prompt investigations and sanctions for all allegations of sexual misconduct, and the provision of assistance to victims.

75. A group of delegations expressed its gratitude to UNICEF for its leadership. It outlined four areas deemed to be at the core of each agency's efforts. In terms of leadership, the group was encouraged by the inclusion of new indicators in the Strategic Plan and applauded the PulseCheck initiative. The group requested that headquarters action plans on sexual exploitation and abuse be shared with the Board, and asked how UNICEF ensured that all country offices gave sufficient attention to the issue. The Senior Adviser, Child Safeguarding, explained that this was done through country-level reporting on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse indicators, United Nations country team action plans and performance management.

76. The group stressed the importance of ensuring adequate resource allocation, and asked how UNICEF measured leadership performance on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in terms of indicators similar to those used by the United Nations Development Programme. It encouraged continued efforts to ensure that staff and leadership understood their responsibilities, and implementation of the recommendations from the Task Team on Anti-Racism and Discrimination. The group said it would welcome details on how the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse coordinators engage across the United Nations system at country level. The group was pleased that almost all civil society implementing partners had been assessed and asked what obstacles had been encountered and to what extent UNICEF shared its knowledge and experience with other agencies. The group underlined the importance of prompt reporting of all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, and the need for timely and thorough survivor and victim-centred investigations, with updates provided to Member States. The Senior Adviser, Child Safeguarding, clarified that a common Inter-Agency Standing Committee job description was typically used for the coordinators, and that they worked with United Nations teams, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse networks and senior officials in country. With regard to its implementing partners, UNICEF had experienced significant challenges raising capacity but there was agreement on a common architecture and tool for risk assessment shared through the UN Partner Portal.

77. A delegation expressed appreciation for the work done to strengthen protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and noted UNICEF leadership in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. The delegation encouraged UNICEF to address gender imbalances within the workforce. It looked forward to learning about plans to increase female staff and to sustained momentum and a long-term commitment by UNICEF to build more supportive workplaces and strengthen accountability mechanisms. It encouraged UNICEF to ensure that country offices and

implementing partners had the training and capacity to confront sexual exploitation and abuse.

78. Another delegation asked about the work being done to facilitate reporting, and how UNICEF would accelerate preventive work, strengthen work to curb sexual exploitation and abuse in the humanitarian context, and tackle heightened risks in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

79. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, said that UNICEF continued to prioritize gender parity, including through family-friendly policies and finding more flexible ways of operating while maintaining a strong country-level presence to deliver results for children. Institutionalization of preventing sexual exploitation and abuse required a holistic programming approach that should consider issues such as gender-based violence, education and a livelihoods approach. This would require agencies coming together with Governments and non-governmental organizations, as well as resources and a long-term commitment. UNICEF had made significant investments in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, including through increased capacity, but additional progress would also require collaboration between the humanitarian and development community and additional dedicated core resources.

80. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/6 (see annex I).

G. UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020 and report of the Board of Auditors, and management response

81. The Director of External Audit, Chile, representing the United Nations Board of Auditors, presented the report of the Board of Auditors. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, introduced the UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020 and management response to the report of the Board of Auditors ([A/76/5/Add.3](#)). The Comptroller and Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management, presented the financial report and audited financial statements as well as the management response to the report of the Board of Auditors ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.2](#)).

82. Several delegations expressed appreciation for the efforts and work of the Board of Auditors in drafting the unqualified audit opinion. A delegation welcomed the first statement on internal controls by UNICEF management for all operations for 2020. Recognizing the steps taken by UNICEF to strengthen the financial and management control of its operations, the delegation noted that additional improvements could be made in areas including programme management, human resources, budget management, and management of implementing partners.

83. Three delegations said that UNICEF should take the necessary measures to implement the remaining recommendations of the Board of Auditors, particularly those that had been reported as outstanding in previous years. A delegation noted that UNICEF had already implemented 72 outstanding recommendations that had been open at the beginning of financial year 2020.

84. A delegation welcomed the recommendation that UNICEF should finalize regulatory procedures for cash transfers made directly to beneficiaries so that clear instructions were in place for accurate financial reporting of cash transfer programmes. Another delegation asked if UNICEF had managed to finalize that procedure. The Comptroller noted that UNICEF had carried out the annual forecasting processes for strategic supplies and was currently reviewing the forecasting procedures. Robust mechanisms were in place to ensure uninterrupted programme supplies to countries and to address any unforeseen variations that occurred over time.

The Comptroller also confirmed that the regulatory procedure for cash transfers had been finalized and rolled out last year.

85. Two delegations questioned the number of recommendations from the Board of Auditors, which totalled 22 in 2020, compared with 55 in 2019. The Director of External Audit said that the number of recommendations varied depending on how the observations and feedback were categorized, and could increase in future years as the auditors designed more specific tests. The Comptroller added that historically, the number of recommendations ranged between 20 and 30, with one recommendation, at times, having several subsections. If a single subsection remained open, the whole recommendation would be considered open. That approach hampered the ability of UNICEF to fully close the recommendation and show progress. It had been agreed with the previous auditors to split them into separate recommendations so that individual progress could be recognized, but for financial year 2020, the Board of Auditors had broader recommendations that had not been individually listed. UNICEF was making efforts to implement additional recommendations that would be reviewed during the final audit in April.

86. Two delegations noted the collaborative and proactive approach to fraud awareness training. A delegation expressed support for the commitment by UNICEF to take measures towards implementing partners involved in fraudulent activities by recovering losses and barring such partners from future partnerships with UNICEF and other United Nations entities. In response to a question from the delegation requesting further information about the measures taken by UNICEF, the Comptroller highlighted that UNICEF collaborated with the United Nations system using the UN Partner Portal to enhance partnership integrity, and conducted joint trainings.

87. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/7 (see annex I).

H. Private Fundraising and Partnerships: 2022 workplan and proposed budget

88. The Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships ad interim, introduced the item, followed by the Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, who presented the workplan and budget (E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.1), which was accompanied by an update on the strategic approach to alternative/innovative finance (UNICEF/2022/EB/5) and an update on the World Bank instrument to facilitate sustained investment in private sector fundraising (UNICEF/2022/EB/6).

89. A group of delegations welcomed the workplan's emphasis on non-financial resources to be leveraged from businesses and the influencing of business practices based on the Child Rights Agenda. It sought more information about the results expected from engagements to influence private sector business practices, and the role of the country offices and the National Committees. It welcomed information on the development of country office fundraising capacities, revenue and planned investments, and details on the expected long-term impact of such investments, particularly on regular resource revenue. The Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, said that UNICEF engaged with the private sector on how to integrate a child-sensitive lens in business practices and supply chains. The World Bank instrument had allowed UNICEF to inject \$50 million in investments in emerging markets so that country offices could accelerate their private fundraising activities, potentially generating future regular resources. A sales force-based digital platform was being rolled out in several country offices, helping to ensure data protection for individual donors.

90. The group looked forward to hearing, during the annual session, about results and challenges from the first year of the World Bank instrument and to learning when an evaluation would be undertaken and its results presented to the Board. The Comptroller and Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management, reported that within six months UNICEF had met the triggers related to the instrument, which meant that the investment had yielded a performance target result, and had paid the interest.

91. On alternative/innovative finance, the group said that National Committees should help to inform the UNICEF approach, and asked for information on risk mitigation strategies, UNICEF current skills and capacities, and the role of the newly established Innovative Finance Hub as a new unit of the global Office of Innovation. The Comptroller clarified that the category alternative/innovative finance included several instruments considered to be non-traditional, but that most of those initiatives would not result in debt to UNICEF. The organization was in the process of seeking approval from the General Assembly only for those aspects of alternative/innovative financing that would entail liability to UNICEF. Without such approval, UNICEF could not take advantage of concessional borrowing – even if offered at minimal or no interest. The Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, said that the National Committees were critical to strategies around alternative/innovative finance, and that UNICEF worked in this area with its sister United Nations agencies – like the United Nations Development Programme through a flagship innovative finance initiative – and with joint funds like the SDG Fund. The Director, Office of Innovation, said that the Innovative Finance Hub would help UNICEF to understand how to catalyse more focus from financial markets towards helping to finance children’s impact; create frameworks of social impact benchmarking for children stemming from social impact investment; and ideally work with an existing social impact fund around establishing new initiatives, such as a possible global first private equity fund. The unit would work on a range of alternative financing products, and would seek to connect with new communities or with those not yet fully reached, so that they could become champions for children.

92. The group strongly encouraged UNICEF to share best practices and lessons learned on alternative/innovative finance with its sister United Nations agencies, and to improve coordination among the various instruments. The Director, Public Partnerships Division, said that the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Task Team on SDGs financing, to which UNICEF had been contributing, was an established mechanism to share good practices on cutting-edge financing activities. The group looked forward to the innovative financing for children global vision and strategy and the investment strategy, and welcomed information on the timeline for their presentation to the Board.

93. The Chair of the Standing Group of National Committees said that since 2016, the National Committees for UNICEF had been a significant source of regular resources to UNICEF. The Committees were 10 of the top 20 regular resource donors. They were expected to break financial records in 2021, generating more than \$1.7 billion of the net total private sector income of \$2.1 billion. Beyond their financial contributions, the role of the Committees included the development of audience-centric strategies and innovations. The Chair encouraged more cross-fertilization and seamless exchanges among staff that could strengthen functions globally. She proposed that a special session on the work of the Committees be organized during the next in-person Executive Board session.

94. A delegation encouraged UNICEF to grow private sector revenue in 2022, and urged the organization to continue efforts to attract regular resource contributions. Noting that revenue in 2021 was above the budgeted amount, the delegation applauded the conservative approach to budgeting and projections. It encouraged UNICEF to

coordinate efforts to expand private sector partnerships with other United Nations agencies and private sector engagement platforms, and to adapt its value proposition in order to expand its private sector donor base. The delegation commended the successful launch of the World Bank financial instrument and looked forward to an update on year-end results in 2023. The Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, pointed to the trend of increasingly earmarked funding, which was a natural impact of emergencies. It remained critical for UNICEF to invest in private sector fundraising and individual giving to maintain a healthy balance of earmarked and unearmarked (regular resources) funding. Regarding budgeting and forecasts, the UNICEF teams maintained aspirational targets but based their planning on realistic forecasts.

95. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/8 (see annex I).

I. Report of the visit of the UNICEF Executive Board

96. The report of the visit to UNICEF Supply Division, Copenhagen, by members of the UNICEF Executive Board, 9–11 November 2021 (UNICEF/2022/EB/4), was presented by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations. Prior to the presentation, the President introduced a video that highlighted the visit.

97. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations and Vice-President (Western European and Others Group-Denmark) of the Bureau, said that her country was honoured to have had the opportunity to welcome the Executive Board to Copenhagen and pleased that a substantial programme had been put in place despite the COVID-19 pandemic. She extended an open invitation to the Executive Director to visit Copenhagen and the Supply Division.

98. A delegation noted the value in members of the Board conducting such visits and expressed support for the observations and conclusions in the report. The Supply Division was thanked for its response to the pandemic and for delivering some 1 billion vaccines in more than 140 countries. The division was applauded for its support to local markets and continued contributions through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility, as well as for continuing to work with UNICEF country offices and Governments to ensure that life-saving routine vaccinations for children remained a priority.

99. The delegation commended the Supply Division for sustaining its support for ready-to-use therapeutic food supply chains, and in particular for its efforts to strengthen local supply chain management capacities. UNICEF was encouraged to remain diligent in the areas of food safety as well as regarding the financial stability and standing of producers of ready-to-use therapeutic food. The delegation strongly encouraged UNICEF to have sufficient and adequate internal audit controls in place before awarding contracts. In addition, the delegation welcomed the continued efforts made by the Division to use sustainable materials and packaging and technological innovations for enhancing energy efficiency and reducing waste.

100. The Director, Supply Division, thanked the Board delegation for its engagement and interest during the visit, as well as for its feedback. Addressing the comments about ready-to-use therapeutic food, she emphasized that quality was one of the most important components of such food. She noted the importance of due diligence in contracting and in terms of the quality of products that were being put forward, particularly with regard to the raw materials used during production. The Deputy Executive Director, Field Results and Innovation, thanked the Government of Denmark for its support and the Supply Division staff and management in Copenhagen for their efforts during the visit.

101. The President emphasized that UNICEF had an important task ahead this year given the objective to convert vaccines into vaccinations for 70 per cent of the world's population.

J. Other matters

Provisional list of agenda items for the 2022 annual session

102. The provisional list was presented by the Secretary of the Executive Board.

K. Adoption of draft decisions

103. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2022/1 through 2022/8 (see annex I).

104. A group of delegations said that it was pleased that the Executive Board had taken the decision to establish the important position of Assistant Secretary-General in UNICEF, but that it was disappointed that the Executive Board had not been able to reach consensus during the informal consultation on draft decisions and the decision had been put under silent procedure. That had rarely happened in the history of the Executive Board, and the group would be concerned if it became the new precedent. Noting that the coordination structure was an excellent example of how the United Nations had managed to pull together as one, the group expressed concern that the deliberations around the decision would send the wrong signal to UNICEF and the rest of the United Nations about Member State support for such types of coordination structures.

105. The group acknowledged that as part of the UNICEF family, the Executive Board represented many different views, cultures and backgrounds, but that, like a family, it usually overcame those differences to live up to its responsibility to UNICEF for the benefit of children and adolescents globally. The group thanked all delegations for showing flexibility, which it said would allow UNICEF to do what it did best: deliver for all children in need.

106. A delegation thanked all of the other delegations for the constructive discussion and exchange of views during the informal consultations on the draft decisions before the Executive Board, as well as the coordinator of the draft decisions and the President for their efforts to help bridge the differences regarding the items on the agenda. The delegation expressed unequivocal support for the creation of an Assistant Secretary-General position in UNICEF to head the Global COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Inter-Agency Coordination Structure, which he said could bring a much-needed focus to the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines and lead to progress in their administration. Noting that the differences of opinions among Board members were healthy and should be encouraged, the delegation expressed regret that there had been some inconsistencies regarding the establishment of the post.

L. Closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board

107. The Executive Director thanked the President, the Bureau and the Executive Board for their support for UNICEF and for warmly welcoming her to her first session of the Board. She said that their continued engagement was vital as the organization tackled the many challenges facing the world's children. She also noted that she looked forward to working with the Board and UNICEF partners to implement the new Strategic Plan and to report on progress and monitor achievements.

108. She said that while UNICEF was in an excellent position to deliver on its mission, it would need to use every tool and advantage at its disposal to help the millions of children at risk today. Several important steps had been taken during the session that would help children along the path to recovery from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the many other crises affecting them.

109. The Executive Director welcomed the Board's endorsement of 14 new country/multi-country programmes that were built through strong collaboration with national Governments to yield real results for children in humanitarian and development settings. She noted the essential role that UNICEF continued to play in the COVID-19 pandemic response and said that the organization would continue to advocate for children to be at the centre of global, national and local responses and recovery plans.

110. The Executive Director thanked the Board for endorsing the establishment of the global lead coordinator position to support COVID-19 vaccine country readiness and delivery. She said that the position would provide essential inter-agency coordination to turn vaccines into vaccinations, particularly in communities and countries that had been left behind in the global pandemic response.

111. The Executive Director thanked the President, the Executive Board and the Bureau for their support during the session and in the weeks to come, noting that together, they would build a healthier and more hopeful post-pandemic world for children.

112. The President thanked the Executive Director for her message and for her participation throughout the first regular session. He noted that the Executive Director could count on the full support of the Board and the Bureau, as well as his own personal support, in carrying out her role. Taking stock of what had been achieved during the session, he said that a new chapter had started in the history of UNICEF, which was coinciding with the arrival of the new Executive Director.

113. During the session, the Board had adopted 14 country and multi-country programme documents, which were linked to each country's national development plan and reflected the areas in which the United Nations system, and UNICEF in particular, operated. The documents had been adopted under the principles of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, which represented a commitment to children in a new global environment.

114. He highlighted that the issue of social protection was particularly relevant in UNICEF programme documents, as could be seen in, for example, cash transfer programmes. The world was well aware of the work of UNICEF in the area of social protection, and the Board shared the view of the importance of achieving a world without children living in poverty. He noted that the creation of an Assistant Secretary-General position to head the Global COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Inter-Agency Coordination Structure had also been approved during the session.

115. The President expressed his thanks to the members of the Board and his colleagues in the Bureau, the facilitators of draft decisions, and the staff of the UNICEF secretariat. He also thanked the Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board for its support throughout the year.

116. Looking ahead to the annual session in June, the President expressed hope that an in-person session would be held. At the same time, it was hoped that virtual participation would be enabled, as it also presented many benefits.

Part two
Annual session of 2022

Held at United Nations Headquarters from
14 to 17 June 2022

I. Organization of the session

A. Adoption of the provisional annotated agenda, timetable and organization of work

117. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2022/9/Rev.1) for the session.

118. The Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 55 observer delegations, including 1 intergovernmental organization, 3 international organizations, 8 non-governmental organizations and 4 National Committees for UNICEF, had submitted credentials, in accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure.

B. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF

119. The President opened the annual session of the Executive Board. He welcomed the members and observers of the Executive Board to the first in-person session in more than two years.

120. The President commented on the unprecedented circumstances and challenges due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and instabilities around the world. He thanked the Vice-Presidents of the Executive Board, noting their dedication and collegial manner in responding to the challenges UNICEF had faced.

121. The President highlighted the increasing risk of harm to children as a result of the pandemic and increasing humanitarian needs as a result of conflict and crises, leading to violations of children's rights. He said that half of the world's children were living, as of 2021, without access to essential services.

122. The President regretted the violation of fundamental human rights that was affecting a rising number of children due to high levels of poverty and hunger. He noted that interruptions to schooling continued to derail progress towards quality education throughout 2021. The President noted that at least 24 million children were estimated to have dropped out of school in 2021, on top of more than 260 million children who were already out of school prior to the pandemic. He expressed his concern that almost half of all refugee children did not have schools to attend. In addition, children who were internally displaced or in fragile settings often had even fewer educational opportunities. He affirmed that UNICEF was working across all sectors to support the safe reopening of schools and helping children to recover from learning losses by scaling up tailored digital learning solutions.

123. The President reported that throughout 2021, UNICEF had helped nearly 49 million out-of-school children to access education, including 6.4 million children on the move and 31.7 million children in humanitarian settings. He hailed the School-in-a-Box kits as emblematic of the organization's dedication.

124. The President called on delegations to put children at the centre of their efforts and renew their commitment to children's education ahead of the Transforming Education Summit in September 2022. He advocated for a united effort to give children the knowledge and skills they needed to thrive and called for a reinvigoration of global efforts to deliver on the education-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

125. The President looked forward to a full agenda over the coming days. He thanked the United Nations Conference Services and technical teams for their support to the session, stressing the importance of the availability of simultaneous interpretation as a fundamental component of the modalities of multilateralism.

126. In closing, he commended UNICEF staff worldwide for their dedicated work, in particular their commitment during the long months of the pandemic and in times of conflict, which had enabled UNICEF to deliver on its mission in the face of unprecedented challenges.

127. The Executive Director emphasized the scale of the crisis that had unfolded in Ukraine, reporting that two thirds of Ukrainian children had been displaced and hundreds more had been killed or injured in 100 days. The ripple effects of the war had spread quickly beyond Ukraine, she said, due to the large number of countries dependent on Russian and Ukrainian food exports.

128. The Executive Director voiced her concerns at rising food prices and supply disruptions that were exacerbating the global nutrition crisis and intensifying risks for the most vulnerable children. She highlighted the fragility of today's interconnected world but also its capacity for resilience, solidarity and progress.

129. The Executive Director commended the ability of UNICEF to respond rapidly to changing circumstances and build resilience for the future. She described the work of UNICEF that she had witnessed in recent months, including in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and at the border of Romania and Ukraine.

130. The Executive Director said that until there was a political solution to the war in Ukraine, UNICEF would continue to do everything possible to meet the humanitarian needs of children and families affected by the war. In the context of her visits to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, the Executive Director commended the power of the UNICEF dual mandate to provide both humanitarian assistance and development support.

131. The Executive Director reported that, across the Horn of Africa, more than 1.7 million children were suffering from severe wasting and required urgent therapeutic care to save their lives. The war in Ukraine was exacerbating that crisis due to the rising prices of staples and life-saving therapeutic food. Acknowledging that the challenges for children continued to grow, the Executive Director galvanized participants to respond to the many obstacles to secure a more peaceful, prosperous and sustainable future for everyone.

132. The Executive Director noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had reversed progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and that the world's recovery had been inequitable. She reiterated the Secretary-General's call to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals and stated that the only way of doing that was by making children the top priority.

133. The Executive Director outlined how Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 13 all required urgent action to improve the lives of children. The new UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 was a blueprint for driving progress towards all of the child-focused Goals, and although she was encouraged by its early implementation, she said that UNICEF needed to “future-proof” its ability to reach all children, wherever they were, by securing the funding that made its work possible. She noted that while total income to UNICEF was a record-breaking \$8.1 billion in 2021, that income was primarily made up of earmarked contributions; unrestricted funds – regular resources – had declined by 4 per cent.

134. The Executive Director noted that regular resources allowed UNICEF to innovate and respond rapidly at any given moment, and supported the organization's ability to respond to underfunded emergencies. In 2021, 68 per cent of the earmarked funding that UNICEF had received had gone to only 10 emergency appeals. In addition, the 10 least-funded emergencies accounted for only 2 per cent of total funding, a trend that the Executive Director stressed must be reversed in order to

future-proof the ability of UNICEF to reach the most disadvantaged children and reignite progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. She urged Member States to dedicate 30 per cent of their contributions to regular resources.

135. Expressing her concern at the decline in official development assistance contributions, the Executive Director said that she hoped that such reductions did not become a trend, particularly because needs were still increasing. She said that the war in Ukraine had generated unprecedented levels of private support, with 70 per cent of those donors being new to UNICEF, which presented an opportunity for their support in other emergencies and longer-term support for core resources.

136. The Executive Director said that the successful fundraising efforts of UNICEF in 2021 reflected the urgency of the moment, but were also a testament to the expertise of UNICEF staff, to the power of the organization's advocacy, and to the trust that donors placed in UNICEF. She highlighted that in her time at UNICEF, she had already seen how the ability of UNICEF to deliver on its mission was closely tied to the organization's reputation for transparency, accountability and integrity. UNICEF had a well-functioning internal control and risk management system and strong safeguards for whistle-blowers. Such efforts were part of a continuous process of working to strengthen the effectiveness of governance, risk management and controls, and to build an inclusive, safe and welcoming workplace for all.

137. The Executive Director expressed zero tolerance for any conduct that undermined the ability of UNICEF to deliver on its mission, including mismanagement and fraud, and called on UNICEF to unite around its core values, while adapting to the challenges of today's changing times.

138. The Executive Director said that she was proud to be part of the remarkable United Nations system. She said that UNICEF had always been strongly committed to United Nations reform as a way to increase results, and it was her honour as Executive Director to build on the efforts of her predecessors. She added that it was necessary to work more closely and efficiently than ever with all United Nations partners, especially during today's challenging times.

139. In closing, the Executive Director called the present day a time of urgency and opportunity; the world had made enormous progress for children in recent decades and must now do so again, with children and young people as partners and a gathering force for positive change. She thanked participants and said that she looked forward to the conversations in the coming days.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Annual report for 2021 of the Executive Director of UNICEF

140. The President introduced the annual report for 2021 of the Executive Director of UNICEF ([E/ICEF/2022/10](#)) and the UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit ([E/ICEF/2022/12](#)).

141. After introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, the Director, Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, presented details on results achieved in 2021. The presentation also included a brief update of the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 ([E/ICEF/2022/11](#)).

142. Numerous delegations welcomed the results of the annual report, congratulated UNICEF on its progress and thanked staff and implementing partners for their commitment to children's rights and well-being.

143. Several delegations commended the work of the President and the Executive Director. They praised the Executive Director for the first 100 days of her tenure, noting her skilled leadership and pledging their full support to her work.

144. In the context of the ongoing negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reprioritization of resources, a group of delegations underlined the risks posed to the Sustainable Development Goals and urged that this was no time for complacency – a sentiment with which the Executive Director agreed. In her response, the Executive Director noted that UNICEF played an active role in United Nations country teams and that in many situations UNICEF took on a leadership role of specific functions.

145. Multiple delegations expressed concern that immunization progress was off track. The delegations called for increased investment in routine immunization and drew attention to setbacks that had led to an increase in the number of unvaccinated children and to a persistent vaccine divide. In response, the Executive Director underscored the importance of routine immunizations for children's health and development. She acknowledged that COVID-19 vaccine delivery remained challenging and reaffirmed the commitment of UNICEF to all children everywhere.

146. Numerous delegations looked ahead to the upcoming Transforming Education Summit as an opportunity to develop a road map to regain lost ground in children's education. The Executive Director emphasized the need for concrete plans and concrete information to emerge from the Summit – children were falling behind so quickly, she said, there was simply no time to get together and talk. She described UNICEF teams as ready to plan for how countries could recover from the dramatic challenges they faced.

147. A group of delegations welcomed the increase in private sector revenue but expressed concern at the declining proportion of regular resources. The group called on UNICEF to ensure that appropriate systems were in place to manage funding effectively, including for the prevention of, and response to, fraud and other forms of mismanagement. A delegation expressed concern at recent allegations of fraud and misconduct at the United Nations Office for Project Services. In response, the Executive Director emphasized the value that UNICEF placed on oversight, ethics and evaluation, including the importance of well-resourced and independent evaluation, audit and ethics offices, and assured delegates of her complete confidence in those functions.

148. Numerous delegations drew attention to climate change and its consequences, with one group encouraging UNICEF to continue to reduce its carbon footprint. The group noted that the implementation of measures to promote environmental sustainability was inconsistent across UNICEF country programmes and often focused on water, sanitation and hygiene programmes. The group called on UNICEF to include assessments of environmental sustainability in future evaluations.

149. In the context of numerous protracted crises, inflation, rising food prices and the effects of climate change, numerous delegations called for increased collaboration, multilateral responses and innovative thinking by UNICEF and a more integrated, coherent, efficient and results-driven United Nations presence. Delegations called on Governments, international partners and civil society organizations to come together to tackle the many challenges. The Executive Director reaffirmed that UNICEF was working hard to improve collaboration and agreed that support for United Nations country teams, led by resident coordinators, would play an important role in countries' recovery from the pandemic.

150. A delegation noted that the crisis in Ukraine had caused food prices on global markets to rise to a three-decade high, disproportionately impacting the most

vulnerable people in developing countries. The delegation called for collective action to tackle hunger. In response, the Executive Director expressed the view that inflation and rising food prices posed a serious challenge to UNICEF in terms of affordability; for example, the cost of ready-to-use therapeutic foods had risen significantly.

151. A group of delegations drew attention to mental health as an emerging challenge for children. The group expressed its support for UNICEF in trying to break the silence surrounding mental health and in catalysing and galvanizing support for the issue. The Executive Director agreed, emphasizing the need to include mental health in UNICEF programming in a thoughtful manner.

152. In the context of digital security, a group of delegations highlighted the danger of fake news and the “infodemic” on children, who were being exposed to more misinformation than ever before. The delegations called for efforts to counter those threats to focus on children as well as adults. The Executive Director affirmed the vulnerability of children online and her awareness of the issue.

153. A group of delegations expressed concern at the situation in the Horn of Africa, which had experienced rain shortfalls for four consecutive years. The group noted that the loss of cattle to serious drought deprived children of important sources of nutrition, forced them to drop out of school to find food and water, and resulted in school closures.

154. A group of delegations recognized UNICEF efforts to prevent and respond to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. The group of delegations reiterated a zero tolerance for inaction and welcomed the progress, but acknowledged that significant challenges remained. Another delegation called on United Nations agencies and the United Nations system to strengthen governance, ethics, evaluation, audit and internal investigation functions, ensure that whistleblower protections met appropriate standards, and commit to building safer and more supportive workplaces, including strengthening accountability for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. In response, the Executive Director deplored the prevalence of violence against women in every society and in every part of the world and pledged her full commitment to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment within UNICEF, noting that the organization was committed to dealing with the issue aggressively.

155. Highlighting that 2021 was the last year of the reporting period for the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, a group of delegations expressed their recognition that it took time for system-level outcomes to affect children’s lives and livelihoods and urged UNICEF to keep the bigger picture in mind. The delegations noted that UNICEF could have used the 2021 annual report to report on and evaluate progress on systematic and composite changes, as well as to showcase where UNICEF saw its role as critical to making those changes come about over the past four years.

156. The group of delegations welcomed the opportunity to discuss the updated Integrated Results and Resources Framework, review disaggregated data and examine the operationalization of a human rights-based approach. The group urged UNICEF to specify the year on baseline values to allow for precise discussion and encouraged the organization to prepare for an analysis of results and progress over the entire period, 2022–2025. The delegations underlined the need for transparent and timely reporting to provide the necessary oversight of outcome-level results, as per the commitments in the funding compact, and noted that accountability was pivotal to maintaining support for flexible funding modalities. The group commended UNICEF for taking the lead on data collection and paving the way for more harmonized and integrated systems for reporting on country-level changes.

157. A delegation highlighted the importance of maintaining a special focus on least developed countries, especially in Africa. The delegation anticipated that, in the coming years, a decrease in the number of least developed countries coupled with an increase in middle-income countries would mean a decrease in contributions to the least developed countries in absolute terms. The delegation asked whether UNICEF intended to readjust those assessments and allocations to address the needs of the most vulnerable. In response, the Executive Director noted that the core resource allocation was guided by the Executive Board-approved formula, taking into consideration child mortality rates and other factors. She acknowledged that a majority of the world's extreme poor lived in middle-income countries, hence the importance of UNICEF in those countries.

158. A delegation underlined the importance of addressing fragility and inequality, including by strengthening social protection systems, which required cooperation with the countries concerned as well as all relevant actors inside and outside the United Nations system. The delegation also raised the importance of bridging the gap between multifaceted, core-funded strategies, and targeted or earmarked projects. The delegation praised UNICEF efficiency in the field, but said that targeted, earmarked projects resulted in more visibility and more efficient reporting than projects that benefited from core funding and multifaceted strategies.

159. Highlighting the importance of innovation, a delegation noted that the multilateral system was under extreme pressure from multiple and interlinked crises. The delegation spoke of the need for innovative, solutions-focused thinking and underscored the importance of flexible, quality funding for UNICEF, reminding partners of their joint commitment to the funding compact. The delegation said that UNICEF had both the capacity and a responsibility to be one of the main driving forces in the reform of the United Nations.

160. Noting growing humanitarian needs, a delegation highlighted the importance of the dual humanitarian-development mandate of UNICEF. The delegation also welcomed the annual report's growing focus on adaptive social systems and the strengthening of social cohesion in UNICEF programmes. The Executive Director agreed that the dual humanitarian-development mandate was essential to responding to the cycle of crises.

161. Multiple delegations commended the presence of UNICEF in Ukraine and called for a continuing focus on education and for UNICEF to collect evidence of negative coping mechanisms in the war against Ukraine in order to advocate for the needs of women and children. In response, the Executive Director acknowledged that education for Ukrainian children remained a challenge in many places, despite the education system being mostly digitized, and said that UNICEF needed to redouble efforts to support continuity of education.

162. A delegation highlighted the issue of severe wasting, noting that malnutrition could have decades-long effects and intergenerational impacts on children's development. In response, the Executive Director expressed her commitment in the strongest terms to eradicating severe wasting.

163. Multiple delegations commended the work of UNICEF as a key partner in the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility. A delegation praised UNICEF in particular for integrating public health, emergency and socioeconomic responses into country-level plans and regional Humanitarian Action for Children appeals.

164. Several delegations welcomed the achievements of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021 in advancing gender responsiveness both in UNICEF programmes and organizational system and work culture. A delegation also highlighted the important responsibilities of all to prioritize gender equality to empower children and youth.

165. Referencing the global food crisis, a delegation said that the United Nations had declared the risk of a crisis two years ago and cited multiple drivers of rising prices, including the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic approaches, and trade wars.

166. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/9 (see annex I).

B. UNICEF humanitarian action

(a) Annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action

167. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, presented the annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action ([E/ICEF/2022/13](#)).

168. Multiple delegations welcomed efforts by UNICEF to deliver robust humanitarian assistance and respond to the multiple shocks that had pushed humanitarian needs to record levels. Numerous delegations commended UNICEF efforts to apply lessons learned from major evaluations to improve its humanitarian action throughout the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025. Delegations also praised efforts to partner at all levels to maximize the impact and scope of UNICEF work, with one delegation urging UNICEF to take the lead in strengthening collaboration and coordination between humanitarian and development work. In response to comments on collaboration and partnerships, the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, said that UNICEF continued to strengthen partnerships with other organizations in the United Nations system and highlighted the successful partnership between UNICEF and the World Health Organization around the COVID-19 response.

169. A delegation noted with appreciation that UNICEF was increasingly putting protection at the centre of its approach. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, underscored the importance of protection and said that UNICEF was actively supporting the Inter-Agency Standing Committee review on the centrality of protection policy. The delegation raised the issue of forcible deportation of children in conflict settings. In response, the Director noted the concern of the Office of Emergency Programmes regarding the issue, as well as his concerns regarding the risk of adoptions in conflict settings.

170. A delegation characterized the crisis in the Horn of Africa as an example of climate-induced drought, whose effects were compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and lost learning. The delegation called on development partners and countries to increase support to countries at risk of climate-related calamities and to honour commitments to sustainably address climate change, including through cutting carbon emissions to zero.

171. Numerous delegations commended UNICEF efforts to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and called on the organization to support the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in low-income countries and to build preparedness and resilience for possible future pandemics.

172. Multiple delegations commended efforts to improve humanitarian access and urged UNICEF to strengthen its approach to identifying and targeting populations with the greatest need and allocating resources to the hard to reach and most vulnerable.

173. A delegation commended the investment by UNICEF in strengthening the capacities of local actors in humanitarian action, in line with the Grand Bargain and the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, and said that it looked forward to consultations on the development of the UNICEF strategy on localization.

174. A delegation referenced a recommendation in the Humanitarian Review for UNICEF to define its “risk appetite” and requested further information on such action. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, pointed out that risk appetite was at the centre of the new UNICEF emergency procedures, following a global risk management consultation. He noted that humanitarian assistance was focused on the concept of no regrets, with the most significant potential regret being non-assistance.

175. Several delegations appreciated progress made in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, but noted that underreporting was still a challenge that needed to be addressed while prioritizing survivor-centred care. Delegations asked how UNICEF had prioritized such work to ensure its presence across the organization’s systems and operations, and called for more detailed reporting on gender equality and how a gender perspective was mainstreamed, beyond gender-based violence and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, drew attention to the fact that every allocation from the emergency programme fund and the global humanitarian thematic fund included an investment in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, noting that the issue was central to efforts. He acknowledged that there was more work to be done but highlighted that in 2021, UNICEF had reached 61 million children and adults through the accessible reporting channels for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, up from 7 million in 2018.

176. A number of delegations appreciated the recent focus on accountability to affected populations. One delegation requested a clear explanation of what barriers had prevented progress on improving accountability for affected populations, while another suggested partnering to improve accountability, such as through joint complaint mechanisms. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, emphasized that all country offices, country representatives and senior management at the country level understood that when a crisis happened, setting up mechanisms of accountability, reporting and feedback loops, and incorporating those into UNICEF responses, was a core element of what the organization did. He noted that, in 2021, feedback mechanisms that informed planning processes existed in 42 countries and said that building systemic and integrated accountability for affected populations was a key area of focus.

177. A group of delegations expressed interest in understanding how UNICEF integrated children with disabilities into its overall activities and achievements. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, emphasized that UNICEF was consistently and meaningfully integrating disability into its programming and had made progress in that regard.

178. Several delegations commended UNICEF for its support of humanitarian cash transfers and support to social protection systems, acknowledging that cash coordination was key. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, also emphasized the importance of cash coordination, at the country level in particular, making space for partners to engage in cash programming in a coordinated and harmonized way.

179. A number of delegations raised the urgent need for support in the Sahel region. In his response, the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, strongly agreed.

180. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/10 (see annex I).

181. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, and the UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia also provided a briefing on the situation in Ukraine. Numerous delegations underlined the importance of continuing to record, monitor and report on violations against children in Ukraine. One delegation expressed concern that the briefing had not been announced in advance. In response,

the Secretary of the Executive Board noted that the request to add the briefing to the agenda item on UNICEF humanitarian action had been endorsed by the Bureau during a previous Bureau meeting, and that the note for the record of that meeting had been circulated to all Member States. The Secretary added that in 2021, an update had been provided on Afghanistan by the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, which had not been explicitly included in the agenda for the session.

(b) Update on the progress achieved through the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership

182. The Global Lead Coordinator, COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership, presented an update on the progress achieved through the Partnership. He outlined the situation with COVID-19 vaccination among the 92 Advance Market Commitment entities and the contribution of the Partnership to the acceleration of COVID-19 vaccination, and highlighted key achievements as well as challenges.

183. Numerous delegations commended the Partnership's progress in increasing vaccine coverage and thanked vaccinators for their work, but expressed concern that progress continued to be uneven, with low rates of vaccination in humanitarian settings. Several delegations expressed their strong ongoing support for ending the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, thanked Governments and UNICEF for their role in efforts to end the pandemic, and committed themselves to helping countries to build back better.

184. Citing reported vaccination rates of 18 per cent in Africa, one delegation asked why there was such a discrepancy when there was ample supply, and questioned the economic impact of low coverage. In response, the Global Lead Coordinator outlined that a window of opportunity had been missed in early 2021 when vaccines were not readily available; that Omicron had changed risk perceptions so that vaccine demand was an issue in addition to hesitancy; and that health systems were stretched and addressing numerous health priorities. He explained how the Partnership was supporting countries to address those issues through political engagement, rapid disbursement of quick-impact funding and technical assistance. He said that the Partnership was also working to increase vaccine coverage in humanitarian settings, through country teams and partnerships, and recognized the importance of making the COVAX Humanitarian Buffer an accessible, user-friendly tool.

185. A delegation urged a continuing focus on critical gaps in vaccine delivery and expressed the hope that COVID-19 responses could help to strengthen routine immunization and health and nutrition services, and, vice versa, that existing global vaccination capacities could speed up COVID-19 vaccine administration. In response, the Global Lead Coordinator provided an example of where UNICEF was repurposing polio vaccination assets for use against COVID-19 and acknowledged that bundling or sequencing campaigns was an important strategy. The Partnership was focused on ensuring that countries met national targets, with a focus on high-priority groups, and was continually documenting lessons learned. He asked for continued political attention on COVID-19 vaccination, provision of flexible delivery funding and support for the integration of COVID-19 vaccination with humanitarian activities.

186. Delegations urged Member States and partners to maintain the momentum and promote global solidarity in overcoming challenges, with one delegation calling for more investment and sustained country leadership.

187. Looking ahead, a delegation welcomed lessons learned that would inform the response to the next pandemic, particularly regarding inequity and increasing coverage in humanitarian settings. The Global Lead Coordinator agreed that it was vital to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic and stated that documenting lessons

learned would be one of the outcomes of the Partnership. In terms of lessons learned thus far, he underscored the importance of investing in primary health care, including paying health workers at the community level, investing in local production of health commodities and having simple, user-friendly mechanisms for humanitarian actors to access vaccines as soon as they were needed.

C. Annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021

188. The Associate Director, Gender Equality Programme Group, presented the annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021 (E/ICEF/2022/14), which included a video about UNICEF work on gender equality.

189. Numerous delegations praised UNICEF for its formidable overall results. Delegations congratulated UNICEF on surpassing almost all Gender Action Plan targets and for exceeding United Nations benchmarks for gender equality, including increased investments in gender equality and achieving parity at senior levels. Many also welcomed the start of the new Gender Action Plan, 2022–2025. Particular recognition was given to caregiving work and the importance of mental health. Delegations welcomed UNICEF work on menstrual health and hygiene, child protection and gender-based violence, and called for an expansion of its work in menstrual health and hygiene, mental health and psychosocial support. The delegations emphasized the importance of taking differentiated approaches tailored to situations and welcomed the recognition of adolescents as agents of change. A delegation suggested that engaging boys in the cause of gender equality was essential to accelerating progress and asked how UNICEF was doing in that regard. In response, the Associate Director underscored the importance of partnerships with boys and men as a cross-cutting priority in the new Gender Action Plan, 2022–2025 and cited examples of how UNICEF was working with boys to prevent harms in the first place. She also noted that many boys were taking part in programmes on menstrual health and taking a stand in their schools to end the stigma and taboo.

190. A group of delegations expressed concern that core resources to the Gender Action Plan had decreased, noting that the thematic fund for gender was one of the least funded. In response, the Associate Director welcomed more governmental contributions to the gender thematic fund, which she said allowed UNICEF to work flexibly and do vital work on new and emerging issues.

191. Given that UNICEF was now half a year into the implementation of its new Strategic Plan and the Gender Action Plan, a group of delegations asked what the gender department considered to be the greatest challenges to achieving the desired goals set out in the new plans. In response, the Associate Director expressed her view that adolescent girls represented the greatest challenge because they were not only at risk due to concurrent crises – COVID-19, climate change and ongoing humanitarian conflicts and crises – but also faced a more pronounced risk of child marriage, violence and school dropout due to school closures. She described the reopening of schools as a golden opportunity for UNICEF to launch integrated services within school structures that addressed menstrual health and hygiene, mental health, gender-based violence and anaemia prevention.

192. A delegation asked how UNICEF was involving children from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in its programmes to eliminate structural barriers, urging a focus on comprehensive sex education and access to rights without discrimination. The Associate Director underlined the need for targeted strategies to reach indigenous girls and girls from ethnic minorities through, for example, dedicated skills programmes.

193. Numerous delegations noted the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality and encouraged a strong focus on education and gender equality in efforts to support the 11 million girls at risk of not returning to school due to COVID-19 and related disruptions. In response, the Associate Director expressed her concern at rising levels of child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting and gender-based violence and reported that school closures had impacted other important services, such as iron-folate distribution.

194. A delegation noted that Goal Area 3 lacked specific references to protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in its indicators and called on UNICEF to consider adding specific measures of its work in that regard. The Associate Director said that efforts were under way to ensure greater awareness and accountability on addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, but acknowledged that gaps remained in gender staffing and expertise to support offices.

D. UNICEF programme cooperation

(a) Country programme documents

195. The country programme documents (CPDs) for Kenya ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.16](#)), the United Republic of Tanzania ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.17](#)) and the Syrian Arab Republic ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.18](#)) were considered by the Board.

196. In his introductory remarks, the Director, Programme Group, underscored that a lack of education casted a long shadow throughout the life of a child, affecting their ability to learn, earn and achieve their full potential. The Director, Education and Adolescent Development, Programmes, then provided an overview of the global context regarding education and the learning crisis, followed by a photo loop depicting some of the work of UNICEF across the world.

197. That was followed by a panel discussion in which the Director-General of Early Learning and Basic Education, Ministry of Education of Kenya; the former Country Director, Norwegian Refugee Council in the Syrian Arab Republic; and a youth advocate from the United Republic of Tanzania participated. The panellists thanked UNICEF for its continued support in ensuring the implementation of CPDs and underscored the importance of a unified commitment to removing barriers to safe, inclusive and quality education for all children, and of continuing to tackle the many challenges that had been exacerbated by COVID-19 and climate change.

198. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/11 on a no-objection basis (see annex I).

199. Following the adoption of the decision, a group of delegations expressed concerns relating to aspects of the United Nations Strategic Framework 2022–2024 for the Syrian Arab Republic, and its potential to risk the effectiveness of country-level United Nations programmes designed to help alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people. The group urged the United Nations to work with the Syrian Arab Republic country team to find creative solutions to the issue.

200. Several delegations expressed concerns that the Strategic Framework for the Syrian Arab Republic and subsequent development frameworks and instruments were being politicized. The delegations underlined the importance of respect for the principle of sovereignty in CPDs and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and the importance of rejecting attempts to undermine it.

201. The Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, thanked the delegations for their approval of the CPDs and acknowledged that their comments had been noted.

(b) Extensions of ongoing country programmes

202. The Chair stated that, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2009/11, the Board would be informed of the extensions of ongoing country programmes as set out in document [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.19](#). Those included the first two-month extension of the country programme for Ecuador, the first two-month extension of the multi-country programme for the Pacific Islands, the first six-month extensions of the country programmes for Chile and Papua New Guinea, and the first one-year extension of the country programme for Myanmar, all of which had been approved by the Executive Director.

203. The Executive Board was asked to approve a one-year extension of the country programme for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, following a previous one-year extension.

204. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/12 (see annex I).

E. Evaluation reports and management responses

Annual report for 2021 on the evaluation function in UNICEF, and management response

205. The Director of Evaluation presented the annual report for 2021 on the evaluation function in UNICEF ([E/ICEF/2022/17](#)), followed by the Director, Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, who presented the management response ([E/ICEF/2022/18](#)).

206. Numerous delegations commended the evaluation function on its excellent work in highly challenging circumstances, particularly its efforts to increase coverage on gender equality, disability and humanitarian action, strengthen the decentralized evaluation function, invest in a broader range of evaluative products and maximize the use of evaluation findings.

207. A delegation expressed an interest in UNICEF further exploring the potential of alliances. The delegation highlighted the potential for innovation and partnerships with other stakeholders, at a time when resources were scarce, to maximize the impact of UNICEF interventions. The Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, underscored the fact that partnerships were at the heart of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, which focused on outcomes and impact, and acknowledged that those results would not come from UNICEF work alone.

208. A delegation welcomed the increase in joint evaluations, particularly at the decentralized level, as an important way of improving joint programming and strengthening collective results. The Director of Evaluation agreed that joint evaluations were crucial and that joint management responses were always the intended outcome of such exercises. He raised some of the challenges inherent in joint evaluations before underlining the fact that the Evaluation Office aimed, above all, for evaluations and responses to lead to meaningful change.

209. On the challenge of building national capacities for evaluation, a delegation requested further information on how UNICEF was working to meet its objectives. In response, the Director of Evaluation explained that the report in some ways underestimated the amount of work that went into developing national evaluation capacities because the Evaluation Office did not qualitatively track everything undertaken at the decentralized level. Anecdotally, he said that his colleagues were working on the issue at both regional and country levels and he acknowledged the need to take stock of such work.

210. A delegation welcomed the increase in evaluation expenditure, which appeared to be nearing the 1 per cent target. In response, the Director, Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, reaffirmed the commitment of management to achieving that target and thanked delegations for their advice and support on maintaining the robustness of the evaluation function.

Evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency, and management response

211. The Director of Evaluation presented the report on the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency ([E/ICEF/2022/19](#)), followed by the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, who presented the management response ([E/ICEF/2022/20](#)).

212. A number of delegations praised UNICEF for the way it was fulfilling the coordination responsibilities associated with its cluster lead agency role, but called on it to continue to improve the leadership responsibilities of the role. Delegations acknowledged the need for clusters to become more strategic, leaner and better integrated with the rest of the organization. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, welcomed the comments and guidance from delegations, underlining that the cluster lead agency role was central to UNICEF and its core commitments. He noted that the Humanitarian Review made a strong case for the role of UNICEF as a cluster lead and shared his belief that it would bring greater integration and ownership.

213. A group of delegations identified three opportunities to strengthen the management response to the evaluation: identifying the specific areas where recommendations were unlikely to be achieved, given the current actions developed as part of the management response; considering the existing gaps in cluster coordination and information management and how those might be addressed moving forward; and reporting annually on progress to the Executive Board and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

214. Several delegations appreciated the renewed efforts of UNICEF to evaluate its performance as cluster lead agency but noted that the role was not sufficiently prioritized within the organization, citing long-standing staffing issues and a lack of consensus around a shared strategic vision. The delegations supported the key recommendations of the evaluation and encouraged UNICEF to take action to address the outstanding obstacles that had been raised more than seven years ago by the original evaluation on the same topic. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, underlined the fact that progress was under way. He noted, among other things, the ongoing revision of the job description of senior managers for stronger accountability for the cluster lead agency role, better definition of the cluster lead agency's responsibilities for different entities of the organization, and the finalization of the talent management strategy on cluster coordination. He pledged to look carefully at the concerns expressed by delegations and said that his Office would provide regular updates to the Executive Board on progress.

215. Responding to comments, the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, expressed his commitment to addressing the gaps identified by the evaluation, agreed that there was a need to incentivize the role of cluster coordinators, and noted that securing additional funding would require a creative approach at a time when regular resources were declining. He stated his intention to incorporate progress updates on the status of the implementation of the cluster lead agency role in the annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action each year.

216. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/13 (see annex I).

F. Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2021, and management response

217. The Director, Ethics Office, presented the report ([E/ICEF/2022/15](#)), followed by the Director, Division of Human Resources, who presented the management response ([E/ICEF/2022/16](#)).

218. A large group of delegations congratulated the Ethics Office on the record number of requests handled and expressed appreciation at the preventive and proactive strategy on ethical issues, specifically welcoming efforts to target personnel with greater and specific training needs and the launch of the Ethics and Culture Champions network. The delegations praised efforts to collaborate and coordinate with other UNICEF offices and to follow up on recommendations regarding workplace culture, but said they were very concerned by the continued inadequate resourcing and low number of Ethics staff positions. The delegations noted that funding seemed not to have improved since 2020, despite previous Executive Board decisions, and that the UNICEF Ethics Office was one of the least-resourced ethics offices in the United Nations system. The delegations urged UNICEF to expand financial and human resources to firmly establish the Ethics Office as an independent institution. In response, the Director, Ethics Office, agreed that there was a need for increased support and funding. He noted that constructive discussions had been held with management about an initial investment of one additional Ethics position. He also noted efforts to collaborate with colleagues internally to improve prevention and awareness, such as by leveraging the UNICEF network of Ethics and Culture Champions.

219. The Director, Division of Human Resources, commended the Ethics Office on a successful year and expressed management support for strengthening the Office and providing additional resources. A group of delegations commended the recent introduction of the Pulse Check survey and expressed the view that the Global Staff Survey remained important, regretting the fact that those scheduled for 2021 had not been conducted and asking when the next survey was planned. The Director, Division of Human Resources, stated that the last Global Staff Survey had been conducted in 2021 and that another would hopefully be conducted during the last quarter of 2022.

220. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/14 (see annex I).

G. UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2021 annual report to the Executive Board, and management response

UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee 2021 annual report to the Executive Board

221. The Director, Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, presented the report ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.5](#)), which was accompanied by an addendum ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.5/Add.1](#)) detailing the investigations cases closed in 2021. The Deputy Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management, then presented the management response ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.6](#)), followed by the Chair of the Audit Advisory Committee, who discussed the results of the Committee's 2021 annual report.

222. A group of delegations congratulated UNICEF on the Office's overall assurance opinion and commended the timely and thorough implementation of its agreed actions. The group agreed that remote working could not fully replace fieldwork and appreciated the inclusion of the benefits and risks to remote work strategies in the report, supporting a hybrid approach.

223. The group of delegations invited UNICEF to provide further updates on how staff and beneficiaries were encouraged to report misconduct. The Director, Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, underlined that reporting mechanisms must always

take account of local circumstances and customs and that they relied on all UNICEF staff to report and encouraged beneficiaries to do the same.

224. Multiple delegations expressed concerns that non-post financial resources remained low, despite the significant increase in workload. The Director explained that while a raft of cost-savings measures were being employed to address recent cuts in non-post resources, anticipated increases in travel and caseloads in 2023 and beyond might pose significant resource challenges in the future.

225. A delegation questioned how the Office intended to take a more active and direct role in investigating allegations of fraud and corruption. In response, the Director said that more resources would enable more direct responses to fraud and corruption cases and that the Office was working closely with the Supply Division as well as other UNICEF sections to improve internal processes, specifically regarding vendors and implementing partners.

226. Another delegation noted with grave concern the increase in cases of sexual exploitation and abuse involving staff of implementing partners, citing 75 cases in 2021. The Director outlined measures taken to ensure that allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were always adequately investigated.

227. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/15 (see annex I).

H. Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

228. The Deputy Executive Director ad interim, Partnerships, introduced the update, followed by the Director, Public Partnerships Division, who presented an overview.

229. A group of delegations stressed that the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals was under threat and emphasized the importance of inter-agency collaboration and United Nations development system reform. The group drew attention to the importance of integrated responses to crises, including collaborative analysis and planning; critically assessing the presence of all United Nations agencies for the right skills and expertise; ensuring that CPDs aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks; strengthening the human-rights based approach within UNICEF; and the Management and Accountability Framework.

230. In response, the Director, Public Partnerships Division, emphasized that the overall aim of the reform was to have integrated support across the United Nations system, especially at country level, led by the common country analysis process. She highlighted the UNICEF lead role in many areas, including monitoring and evaluation. The Director reiterated the strong commitment of UNICEF to efficiencies and its ability to pivot to get the right skills where they were needed. She also affirmed that the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 explicitly embedded human- and child-rights standards into everything the organization did. She described the Management and Accountability Framework as a foundational piece of the reform that was yielding results with a growing positive trend for reporting on management, and confirmed UNICEF compliance with the Framework, including on dual reporting lines and full alignment of CPDs with Cooperation Frameworks.

231. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, noted that UNICEF had reached or surpassed targets in many efficiency areas, including on common premises, business operations strategies and global shared services. She highlighted UNICEF

investments in the greening of premises, such as through solar power. She also noted the potential of the mutual recognition framework that would allow for more joint work in operational areas such as finance and human resources, and encouraged delegations as well as all parts of the United Nations to support that.

232. On the Cooperation Frameworks, the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, reiterated their key role in defining integrated planning and collective outcomes at the United Nations country team level, from which agencies derived their country programmes and defined outputs contributing to the collective outcome.

233. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/16 (see annex I).

I. Private Fundraising and Partnerships: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2021

234. The Deputy Executive Director ad interim, Partnerships, introduced the item, followed by the Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, who presented the report (E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.4).

235. A group of delegations commended the excellent results that had surpassed revenue targets but noted that the growth of regular resources had been modest, resulting in a declining share of regular resources in total private sector income. The group asked how UNICEF intended to use investment funds and innovative financing strategically, to increase generation of regular resources, and expressed their interest in the innovative financing and investment strategy of UNICEF. In response, the Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, highlighted the fact that investments needed to be continuous, as they did not yield immediate results. She outlined how ongoing investment in private sector fundraising operations had created a base for regular resources and offered huge potential by attracting new sources of funding.

236. The group of delegations announced that they would be interested to hear from National Committees and UNICEF country offices with structured private sector fundraising capacities on the potentials and challenges of raising regular resources in their country contexts.

237. The group of delegations affirmed its belief that the successful engagement of UNICEF with the private sector provided a blueprint for other United Nations agencies to partner with the private sector and advocate for their active involvement in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Director acknowledged that there was strong collaboration with other United Nations agencies and said that much work was under way with businesses, not just in terms of a transactional fundraising relationship but also in influencing them to include a child rights lens in their practices. She provided a pertinent example of how UNICEF nurtured one-off contributions into longer-term donor journeys for multi-year and flexible funding, describing a partnership with a foundation that had started as an emergency contribution and, after consultation and understanding their interests, turned into funding for other UNICEF programmes.

238. In response to concerns from delegations about declining regular resources, the Comptroller and Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management, underlined the fact that grant funding alone would not allow UNICEF to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for the world's children. He also noted that not all funding needed to come to UNICEF directly; with its leverage and convening power, UNICEF was able to secure multiple sources of funding for its programmes.

239. A delegation expressed a particular interest in endowment and trust funds. In responding, the Comptroller noted that ultimately those all pointed to traditional

donors, Member States in the public sector, and that those donors were increasingly earmarking and reducing core resources.

240. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/17 (see annex I).

J. Update on the World Bank instrument to facilitate sustained investment in private sector fundraising

241. Following an introduction by the Deputy Executive Director ad interim, Partnerships, the Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, presented the report.

242. A delegation welcomed the ongoing performance review of the instrument and requested further comments on how UNICEF planned to communicate and share the results of the review with the Executive Board as well as other stakeholders. Responding to comments, the Comptroller outlined plans to conduct an independent review and assessment of the World Bank instrument after the first full year of operation in 2022.

243. Another delegation expressed its strong support for such an innovative financing tool and asked whether going forward, UNICEF would be seeking Executive Board approval for future debt instruments or financing of that type. The Comptroller indicated that actual approval rested with the General Assembly.

K. Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association

244. The Chairperson thanked Member States for their strong support, their appreciation of the work of UNICEF staff and their endless advocacy for global support to the UNICEF brand. He underlined the huge sacrifices that UNICEF staff had made in ensuring that programme delivery was not compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic. He called for more inclusive processes, vigilance and drive to ensure that the vision and values of UNICEF were represented wherever the organization was present.

245. The Chairperson praised the passion and tenacity of UNICEF leaders on behalf of staff, noting in particular the energy demonstrated in the pursuit of the UNICEF mandate and their support for staff well-being.

246. The Chairperson praised UNICEF staff for the quality and timeliness of their output, adaptiveness, creativity, enterprise, energy and drive. He acknowledged the commitment of UNICEF leadership to promoting cultural change and zero tolerance of all forms of harassment and abuse. He noted, however, that the Global Staff Association continued to encounter contrasts between data and the reality on the ground, with concerns about colleagues' fear of retaliation not abating.

247. The Chairperson reported that the Association had strengthened its advocacy for a comprehensive review of the national staff category. The Association had also ensured the formation of a working group on national staff issues in the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations system, where UNICEF was on the executive council for the first time, and ensured that national staff issues were among the key recommendations of the most recent general assembly of the working group.

248. A delegation speaking on behalf of the Bureau of the Executive Board recognized the immense burden placed on UNICEF staff and their families by the COVID-19 pandemic and commended them for rising to the many challenges while demonstrating an unwavering commitment to delivering results for children and their families. The representative also congratulated the leadership of the UNICEF Global

Staff Association for their important work in advocating for staff and organizational change in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She expressed appreciation of efforts to improve the UNICEF working culture on multiple fronts.

L. Other matters

Provisional list of agenda items for the second regular session of 2022

249. The provisional list was presented by the Secretary of the Executive Board.

M. Adoption of draft decisions

250. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2022/9 through 2022/17.

N. UNICEF Staff Team Awards and closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board

251. The Executive Director announced the winners of the 2021 UNICEF Staff Team Awards, paying tribute to 10 teams that exemplified the very best of UNICEF. The awards went to: (a) the Syrian Arab Republic Country Office, for their efforts to promote the right to education of children with disabilities in Aleppo; (b) the UNICEF Global Supply Community, for their COVID-19 vaccine roll-out efforts; (c) the Pakistan Country Office, for its measles and rubella vaccine campaign; (d) the India Country Office, for support to children during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic; (e) the Lao People's Democratic Republic Country Office, for its *My House* early childhood education television series amid school closures; (f) the Airtel Africa for Reimagine Education collaborative partnership between the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office and the West and Central Africa Regional Office; (g) the Botswana Country Office, for its subregional commemoration of World Children's Day; (h) the Kenya Country Office, for its COVID-19 vaccine campaign; (i) the country offices of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, for their collaboration with the West and Central Africa Regional Office, the UNICEF Child Protection section and the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy to engage communities around child marriage; and (j) the UNICEF Office in the State of Palestine, for its multifaceted response in the face of multiple crises.

252. The Executive Director thanked delegations for their active participation during the annual session and for making such good, productive use of their time together. She commended the support of the United Nations Conference Services and thanked the Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board for ensuring a successful meeting. The Executive Director thanked retiring staff members and acknowledged the leadership of the President of the Executive Board. She expressed appreciation to the members of the Board for their suggestions, support and solidarity, and said that she looked forward to working with the members as UNICEF implemented the Strategic Plan to help realize the vision of a better world for every child.

253. In his closing remarks, the President focused on the importance of multilateralism and reviving faltering cooperation among the global community. He summarized the many achievements of UNICEF – life-saving interventions, learning, access to safe water and sanitation, social protection, and equitable and accelerated access to COVID-19 vaccines – but noted growing challenges, including conflict, burgeoning crises and the impacts of climate change. The President thanked the members of the Board and called on everyone to continue to work together to ensure that the rights of children and young people were respected and translated into opportunities for the present and for the future.

Part three
Second regular session 2022

Held at United Nations Headquarters from
6 to 8 September 2022

I. Organization of the session

A. Adoption of the provisional annotated agenda, timetable and organization of work

254. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2022/22/Rev.1) for the session.

255. The Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 40 observer delegations² including 1 intergovernmental organization, 1 international organization, 6 non-governmental organizations and 6 National Committees for UNICEF, had submitted credentials, in accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure.

B. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF

256. The President said that she was honoured to preside over the session following her recent appointment as the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations, and that she would fulfil the role with dedication and collegiality. She expressed her gratitude to the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for its endorsement as President for the remainder of the term that ends in December 2022. She affirmed that her appointment was a testament to her country's commitment to the well-being and rights of children in the nation and worldwide, and to strengthening the work of UNICEF around the globe. The President thanked the former Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Rodrigo A. Carazo, who had led the work of the Executive Board until the end of June, and the Vice-President of the Executive Board, H.E. Mr. Michal Mlynár, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, who had temporarily taken on the leadership since July.

257. The President reported that during the session, the Board would review UNICEF work in multiple areas, which would strengthen the organization's footprint on the ground and bolster its capacity to tackle the multitude of challenges faced by children and families in many parts of the world. The Board would consider 22 new country programme documents, which would be accompanied by a thematic discussion on resilience and adolescent development, focusing on girls. The extensions of 18 ongoing programmes of cooperation would also be reviewed. An update on oversight matters, specifically an overview of UNICEF audit and investigations work and an assessment of the independence of that office, was also on the agenda. The President emphasized that while the current context called for more attention and scrutiny of oversight matters generally, it was important to recognize that each United Nations organization had its own specificities and practices and that one size should not fit all. She expressed confidence that the discussions and informal consultations would consider the unique situation of UNICEF, and stressed the importance of maintaining an optimal balance between investments in oversight matters and investments in programmes.

258. The Board would also review the organization's updated accountability system and its ongoing efforts to improve the structures through which it assigned responsibility and enabled accountability. Financing and the resource requirements needed by UNICEF to achieve its strategic objectives would also be discussed. The President said that as a representative of a programme country, she had witnessed the key results achieved by UNICEF in partnership with her Government. She stressed

² The final number of observer delegations was 48, including the credentials submitted during the session, after the announcement by the Secretary.

the importance of supporting the organization's mandate by strengthening contributions of core, unearmarked resources that supported its implementation of the Strategic Plan and contributed to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

259. The Executive Director congratulated the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica on her new role as President of the Executive Board and thanked the Permanent Representative of Slovakia for having served as President ad interim.

260. The Executive Director discussed the converging impacts of conflicts, crises, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and climate change on children. Catastrophic flooding in Pakistan, the historic drought in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, political instability and the impact of COVID-19 in Sri Lanka, and the many other less well-known emergencies globally, including in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, all continued to put millions of children at risk. Two million additional children in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Madagascar and Yemen were at risk of severe wasting. The Executive Director reported on her recent mission to Ukraine, where UNICEF had implemented a humanitarian cash assistance programme that had already reached more than 350,000 children.

261. Two of the most serious threats facing children as a result of the pandemic were disruptions in routine immunization and a devastating impact on learning. Recent World Health Organization/UNICEF data showed that, in 2021 alone, 25 million children had not received basic vaccines against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis, the largest decrease in the rates of routine vaccinations in a generation. UNICEF was calling on all Member States with high numbers of children who had missed immunizations to urgently invest in dedicated catch-up campaigns.

262. The Executive Director discussed the work of UNICEF and its partners to address learning losses as a result of the pandemic. In the lead-up to the 2022 Transforming Education Summit, UNICEF was calling on all Governments to ensure that every child, and every girl, could realize their right to an education. Some of the specific asks included a call to Member States to reduce the learning poverty rate, to halve by 2030 the number of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries who could not read or understand a simple story, and to close the education resource gap by driving new investment to transform education for every child.

263. To combat the intensifying impact of climate change, UNICEF was making smart investments to help countries ensure that critical services children relied on were adaptable and resilient. UNICEF was working to prepare children to survive and thrive in a climate-changed world, including by supporting more green skills training.

264. The Executive Director stressed the growing need for more flexible, high-quality funding and urged a reversal of the trend of decreasing core funding as a percentage of total funding, including the drop of 4 per cent core funding to UNICEF in 2021. Citing the funding compact commitments, she called on Member States to advocate with their constituencies, parliaments and decision makers to meet their commitments and to increase their contributions of core and flexible funding for children.

265. In the current context, it was necessary to leverage the strengths of UNICEF and the entire United Nations system. A well-coordinated, efficient and accountable United Nations development system could achieve results that would support a more sustainable future for everyone. UNICEF priorities included making sure that its staff had the resources and support they needed to deliver and strengthening its organizational culture, in part by deepening its commitment to living its core values of care, respect, integrity, trust, accountability and sustainability.

266. The UNICEF updated accountability system was part of a well-functioning system of internal controls, governance and risk management. The Executive Director

expressed her gratitude for the work of the independent offices, and her commitment to strengthening and supporting the independence of the internal oversight systems.

267. The President opened the floor for general statements. Delegations expressed their gratitude to the previous President of the Executive Board. They also congratulated the new President and said that they looked forward to collaboration and joint efforts towards realizing the rights of every child. In addition, they welcomed the statement of the Executive Director and her focus on the priorities and key questions that needed to be addressed, particularly in relation to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for all children.

268. Several delegations commended the continued response by UNICEF to the COVID-19 pandemic, including through the procurement and delivery of vaccines, while addressing new and ongoing challenges. The delegations highlighted that for many students around the world, the interruption to their education as a result of the pandemic risked becoming permanent, with severe consequences for their rights, opportunities and futures.

269. Delegations also noted that the Transforming Education Summit, which would be held during the upcoming United Nations General Assembly, was a key initiative in that regard, and welcomed the engagement and leadership of UNICEF in preparation for the event. A delegation highlighted that the Summit presented a timely opportunity to mobilize practical action to recover from pandemic-related learning losses, particularly for girls, children with disabilities and other marginalized groups, and to revitalize efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 and quality education. Another delegation stressed the important role of youth at the Summit, and the need to listen to their concerns. In response, the Executive Director concurred that the momentum around the Summit was critical and said that UNICEF was working to make the event productive so that there would be concrete outcomes that resulted in change for children.

270. A delegation encouraged UNICEF to scale up education partnerships to help children in developing countries in particular and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The delegation highlighted the need to invest in technology infrastructure for education, and noted that access to technology deserved more attention than ever before. Emphasizing that digital connectivity and access to digital tools and equipment were a necessary stepping stone towards an effective and modern education experience, another delegation called on the international community to mobilize resources to ensure the inclusion of all learners and eradicate the digital divide. In response, the Executive Director said that UNICEF was very concerned about the digital gap and was working diligently to make strides in connectivity and other areas of technology.

271. A group of delegations highlighted that the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were still lingering, which was impairing the socioeconomic development of many developing countries. The group underscored that there was a large equity gap in COVID-19 vaccine distribution, which would necessitate efforts from UNICEF and other development partners that needed to scale up their support in financing health systems and social projects in the Global South, and particularly in Africa.

272. In a similar vein, a delegation noted that the urgency of the health challenge due to the pandemic had disturbed vaccination programmes for children, especially in Africa. That context had opened the door for certain infant childhood diseases and had rolled back UNICEF achievements in that regard. Several delegations said that it was necessary to strengthen health systems so that routine immunization initiatives were not derailed. A delegation underlined that preventing vaccination hesitancy was as fundamental as tackling accessibility to improve vaccination rates. Another delegation said that UNICEF must have the necessary funding to ensure the smooth

functioning of its routine immunization programmes, together with COVID-19 vaccination drives. In response, the Executive Director stressed that UNICEF and partners had been making concrete progress in terms of routine vaccinations, although efforts had been hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic. She agreed that routine vaccinations must be a priority and that it was necessary to get back on track because the impact on children was devastating.

273. Delegations also emphasized that in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, it was necessary to face the reality that climate change was impacting the lives of everyone, including children, increasing inequalities and pushing them further into poverty. A group of delegations said that the protracted drought in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa desperately required the attention and action of UNICEF, as it continued to impact the lives of millions of people, especially children. The group said that in addition to the challenges of hunger and malnutrition, the drought had increased displacement, caused school disruptions, and exposed children to various health challenges and harmful practices.

274. Several delegations mentioned the recent flooding in Pakistan and called for a continued response by UNICEF to both existing and emerging needs as people, and children in particular, continued to bear the brunt of the effects of climate change. Another delegation said that a synergy of efforts was needed to immediately address the environmental crises around the world. In response, the Executive Director recalled her visit to Gode, Ethiopia, where she had seen first-hand the effects of drought on communities and children. She said that the issue of climate change featured into all of the work done by UNICEF, as reflected in the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025.

275. Several delegations thanked the Executive Director for discussing her recent visit to Ukraine, with one noting that the message of hope and strong support from UNICEF and from the United Nations in general was needed by the children of Ukraine. Delegations praised UNICEF for the assistance being provided to children in the country, in terms of education, mental health and psychosocial support. In response, the Executive Director reiterated that war was devastating for children, and she thanked the countries that were receiving refugees as a result of the war.

276. Delegations underlined that as UNICEF neared the end of the first year of the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, it was critical that the organization was well resourced in order to be able to continue to deliver and to maintain an innovative approach in addressing the challenges that children faced. A delegation expressed concern regarding the shortfall in development resources faced by UNICEF, particularly the decline in the proportion of core resources. The delegation called on all donor countries to actively fulfil their commitments under the funding compact, and to increase the proportion of core resources for development agencies to 30 per cent so that UNICEF would have flexible, adequate and predictable core resources to better perform its functions and implement country programmes.

277. Another delegation commended the work by UNICEF in generating a substantial share of its revenue from the private sector, and encouraged UNICEF to continue to diversify its donor base. In response, the Executive Director expressed appreciation for the comments regarding the critical importance of core resources, which she said allowed UNICEF to be most efficient and effective.

278. Several delegations welcomed the review of the functions of the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations and the assessment of its independence. A delegation thanked UNICEF management for the prompt response to the Board decision during the annual session of 2022 on audit and oversight, and for the commitment to strengthen the accountability mechanisms of the organization, noting that stronger oversight would indeed foster more trust from donors.

279. Another delegation highlighted that risk management, audit and oversight were crucial for an effective and efficient United Nations system, and called for their continuous improvement and strengthening. The delegation welcomed that in the response to the audit performed by the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, UNICEF management had agreed to clarify and communicate the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for enterprise risk management governance and oversight. The Executive Director stressed the importance of audit and oversight in maintaining the trust of donors, staff and all partners.

C. Proposed programme of work for the Executive Board sessions in 2023

280. The Secretary of the Executive Board presented for information the proposed programme of work ([E/ICEF/2022/23](#)), which had been prepared by the Office of the Secretary in consultation with the Bureau of the Executive Board on the basis of statutory requirements, decision 2020/14 on working methods, requests made in decisions of the Executive Board, and proposals by the secretariat. The Secretary noted that the programme of work would serve as a flexible framework that could be revised throughout the year, in consultation with the membership and the secretariat through the Bureau.

281. Two updates were highlighted pertaining to the annual session of 2023, namely, the change in the classifications of the agenda items on update on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, and update on organizational culture and diversity, with both items to be presented to the Board for decision instead of for information.

Provisional list of agenda items for the first regular session of 2023

282. The provisional list of agenda items was presented by the Secretary of the Executive Board as part of the proposed programme of work for 2022.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. UNICEF programme cooperation

(a) Country programme documents

283. The country programme documents (CPDs) for Bulgaria, Croatia, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, India, Jordan, Libya, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Republic of Moldova, Romania, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Yemen and Zambia were considered by the Board. Following a brief introduction by the Director, Programme Group, the Deputy Director, Programme Group, provided an overview of UNICEF strategic approaches to resilience and adolescent development, with a focus on girls.

284. A video was then shown, followed by two panel discussions that included representatives from Government, academia, the United Nations system, the private sector and youth leaders. After the discussions, the floor was given to the Member States for their comments.

285. Several delegations acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the longstanding partnerships between UNICEF and their respective Governments and their commitment to continued cooperation. Several of the delegates commended UNICEF for the inclusive and consultative processes related to the development of the CPDs and confirmed their alignment with national plans, priorities and strategies. Many delegations confirmed alignment of their CPDs with the respective United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

286. Many delegations were thankful to UNICEF for its support during the COVID-19 pandemic, including its support in providing vaccines, distance education and recovery from the impacts of the pandemic. Several delegations were appreciative of the plans outlined in their new CPDs for UNICEF to continue providing support in various areas related to pandemic recovery and rehabilitation.

287. Some delegations expressed their gratitude to UNICEF for its joint work with Governments to provide assistance to child refugees from the war in Ukraine. One delegation expressed pride for its participation in UNICEF-supported development projects and humanitarian action in other crisis-affected countries and regions.

288. Several delegations acknowledged the vulnerabilities caused by climate change, including major flooding, which was reported by two delegations. A delegation welcomed the fact that its CPD reflected strengthened UNICEF programming in climate change, energy and environment through a growing focus on promoting climate-sensitive infrastructure across several programme components.

289. Two delegations looked forward to UNICEF being able to reprioritize and implement the new CPDs with flexibility, given the changing situations in their countries as a result of natural and human-made disasters.

290. The Executive Director thanked the delegates for their important comments. She said that the CPDs were the core of UNICEF work. She added that the critical work that had gone into developing the country programmes had been encouraging, and that working in partnership with Governments was key to the success of UNICEF programmes.

291. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/18 on a no-objection basis (see annex I).

(b) Extensions of ongoing country programmes

292. The President stated that, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2009/11, the Board had been informed of the first two-month extensions of the country programmes for Mauritania and Nepal; the first two-month extension of the common country programme for Cabo Verde; the first two-month extension of the area programme for Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine; and the first one-year extensions of the country programmes for Angola, Guinea, Rwanda and Ukraine.

293. The Board was requested to approve the two-month extensions of the country programmes for Brazil, the Central African Republic, the Gambia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Sao Tome and Principe, following one-year extensions; the two-month extension of the country programme for Lebanon, following two consecutive one-year extensions; the two-month extension of the country programme for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, following three consecutive one-year extensions; the one-year extensions of the country programmes for Chad and the Sudan, following previous one-year extensions; and the one-year extension of the country programme for Burkina Faso, following a two-year extension.

294. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/19 (see annex I).

B. Structured dialogue on financing the results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021

295. The Deputy Executive Director ad interim, Partnerships, introduced the item, followed by the Director, Public Partnerships Division, who presented the report (E/ICEF/2022/25) and accompanying update on progress against funding compact commitments (UNICEF/2022/EB/12).

296. Several delegations commended UNICEF on its record income in 2021 and encouraged the organization to continue to enlarge its donor base and to mobilize more core contributions. Some delegations urged UNICEF to ensure incentives and proper visibility, and encouraged work in innovative financing and engagement with other partners. Some delegations welcomed UNICEF efforts to improve its structured funding dialogue report and to harmonize it with those of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

297. Some delegations said that they were pleased to see increases in the share of regular resources from the private sector, but expressed concern about the overall decrease in core funds. A delegation said that a more balanced way of guaranteeing the effective functioning of institutions such as UNICEF needed to be found.

298. A group of delegations stressed that the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 should remain adequately funded. The group welcomed the high percentage of UNICEF offices that worked in partnership with other United Nations agencies and urged increased efforts in that regard. The group also encouraged UNICEF to continue South-South and triangular cooperation, especially in cooperation with other United Nations funds and programmes.

299. A delegation encouraged UNICEF to continue to innovate and adapt its resource mobilization strategy, and to remain focused on effective management oversight and internal controls. The delegation requested clarification of the difference between core resources for results and core resources. The Director, Public Partnerships Division, explained the difference as rebranding, which was meant to convey the foundational nature of such resources, which are used to underpin programmatic results as well as oversight and accountability functions.

300. Speaking as a donor, one speaker welcomed the growth in humanitarian funding in 2021 but regretted that funding had been concentrated on only a few emergencies. The speaker sought information on UNICEF plans to draw donors' attention to the forgotten crises and to undertake joint outreach with other aid organizations. The Director, Public Partnerships Division, said that UNICEF worked closely with other humanitarian actors and was exploring ways to mobilize additional support, including to achieve the Grand Bargain commitments. The speaker encouraged UNICEF to continue supporting joint United Nations interventions to maximize programme efficiency.

301. The Chair of the Standing Group of National Committees stated that the Committees had been responsible for \$5.6 billion of total UNICEF revenue between 2018 and 2021. As a group, they were the largest source of unrestricted funds to UNICEF, with \$717 million in regular resources contributions in 2021, or approximately half of UNICEF core resources, and they also provided solid contributions in thematic funding. The Chair said that donors to the Committees also expected Governments to contribute the maximum core resources to UNICEF.

302. A delegation cited inflation and the impact of climate change as persistent challenges to maintaining and increasing resources so as to guarantee tangible results for children. The delegation asked how UNICEF was addressing and planning to address those challenges and to help businesses, which were themselves struggling. The Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, said that although there was scarcity, businesses had been expressing interest in a dialogue with UNICEF, and that those discussions could focus on their short- and long-term support and also garner attention for underfunded emergencies.

303. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/20 (see annex I).

C. Update on the progress achieved through the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership

304. The Global Lead Coordinator of the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership presented an update.

305. Several delegations expressed concern about the remaining equity gaps in access to the COVID-19 vaccine. A delegation asked what were the main lessons and how joint preparations for swifter action could be undertaken for future pandemics and crises; what efforts were being made to reverse the trend of declining routine immunizations in many countries, especially among marginalized groups; whether the global coverage target of 70 per cent remained relevant; and how efforts to reach high-risk groups and front-line workers could be increased. Another delegation also enquired about the lessons learned on the establishment and organization of the Partnership.

306. The Coordinator said that the focus would remain on high-priority groups and would include the introduction of boosters. The Partnership had facilitated high-level political access for advocacy and quick-impact funding. Some lessons learned were the need to decentralize the means of production for health commodities to better meet local needs, and the importance of focusing on primary health care. The Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, said that an ongoing review of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator would likely highlight the need for a concurrent focus on supply and delivery from the outset, and that UNICEF and the World Health Organization had been working on an acceleration plan to address the declining rates of routine immunization.

307. A delegation expressed regret that the work of the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership and vaccine delivery remained underfunded, a situation that could worsen. The delegation said that UNICEF was uniquely positioned to support Member States, especially developing countries, in strengthening their health systems, and should continue to assist them in addressing the causes of low vaccine uptake.

308. A delegation said that the entire spectrum of effective vaccines should be used to combat COVID-19 and that vaccine producers should be granted certification. The Coordinator expressed the Partnership's commitment to using vaccines that had gone through emergency use listing, as led by the World Health Organization.

309. Another delegation requested information on the funding in the pipeline for the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines and expenditure levels. The Coordinator said that the Partnership continued to engage with countries, with new funding requests coming in as countries undertook additional vaccination campaigns. The Partnership tracked both the efficiency of responses to acceleration requests from countries and the utilization of funds, which was currently around 64 per cent.

310. A delegation recognized that government commitment and the Partnership had been key to progress in addressing the acute phase of the pandemic. The delegation expressed concern about growing child malnutrition and major disruptions in routine vaccinations and sought information on best practices for integrating COVID-19 vaccines with routine childhood immunizations. The delegation urged further expansion of COVID-19 vaccine coverage, strengthening of the health workforce and primary health-care capacities, and efforts to ensure that countries would be better prepared for future pandemics.

311. A delegation expressed the hope that with the decreasing number of infections, the future would be clearer for the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership. The delegation took note of the networks supported by the Partnership that would increase effectiveness and promote greater local ownership of the process. The Coordinator

said that work would continue into 2023 with a continued focus on high-priority groups, closing equity gaps, introducing boosters, phasing and integrating COVID-19 vaccination into primary health care, and accompanying countries to fully vaccinate vulnerable populations and raise coverage levels. The modalities of engagement started by the Partnership would continue with the support of the agencies (i.e., UNICEF, the World Health Organization, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and others) when wound down.

D. Report of the accountability system of UNICEF

312. The Senior Adviser, Strategic Partnerships, presented the report (E/ICEF/2022/24), for which several delegations expressed their appreciation, with some delegations noting the improvements made to the accountability system since the 2009 report.

313. A delegation stressed the importance of knowledge transfer, risk management and a well-functioning whistle-blower system. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, said that UNICEF was finalizing the recruitment of a Chief Risk Officer, which would complement existing risk management capacity globally. The delegation asked how UNICEF ensured the meaningful participation of children and young people in relation to accountability in programme countries. The Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, affirmed the commitment of UNICEF to article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as demonstrated by the consultations with more than 200,000 children and young people as part of Strategic Plan development, and by children's participation in the design of country programmes.

314. A group of delegations requested that future reports detail the connection and integration between the main functional elements and also requested information on the whistle-blower system. The Director, Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI), clarified that there were multiple reporting channels for whistle-blowers and that responses would depend on the nature of the issues being reported. The Director, Ethics Office, said that confidential and anonymous reporting channels had been established for the ethics and investigation functions. He directed the Board's attention to the annual report of the Ethics Office (E/ICEF/2022/15), which included details and data on whistle-blower protection and retaliation matters. There had been an exponential increase in the number of staff approaching the Ethics Office, although internal surveys revealed ongoing staff concerns regarding the organization's "speak-up culture". The Deputy Executive Director, Management, cited ongoing work with the Ethics Office to ensure that the whistle-blower system was protected and functioning as intended.

315. The group requested UNICEF to implement the recommendations of a recently released internal audit on enterprise risk management and to strengthen risk management. The group said that it would welcome a targeted Board discussion on how enterprise risk management could be addressed and more frequent updates and discussions on the accountability system. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, also welcomed a targeted dialogue on enterprise risk management and looked forward to a follow-up review on the audit in a year's time.

316. Some delegations enquired about actions taken by UNICEF to increase staff capacity to understand and comply with the accountability system. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, said that several initiatives had been introduced, including mandatory trainings for all staff, various communication efforts, and sharing experiences and learning across countries.

317. Speaking as a donor, a speaker commended UNICEF for its commitment to programmatic and management accountability. The speaker welcomed information on the measures to further improve accountability to affected populations, while a delegation asked how the issue fit into the overall system of accountability. The speaker encouraged UNICEF to continue deepening its work and coordination with United Nations country team partners, under the leadership of the resident coordinator or humanitarian coordinator. The Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, reported increased strengthening of accountability to affected populations, with U-Report available in 90 countries. The speaker expressed support for the organization's zero-tolerance policy for all forms of fraud and corruption and encouraged the continued pursuit of a transparent approach.

318. A delegation asked that concrete data or specific areas of progress be included in future reports. In relation to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, the delegation asked what had been done to increase access to reporting channels and survivor-centred assistance. The delegation urged UNICEF to include accessibility in refinements to and discussions of the accountability system. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, reported that across 93 countries, 61 million children and adults had access to safe and accessible reporting, and that there had been increased reporting; 117 out of 128 UNICEF reporting country offices had been actively engaged in establishing and/or scaling up systems for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Examples included the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where UNICEF had engaged local women leaders to serve as focal points, and Haiti, where UNICEF had established an internal office architecture on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Joint inter-agency work had been critical to those achievements. On diversity and inclusion, UNICEF had recently strengthened its team and was working to introduce new policies on disabilities and child safeguarding.

319. The Chair of the Standing Group of National Committees said that recognition of the role of the National Committees operationalized as part of the accountability system represented progress for every child. She affirmed that the Committees had zero tolerance for all forms of fraud and corruption and that their governance was informed by a triple stringency test.

E. Update on oversight matters

320. The Director, OIAI, presented the update. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, shared an oral management response.

321. A group of delegations expressed appreciation for Management efforts to facilitate direct channels of communication between OIAI and the Board, and for the timely response of OIAI to the request for a self-assessment of its independence. The group requested UNICEF and the Board to establish an independent channel of communication between the Board and key oversight stakeholders and entities.

322. A delegation asked about having earmarked resources for OIAI to avoid competition for regular resources funding. The Director, OIAI, said that innovative ways to allocate additional resources could be identified, including expanding use of the Junior Professional Officer programme that OIAI had successfully used in the past. Acknowledging the OIAI heavy workload of cases involving interpersonal issues, the delegation asked how UNICEF could proactively ensure that its leadership was embracing the organization's core values. The Director, OIAI, said that the senior management agreed to the need to reduce the workload by finding alternative ways to resolve many matters through non-investigative means, but noted the challenge of efficiently dealing with those types of interpersonal issues in a large and decentralized organization.

323. Another delegation encouraged recognition of appropriate resourcing of the United Nations agencies and encouraged agencies to build oversight costs into project funding. It emphasized the importance of prevention, and its endorsement of activities to strengthen systems, reduce risk and provide robust responses to wrongdoing.

324. A delegation expressed concern about the assessment's limited discussion of prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and requested additional information on measures taken, as well as an update on the current investigative caseload and capacity. It asked whether OIAI independence was affected by UNICEF management review and edit of the draft OIAI annual report. It also enquired how the OIAI static budget over the past five years could be justified, despite the increased workload. The Director, OIAI, said that the OIAI role was limited to managing the investigative process and that the majority of sexual exploitation and abuse matters that came to the attention of OIAI involved implementing partners, for whom there was a separate mechanism. The OIAI annual report and its annex provided substantial information on the caseload and additional details could be provided. The Director expressed confidence that the annual report was fully independent, noting that senior management comments were generally limited and constructive. He clarified that the non-post budget had generally remained static, while the number of posts had increased. However, the adequacy of the overall number of posts for OIAI would ultimately depend on the risk tolerance of UNICEF and the Executive Board.

325. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, reported that UNICEF had implemented most of the recommendations from the independent review of its work on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and had made investments in several areas, but continuous efforts were needed. She agreed that oversight was a two-way conversation and a continuous process, and said that the biggest risk would be not reaching children and that managing risks needed to be done in a thoughtful, deliberate manner that established appropriate mitigation measures. She stressed the importance of having oversight discussions within the wider development community, including non-governmental organizations, and of reviewing lessons learned. She confirmed that OIAI was funded from the Board-approved institutional budget and that UNICEF was open to exploring other means of funding the oversight functions. UNICEF had made significant investments to boost its preventive capacity overall.

326. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/21 (see annex I).

F. UNICEF Strategic Plan, updated financial estimates, 2022–2025

327. The Comptroller and Director of the Division of Financial and Administrative Management presented the updated financial estimates ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.8](#)).

328. A delegation said that it was important to include in the assessment that funding related to COVID-19 was expected to decrease as the pandemic subsided. The delegation noted that as much as the organization was focusing on funding and responding to the Ukraine crisis, there was a need for UNICEF to continue to support the other major ongoing humanitarian crises. The delegation asked how UNICEF was preparing for increased global challenges and the effects that rising food and fuel prices could have in parallel with stronger pressure on development cooperation budgets.

329. Expressing appreciation for the detail provided in the report and support for projections for the period 2022–2025, another delegation encouraged UNICEF to continue to explore new and innovative methods for increasing core resources.

330. The Comptroller said that the updated financial estimates included a practical and prudent outlook based on available information, which took into account the

global environment and would be updated annually as things changed. He said that the issue of core resources was very important and that UNICEF was looking at innovative ways to increase its fundraising. He noted that as a mandate organization, UNICEF relied heavily on core resources for its management and oversight functions and internal governance. He also expressed hope that Member States would help to ensure that the organization would continue to be able to deliver across both programmes and audit and oversight functions despite the challenges they might have as individual countries.

331. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/22 (see annex I).

G. Other matters

332. No other matters were raised.

H. Adoption of draft decisions

333. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2022/18 through 2022/22 (see annex I).

I. Closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board

334. The Executive Director thanked the President and Bureau for the smooth management of the session, and the United Nations interpreters, the Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board and all of the UNICEF staff who had contributed to its success. She thanked the Board for its consensual adoption of five decisions, including decisions on the 22 new country programme documents and extensions of 18 ongoing country programmes. The Board had adopted an impressive total of 22 decisions in 2022.

335. The Executive Director thanked those Member States that had expressed their understanding of the critical role of core resources in helping UNICEF to support children, particularly those who were most vulnerable. She called on all Member States, including emerging economies, to help to change the trajectory of decreasing regular resources as a percentage of total resources received by UNICEF. She urged increased contributions to those core resources, which would help to drive funding where it could have the greatest impact for children.

336. Expressing her gratitude for the feedback and guidance provided by the Board on all of the agenda items, the Executive Director cited in particular the ongoing efforts by UNICEF to strengthen its accountability and oversight systems, which would help the organization to further streamline its framework of responsibility, authority and accountability in line with its mandate.

337. The Executive Director thanked the Vice-President of the Executive Board, H.E. Ms. Amal Mudallali, Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, who was attending her final formal Executive Board session. She informed the Board of some senior staff changes within UNICEF, including the departure of Fayaz King, Deputy Executive Director, Innovation and Field Results, and expressed gratitude for his contributions. In closing, she invited the delegates to visit a display in the lobby of UNICEF House in celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the organization's supply and logistics operation in Denmark.

338. The President said that while the second regular session had been shorter than the previous two Board sessions, that had not been the case in terms of its scope and

importance. She said that throughout the session, the Board had addressed numerous reports on the work of UNICEF, including, among others, the report on accountability efforts currently under way to bolster the organization's capacity to achieve results for all children around the world, an evaluation of the functions of the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, and an update on the work of the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership.

339. She noted that as part of discussions around the structured dialogue on financing the results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, the Board had reiterated the importance of having predictable regular resources, which were fundamental for UNICEF to continue to provide services equitably to all children, as well as flexible thematic financing, which was essential for UNICEF to accelerate programming to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

340. The President also highlighted the five decisions that had been adopted during the session, and commended the constructive engagement of delegations to reach agreements in support of the UNICEF mandate. She thanked the facilitators and the overall coordinator of the draft decisions, as well as the UNICEF technical focal points, for their work.

341. Expressing gratitude to the members of the Bureau, the President extended appreciation to Vice-President Mudallali for her efforts on behalf of the world's children. She also thanked the Executive Director and her senior management team, the United Nations conference officers and services, interpreters and other staff who had supported the session, and the Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board for its support during the formal sessions and year-round.

Annex I

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2022

First regular session, 8–11 February 2022

2022/1

Country programme documents

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* that the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Belize, Eastern Caribbean Area, El Salvador, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana and Suriname, Honduras, Jamaica, Malaysia, Maldives, Mozambique, Peru, Thailand and Viet Nam ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.1–E/ICEF/2022/P/L.14](#)) were made available to the Member States for their comments and input from 16 November to 6 December 2021;

2. *Approves* on a no-objection basis, and in accordance with decision 2014/1, the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Belize, Eastern Caribbean Area, El Salvador, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana and Suriname, Honduras, Jamaica, Malaysia, Maldives, Mozambique, Peru, Thailand and Viet Nam ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.1–E/ICEF/2022/P/L.14](#)).

*First regular session
10 February 2022*

2022/2

Extensions of ongoing country programmes

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the first two-month extensions of the country programmes for the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic; and the 10-month extension of the country programme for Morocco, following a two-month extension, which were approved by the Executive Director and are presented in table 1 of document [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.15](#);

2. *Approves* the 11-month extension of the country programme for Afghanistan, following a two-year extension and a three-month extension; the one-year extension of the country programme for Algeria, following a one-year extension and a two-month extension; and the six-month extension of the country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic, following two previous one-year extensions; a nine-month extension; a three-month extension; a two-month extension; a four-month extension; and an eight-month extension; these are presented in table 2 of document [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.15](#).

*First regular session
11 February 2022*

2022/3

Establishment of an Assistant Secretary-General position in UNICEF to head the Global COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Inter-Agency Coordination Structure

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the context around the administration of COVID-19 vaccines and of the various barriers that are preventing vaccines from being administered in country;

2. *Also takes note* of the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination at the global, regional, subregional and national levels for full, timely and equitable

access for all to COVID-19 vaccines, while not diverting resources from other health and humanitarian priorities, including routine immunization programmes;

3. *Recognizes* the role that UNICEF has played and can continue to play in advancing the acquisition, transportation, storage, distribution and administration of COVID-19 vaccines;

4. *Welcomes* the efforts of UNICEF and partners to establish the Global COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Inter-Agency Coordination Structure and notes that coordinating the work of this entity at the highest possible global level is a key component for ensuring its success;

5. *Approves* the establishment of the post of Assistant Secretary-General for a two-year period reporting to the Executive Director of UNICEF to carry out the role of Global Lead Coordinator for COVID-19 Vaccine Country Readiness and Delivery, in collaboration with other relevant partners, including the World Health Organization and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to update the Executive Board on the progress achieved through the Global COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Inter-Agency Coordination Structure at its 2022 annual and second regular sessions and 2023 first regular session, under the agenda item entitled “Update on humanitarian action”, among other updates.

*First regular session
11 February 2022*

2022/4

Joint evaluability assessment of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All, and management response

The Executive Board

Takes note of the joint evaluability assessment of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All, its summary ([E/ICEF/2022/4](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2022/5](#)).

*First regular session
11 February 2022*

2022/5

Plan for global evaluations, 2022–2025

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes and endorses* the plan for global evaluations, 2022–2025 ([E/ICEF/2022/3](#));

2. *Recalls* Executive Board decision 2018/2 and requests UNICEF to continue to draw on lessons learned from previous reviews, evaluation reports and management responses to ensure the effectiveness of planned evaluations;

3. *Welcomes* that the new plan builds upon lessons learned from the plan for 2018–2021 and requests UNICEF to present a review, including lessons learned, of the plan for 2022–2025 at the second regular session 2025;

4. *Encourages* UNICEF to expand the use of rigorous impact evaluations in the period up to 2025, particularly in thematic areas where new approaches have potential for scaling-up or where existing impact evidence on approaches is lacking;

5. *Reaffirms* the importance of evaluation as an essential tool for learning and accountability and further requests UNICEF to ensure adequate resources for the implementation of the plan for global evaluations, 2022–2025;

6. *Recalls* the funding target of 1 per cent of programme expenditure for evaluation and requests UNICEF to accelerate its efforts to reach this target;

7. *Requests* UNICEF to continue to extend the importance attributed to inter-agency collaboration in the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 (E/ICEF/2021/25) to all evaluations of programmes and projects that include partnerships with other United Nations entities.

*First regular session
11 February 2022*

2022/6

Update on the implementation of the recommendations made in the independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and the report of the Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the update provided by UNICEF on the implementation of the recommendations made in the independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and the report of the Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority (E/ICEF/2022/6), as well as of the recommendations of the Task Team on Anti-Racism and Discrimination, and notes with appreciation the increasing inter-agency cooperation;

2. *Takes note with appreciation* that the implementation of the recommendations from the Task Team on Anti-Racism and Discrimination will be a top priority for UNICEF in 2022 and requests the management to put in place a mechanism to regularly monitor and measure the progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Team;

3. *Notes* progress made and the need for continued effort and focus on preventing and taking immediate action to respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment, including ensuring that policies and procedures deliver impact and are resourced sufficiently, and that proposed actions are implemented at the country, regional and global levels;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to continue to take action to ensure a victim-/survivor-centred, system-wide and coherent approach to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, while leveraging its mandate, and to address the increased risks during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) response and recovery;

5. *Notes* progress made and the need for continued effort and focus on preventing and taking immediate action to respond to prohibited conduct, and also requests UNICEF to maintain its progress on building a more values-based organizational culture and expanding diversity, equity and inclusion efforts;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to provide an update to the Executive Board on how the organization is preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse in its policies, procedures and operations at headquarters, regional and country levels, at the annual session of 2023, and asks that this includes analysis of available data and implementation of system-wide initiatives, including the Implementing Partners Protocol and use of the Implementing Partner Capacity Assessment and ClearCheck;

7. *Also requests* UNICEF to provide an update to the Executive Board on how the organization is improving organizational culture and on its actions to prevent and respond to all forms of discrimination, including racism and racial discrimination,

and sexual harassment, in its policies, procedures and programmes at headquarters, regional and country levels, at the annual session of 2023;

8. *Further requests* UNICEF to continue taking a long-term approach to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, in line with the Strategic Plan;

9. *Urges* UNICEF to ensure that leadership in country are aware of their responsibilities for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment; that in all country offices there are respective staff with responsibilities for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment who participate in inter-agency coordination mechanisms as appropriate; and that staff are provided with appropriate role-specific training as well as regular mandatory training to support culture change;

10. *Requests* UNICEF to monitor the impact of efforts for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment at the country level, identify and share best practices and address collective barriers, and calls on UNICEF to address the significant gap between the overall strategies on sexual exploitation and abuse and their impact on the ground;

11. *Also requests* timely and thorough victim-/survivor-centred-investigations with prompt reporting to Member States and sufficient resources dedicated to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment investigations;

12. *Commends* UNICEF for annual submission to the Secretary-General of action plans on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse that are implemented at headquarters, regional and country levels, and requests UNICEF to share headquarters-level action plans with the Executive Board annually;

13. *Requests* an update from UNICEF, at the 2023 first regular session of the Executive Board, on metrics used to measure progress on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and how integrated results and resources framework indicators on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment have aligned with relevant indicators of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and those of other United Nations development system agencies and ensure that data obtained, including on allegations, using these metrics and indicators and subsequent analysis, systematically inform strategies, policies and procedures.

*First regular session
11 February 2022*

2022/7

UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020 and report of the Board of Auditors, and management response

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the unqualified audit opinion for 2020 issued by the Board of Auditors, the report of the Board of Auditors for the financial period that ended on 31 December 2020 (A/76/5/Add.3) as well as the management response (E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.2);

2. *Also welcomes* the progress made by UNICEF in implementing the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, and supports the ongoing efforts of UNICEF management to implement the recommendations of the Board of Auditors;

3. *Encourages* UNICEF to harmonize further its reporting format with other United Nations funds and programmes on the management response to the report of the Board of Auditors and the implementation of the recommendations, as

appropriate, including where possible the time frames for their detailed reporting and the categorization of recommendations, and to work with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Food Programme in that regard, as appropriate.

*First regular session
11 February 2022*

2022/8

Private Fundraising and Partnerships: 2022 workplan and proposed budget

The Executive Board

1. *Notes* the high, medium and low revenue scenarios for 2022, as shown in table 3 of document [E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.1](#);

2. *Approves* a budget for special-purpose activities of \$158 million from regular resources, comprising \$85 million for investment funds and \$73 million for other private sector fundraising costs, and the establishment of an other resources ceiling of \$60 million based on the medium scenario in table 3;

3. *Takes note* of the proposed use of \$20 million from the Dynamo Revolving Fund for further investment in private sector fundraising;

4. *Authorizes* UNICEF:

(a) To redeploy resources between the various regular resources budget lines (as detailed in paragraph 1, above), up to a maximum of 10 per cent of the amounts approved;

(b) To decrease or increase expenditures up to the levels indicated in columns I and III of table 3 of document [E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.1](#) should the apparent revenue from fundraising decrease or increase to the levels indicated in columns I and III;

(c) To spend an additional amount between Executive Board sessions, when necessary, up to the amount caused by currency fluctuations, to implement the 2022 approved workplan;

5. *Encourages* the Executive Director to identify and respond to new market opportunities, should they arise, between Executive Board sessions and to notify the Board accordingly;

6. *Approves* an interim one-month allocation for January 2023 of \$15.8 million (or 10 per cent of the special-purpose regular resources allocation of \$158 million), to be absorbed into the annual Private Fundraising and Partnerships budget for 2023.

*First regular session
11 February 2022*

Annual session, 14–17 June 2022

2022/9

Annual report for 2021 of the Executive Director of UNICEF

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report for 2021 of the Executive Director of UNICEF ([E/ICEF/2022/10](#)), as well as the report on the implementation of the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021; the report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy

review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system; the joint annex on the implementation of the common chapter of the strategic plans, 2018–2021 of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children’s Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); and the data companion and scorecard;

2. *Decides* to transmit the above-mentioned reports to the Economic and Social Council, along with a summary of the comments and guidance of the Executive Board;

3. *Recalls* its decisions 2021/13, paragraph 3, and 2021/14, paragraph 7, and requests UNICEF to continue to include in the annual reports of the Executive Director on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, including in its midterm review, information on results jointly achieved with United Nations development system entities identified through common and complementary indicators.

Annual session
16 June 2022

2022/10

Annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action ([E/ICEF/2022/13](#));

2. *Commends* the efforts of UNICEF and looks forward to the implementation of lessons learned from UNICEF humanitarian action, 2018–2021 to improve goals results throughout the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025;

3. *Requests* UNICEF to provide an update on the progress made towards the implementation of the recommendations of its Humanitarian Review during the first regular session of 2023.

Annual session
16 June 2022

2022/11

Country programme documents

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* that the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.16](#) and [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.17](#)) were made available to the Member States for their comments and input from 22 March to 11 April, and for the Syrian Arab Republic ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.18](#)) from 24 March to 13 April;

2. *Approves* on a no-objection basis, and in accordance with decision 2014/1, the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Kenya, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Republic of Tanzania ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.16–E/ICEF/2022/P/L.18](#)).

Annual session
16 June 2022

2022/12

Extensions of ongoing country programmes

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note of* the first two-month extension of the country programme for Ecuador; the first two-month extension of the multi-country programme for the Pacific Islands; the first six-month extensions of the country programmes for Chile and Papua New Guinea; and the first one-year extension of the country programme for Myanmar, which were approved by the Executive Director and are presented in table 1 of document [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.19](#);

2. *Approves* the one-year extension of the country programme for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, following a previous one-year extension; these are presented in table 2 of document [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.19](#).

*Annual session
16 June 2022*

2022/13

Evaluation reports and management responses

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note of* the annual report for 2021 on the evaluation function in UNICEF ([E/ICEF/2022/17](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2022/18](#));

2. *Also takes note of* the evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency, its summary ([E/ICEF/2022/19](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2022/20](#));

3. *Encourages* UNICEF to take the necessary steps to further strengthen the evaluation function, including by timely implementation of those elements as included in the management response;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to brief the Executive Board at the annual session of 2023 on the progress UNICEF has made towards the timely implementation of the actions outlined in the management response to the evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency;

5. *Looks forward to* the updated UNICEF evaluation policy and the process leading towards the adoption of this updated policy, including the results of the independent peer review;

6. *Takes note with appreciation of* the increase in overall evaluation expenditure to 0.91 per cent of total programme expenditure in 2021, which brings the 1 per cent goal within reach;

7. *Welcomes* the evaluation function's continuous focus on outcome- and impact-level evaluations and organizational follow-through on evaluations and encourages UNICEF to increase the number of impact-level evaluations;

8. *Recalls* its decision 2021/10, paragraph 9, and requests UNICEF to provide, in the annual report for 2022 on the evaluation function, updates on the application of innovative technologies and approaches, including a discussion of associated risks and UNICEF management plans to address them;

9. *Encourages* UNICEF to increase the number of joint evaluations conducted at global and decentralized levels and to strengthen the organizational follow-up, including through joint management responses;

10. *Takes note with concern* of the modest progress made in strengthening national capacities for evaluation and requests UNICEF to accelerate progress.

*Annual session
16 June 2022*

2022/14

Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2021, and management response

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2021 ([E/ICEF/2022/15](#)) and the management response ([E/ICEF/2022/16](#));

2. *Takes note with appreciation* of the successful outreach activities of the Ethics Office of UNICEF and its timely responses to the doubled number of requests without additional personnel;

3. *Takes note* of the launch of the Ethics and Culture Champions aimed at raising awareness about ethics and integrity organization-wide through volunteers and within the Office's existing resources, and requests the Ethics Office to provide an update on this initiative, within existing reporting;

4. *Also takes note* of the continuously growing caseload of the Ethics Office and, concerned about its limited capacities, requests UNICEF to ensure that the Ethics Office can adequately execute its mandate and, in this context, recalls its decision 2020/19 and urgently requests UNICEF to provide sufficient financial and staff resources to the Ethics Office, including for field personnel, based on the needs assessment;

5. *Requests* the Ethics Office to maintain and strengthen its independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [60/248](#) and [60/254](#) on the establishment of the Ethics Office, and encourages direct and independent communication with the Executive Board, as needed, through reports or briefings, in particular on concerns related to whistle-blower protection against retaliation issues;

6. *Also requests* UNICEF and the Ethics Office to continue to report on the adequacy of resources made available.

*Annual session
16 June 2022*

2022/15

UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2021 annual report to the Executive Board, and management response

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2021 annual report to the Executive Board ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.5](#)), its addendum ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.5/Add.1](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.6](#)), as well as the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee 2021 annual report to the Executive Board, and welcomes the overall opinion of the adequacy and effectiveness of the organization's framework of governance, risk management and controls;

2. *Welcomes* the progress of UNICEF in addressing audit-related management issues in 2021 and notes with appreciation efforts to implement outstanding audit recommendations;

3. *Recalls* decision 2020/20 and reiterates the importance of the provision of sufficient resources for audit and investigation functions;

4. *Requests* that the Executive Board receive more regular closed briefings from the Office, in a timely manner and throughout the year, as needed, on potential red flags, audit findings and the status of investigations;

5. *Also requests* the Director of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations to provide at the second regular session of 2022 an assessment on the independence of the Office, containing reflections on (but not limited to) the degree to which the Office can determine freely: (a) how and when to report to and brief the Executive Board; (b) the scope of audits and investigations; (c) what and who to audit or investigate; (d) what assessments to make; (e) how to utilize available funds; and (f) its relationship with the Office of Internal Oversight Services; and requests the Director to also provide suggestions and pathways on how to further strengthen the independence of the Office, as well as the budget estimate required for the execution of the full mandate, and requests a closed preparatory meeting between the management of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations and Executive Board members and observers on this topic in advance of the second regular session of 2022;

6. *Decides* to have the update on evaluation, audit and oversight matters for decision at the second regular session of 2022.

*Annual session
16 June 2022*

2022/16

Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;

2. *Encourages* UNICEF to continue to implement resolutions [72/279](#), [75/233](#) and [76/4](#), and to support the efforts of the Secretary-General in implementing related mandates;

3. *Welcomes* UNICEF progress in aligning country programme documents with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, and encourages UNICEF to continue to seek confirmation from the resident coordinators of the alignment of the country programmes with the Cooperation Frameworks;

4. *Also welcomes* the partnerships with international financial institutions, and requests an update, as a stand-alone item on the agenda at the first regular session of 2023, on UNICEF engagement with international financial institutions;

5. *Stresses* the importance of integrated solutions, including enhanced collaboration across humanitarian, development and peace operations of the United Nations system, as appropriate, to address complex, multifaceted challenges impacting achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and requests UNICEF to update the Board, within existing reporting, on how it collaborates in joint analysis, needs assessments, planning, including collective outcomes, and programme delivery;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to provide the Executive Board with an update on the implementation of the Management and Accountability Framework, including the contributions of representatives at country level and regional directors to the

implementation of United Nations development system reform, within existing reporting;

7. *Also requests* UNICEF to provide the Executive Board, within existing reporting, with information and data on its efficiency gains achieved and its efforts to realize efficiency gains through its contributions to system-wide coherence, collaboration and harmonization, and stresses the need to continue to realize efficiency gains, as stated in operational paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#).

*Annual session
16 June 2022*

2022/17

Private Fundraising and Partnerships: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2021

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the Private Fundraising and Partnerships: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2021 ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.4](#));

2. *Also takes note* that the revenue figures presented in this report are subject to external audit and the non-financial results are indicative;

3. *Takes note with appreciation* of the total revenue sourced from the private sector, but notes with concern the ongoing trend of decreasing regular resources as a share of total private sector income and encourages UNICEF to increase its efforts in the fundraising of regular resources from private sector sources beyond individual donors, including from philanthropists, foundations and businesses;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to present to the Executive Board an update, in the form of an informal briefing ahead of the first regular session of 2023, on its innovative and alternative financing strategy, with a focus on the generation of flexible resources, including on its ambition to use alternative sources of funding to invest in private sector fundraising activities; and to organize, on the margins of the first regular session of 2023, a special focus session on innovative financing that includes country office and National Committee perspectives.

*Annual session
16 June 2022*

Second regular session, 6–8 September 2022

2022/18

Country programme documents

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* that the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Bulgaria, Croatia, Egypt, Ghana, India, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, the Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Yemen and Zambia ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.20–E/ICEF/2022/P/L.37](#) and [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.39–E/ICEF/2022/P/L.41](#)) were made available to the Member States for their comments and input from 14 June to 5 July, and for Gabon ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.38](#)) from 17 June to 11 July;

2. *Approves* on a no-objection basis, and in accordance with decision 2014/1, the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Bulgaria, Croatia, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, India, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Mongolia,

Montenegro, Morocco, the Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Yemen and Zambia ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.20–E/ICEF/2022/P/L.41](#)).

*Second regular session
7 September 2022*

2022/19

Extensions of ongoing country programmes

The Executive Board

1 *Takes note* of the first two-month extensions of the country programmes for Mauritania and Nepal; the first two-month extension of the common country programme for Cabo Verde; the first two-month extension of the area programme for Palestinian children and women in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine; and the first one-year extensions of the country programmes for Angola, Guinea, Rwanda and Ukraine, all of which were approved by the Executive Director and are presented in table 1 of document [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.42/Rev.1](#);

2 *Approves* the two-month extensions of the country programmes for Brazil, the Central African Republic, the Gambia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Sao Tome and Principe, following one-year extensions; the two-month extension of the country programme for Lebanon, following two consecutive one-year extensions; the two-month extension of the country programme for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, following three consecutive one-year extensions; the one-year extensions of the country programmes for Chad and the Sudan, following previous one-year extensions; and the one-year extension of the country programme for Burkina Faso, following a two-year extension, all of which are presented in table 2 of document [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.42/Rev.1](#).

*Second regular session
8 September 2022*

2022/20

Structured dialogue on financing the results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the report on the structured dialogue on financing the results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 ([E/ICEF/2022/25](#)), and related annex, as well as the substantial progress made on United Nations entity-specific commitments under the United Nations funding compact, encourages UNICEF to continue its efforts to meet the commitments under the funding compact, and recalls General Assembly resolution [75/233](#) and its call for entities of the United Nations development system and Member States to contribute to its full and effective implementation;

2. *Notes* the importance of sufficient and predictable regular resources, as these are critical for UNICEF to be able to continue to equitably reach all children, everywhere, to meet their needs and fulfil their rights, to deliver on the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, to respond to the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and various humanitarian crises, and to support the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while maintaining robust internal control and accountability systems;

3. *Expresses concern* with the current lower level and trend of declining voluntary contributions to regular resources provided by Member States;

4. *Notes with appreciation* the successful efforts by UNICEF to increase regular resources through contributions from the private sector;

5. *Also notes* the importance of flexible and predictable thematic funding, and pooled funding, which are also a critical complement to regular resources for UNICEF to be able to accelerate programming to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in those areas in which development gains have been eroded by the COVID-19 pandemic and humanitarian crises;

6. *Further notes* the importance of broadening the contributor base of predictable and multi-year funding, and requests UNICEF to continue engaging with Member States to consider prioritizing timely, predictable and flexible contributions to UNICEF regular resources, in line with the funding compact, and also requests UNICEF to continue to make efforts in terms of visibility and recognition of contributions, in particular for regular resources;

7. *Notes* the importance of a diverse contributor base, and encourages UNICEF to continue to engage with relevant stakeholders to diversify its potential sources of funding, including the private sector (businesses, civil society, foundations, individuals and philanthropists), and through strengthened partnerships with international financial institutions.

*Second regular session
8 September 2022*

2022/21

Update on oversight matters

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Director of the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations ([E/ICEF/2022/26](#)), which provides an assessment on the degree of independence as well as recommendations for improvements in administrative processes and operational arrangements, in line with decision 2022/15;

2. *Notes with appreciation* that the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations conducted the self-assessment in compliance with the request in decision 2022/15 and in conformity with UNICEF regulations and rules, policies and procedures, including the consideration of internationally recognized standards applicable for audit and investigations functions, and welcomes responses in the self-assessment report that attest to the independence of the Office;

3. *Takes note* of the suggestions and pathways recommended in the assessment of the independence of the Office, and requests that UNICEF take action, as appropriate, to implement the assessment's recommendations and report, in its management response to the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations annual report for the annual session of 2023, on the progress made by UNICEF on their implementation, and asks the management of UNICEF to provide explanations, in line with established practice, in case a recommendation has not or only partially been implemented or agreed to by management;

4. *Stresses* the importance of ensuring that the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations has full independence in delivering its services to provide the Executive Board, UNICEF management and other relevant stakeholders the necessary and appropriate assurances and advice on the governance, risk management and internal controls of the entity;

5. *Recalls* its decision 2022/15, paragraph 4, and, in this regard, welcomes more regular closed briefings, as needed, from the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations in a timely manner and throughout the year, including on potential red flags, emerging risks and internal control issues, audit findings and the status of investigations, with due regard for confidentiality and privacy;

6. *Also recalls* decision 2022/15, paragraph 3, and reiterates the importance of the provision of sufficient resources for the audit and investigations functions in order to preserve the independence, integrity and professionalism of the Office, and to allow for full, adequate and effective execution of the mandate of the Office, within the established applicable budgetary process, and to update policies, where applicable;

7. *Requests* UNICEF to include, as a permanent annex in its annual report to the Executive Board, a concise summary of the oversight functions responsible for audit, investigation, ethics, evaluation and whistle-blower protection, and also requests UNICEF to ensure that this summary follows a uniform template, to be agreed by the Bureau of the Executive Board, after discussion with the relevant bureaux of the United Nations development system entities;

8. *Further requests* the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations to include in the executive summaries of its reports shared with the Executive Board, as appropriate, potential red flags, emerging risks and internal control issues, audit findings and the status of investigations, which require specific attention from the Executive Board;

9. *Welcomes* efforts of the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations to harmonize approaches with other United Nations agency investigation and audit offices and encourages continuing these cooperation efforts to enhance effectiveness, efficiency and inter-agency learning;

10. *Requests* the Bureau, in consultation with the relevant bureaux of United Nations development system entities, to provide options and cost estimates for an assessment, including the feasibility of a third-party assessment by an entity external to the United Nations system with independent expertise on governance and oversight, of how the Executive Board, in collaboration with UNICEF, as well as the United Nations system, executes its governance and oversight functions, with a view to ensuring that these functions are aligned with the highest international standards and best practices;

11. *Also requests* the Bureau to present these options for consideration by the Executive Board, by the first regular session of 2023, with a view to providing a final assessment and relevant recommendations to the Executive Board no later than the annual session of 2023.

*Second regular session
8 September 2022*

2022/22

UNICEF Strategic Plan: updated financial estimates, 2022–2025

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the planned financial estimates for the period 2022–2025, as contained in document [E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.8](#), as a flexible framework for supporting UNICEF programmes;

2. *Approves* the integrated resources framework of planned financial estimates for the period 2022–2025, and approves the preparation of country programme expenditure submissions to the Executive Board of up to \$605 million from regular resources in 2023, subject to the availability of resources and the continued validity of these planned financial estimates;

3. *Requests* UNICEF to provide annual updates to the Executive Board on the progress of funding its reserves for staff liabilities.

*Second regular session
8 September 2022*

Annex II

Report of the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP held on 3 June 2022¹

An integrated approach towards sustainable investment in people and planet: leaving no one behind as a principle for climate action to ensure a transformative path for the most vulnerable

1. The President of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS opened the joint meeting welcoming all participants of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, as well as the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations. She stressed that the joint meeting was timely for the challenges facing the world were complex, urgent and interlinked and demanded an integrated approach toward sustainable investments for people and planet that superseded individual agency mandates and the capabilities of any single Government. She drew attention to how the interconnected triple Cs – COVID-19, conflict and climate change – were impeding progress toward achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as evidenced in growing inequality, poverty, a global food security crisis, unprecedented biodiversity loss, energy insecurity, and large numbers of refugees and internally displaced. Systemic solutions and transformative results were needed to tackle the multidimensional vulnerabilities and risks faced by the most marginalized and furthest left behind, building on each organization’s comparative advantages and tight interagency collaboration at all levels and in all areas. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, she stressed, was a shared responsibility. Working jointly and coherently among the Executive Boards was now more than ever a matter of urgent necessity to make the United Nations development system, through continued reform, fit for purpose to deliver where it mattered most – on the ground, at country-level, in communities and in people’s lives across the globe.

2. In her opening remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General said the joint meeting of the Executive Boards was an increasingly important platform to address issues that required coherent action across the United Nations development system. She drew attention to the galvanizing force of key transitions to green economies, in parallel with human capital investments, for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda at the country level to leave no one behind. The United Nations development system possessed unparalleled capacities – working coherently – to channel its collective assets and comparative advantages to rally partners and drive the key transitions at scale and deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. She commended the Boards for working to make the United Nations development system fit for purpose to meet the challenges and called on them to step up their pace on remaining reform elements and deepen acceleration of the 2030 Agenda – taking into account the setbacks due to COVID-19, conflict and climate change. She highlighted three areas where the guidance of the Boards was crucial: (a) orienting the organizations on how to support countries’ self-defined priorities to achieve the Goals and accelerate climate action; (b) ensuring the organizations’ strategic documents and business models make full use of reform efforts to support the Goals, especially climate action; and (c) ensuring the organizations were adequately supported financially through sustainable, predictable, flexible funding and within the Boards to progressively shift to more integrated policy advice and options for system-wide collaboration. She expressed deep concern at recent cuts in funding from Member

¹ This report has not been edited by UNICEF.

States. She called for tailored discussions by the Boards as part of the structured funding dialogues, including on integrated programming and pooled funding arrangements, and for their close engagement in upcoming efforts to develop a checklist on implementing the reform agenda and deliver on its promise.

Panel discussion: integrated approach towards sustainable investment in people and planet

3. The Executive Director, UN-Women, while reinforcing the need for collective action, underscored the urgent need for more gender-responsive and child-sensitive strategies to achieve the 2030 Agenda and ensure sustainable investments in people and planet. Women and girls, and children, especially in conflict and humanitarian settings and in rural areas, those belonging to minority or indigenous groups, and migrants and refugees, were disproportionately affected. Their unequal access to justice, resources and opportunities often pushed women and girls to the margins. To reverse that situation, women and girls needed an equal voice in policymaking. To build resilience against crises, sustainable investments were needed to prepare for future shocks and to develop more sustainable responses. Closing the inequality and fragility gaps, which COVID-19, conflict and climate have exacerbated, were key to building resilience and delivering on the 2030 Agenda. Pursuing transformative solutions and pragmatic ideas, the United Nations system had to leverage the potential of multilateralism and international cooperation to support national efforts tailored to national priorities, building and strengthening its partnerships across the humanitarian-development-peace continuum.

4. The moderator of the session addressed the following questions to the heads of the six United Nations organizations whose Boards were represented at the joint meeting.

Question 1: How does climate action contribute to an inclusive, green recovery, including a just transition?

5. The Administrator, UNDP, stressed that the combined socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, climate change and conflict, especially on the most vulnerable in least developed countries and small island developing States, were provoking an unprecedented food, energy and financial crisis across the globe. The active and collective engagement of the United Nations was needed more than ever to bolster integrated solutions and partnerships, guided by the One-UN principles embodied in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system 2020 (General Assembly resolution 75/233). Committed to that effort, UNDP was working to accelerate development solutions to lift millions out of multidimensional poverty, provide access to clean, affordable energy, and build resilience to climate change. Together with partners, UNDP was focused on three broad areas: (a) integrating social protection measures and policies into countries' socioeconomic fabric; (b) supporting countries through the UNDP Climate Promise to enhance and implement nationally determined contributions and raise adaptation ambitions through a gender-responsive lens; and (c) strengthening policy incentives and deploying innovative financial instruments to catalyse public-private finance at scale aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals. Such collective efforts were designed to propel a historic and just transformation towards a more inclusive, green economy grounded in smart climate-responsive strategies for equitable, inclusive development.

Question 2: Building on the leaving-no-one-behind principle, how is UNICEF working with other organizations to ensure that children are not left behind in climate action?

6. The Executive Director, UNICEF, said that the climate crisis was a children's crisis. The UNICEF children's climate risk index showed that nearly half the world's children lived in extremely high risk countries and were exposed to the most severe hazards, shocks and stressors. The severe impact of drought on children across the Horn of Africa highlighted how interrelated climate shocks and crises had become and led to multiple crises in health, nutrition and education. Integrated United Nations action was needed more than ever to reinforce food systems and services and reduce the vulnerability of children at the household and community levels. Together with other United Nations organizations, UNICEF worked to integrate climate priorities into national budgets and drive change by leveraging public and private resources in new ways, in close collaboration with youth partners, for greater accountability on climate change. The United Nations had to advocate and ensure a place at the table for youth and children in climate discussions. She called on countries to put children at the heart of the climate response by increasing the resilience of systems children depended on, preparing every child to adapt and participate in creating a more sustainable future, and prioritizing the needs of every child in funding and resources for adaptation and resilience.

Question 3: What should the United Nations system do to support gender-responsive climate action that benefitted women and girls?

7. The Executive Director, UN-Women, said that UN-Women always worked at the heart of and through the United Nations system, including in joint climate action. There was the urgent need for combined efforts to address the triple interlinked crises of COVID-19, climate change and protracted conflicts that were disproportionately affecting women and girls, exacerbating inequalities, threatening jobs and livelihoods, increasing poverty – and hindering achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and leaving no one behind. Climate action and finance had to accompany long-term development policies and strategies to ensure adequate social protection for women and girls through integrated approaches in support of countries' needs and priorities. She highlighted that, at its 66th session, the Commission on the Status of Women provided a clear normative basis on which to strengthen gender-responsive climate action through a coordinated, coherent United Nations system at the country level that prioritized: (a) women's leadership and participation and integrated women's and girls' perspectives in climate action so they benefit from the sustainable energy transition; (b) gender-responsive just transitions that include investments in expanded gender-responsive public services, universal social protection, health care systems, sustainable support and infrastructure, and provision of new decent employment opportunities for women in green and blue jobs; (c) public investments in the care economy, a key pillar of gender-responsive climate action; and (d) improving and investing in gender statistics and disaggregated data to equip all stakeholders with data that informed policy and programme decisions.

Question 4: What is the role of infrastructure in climate change and in ensuring no one is left behind?

8. The Acting Executive Director, UNOPS, said it was important to take a broad perspective on infrastructure that included its traditional, energy and digital components as well as its mitigation and adaptation aspects. Maintaining a balance between these infrastructure perspectives made it possible to keep the focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. Infrastructure was central to achieving the Goals overall as it impacted most targets directly or

indirectly, with one infrastructure intervention having potential multiple and multidimensional benefits. Beyond its green benefits, for example, infrastructure – when considered broadly – determined how people lived and improved accessibility and inclusion. The architectural concept ‘universal design’ about creating buildings accessible for persons with disabilities could from a broader perspective demonstrate how infrastructure and inclusion worked together to address diversity of needs. It was important for the United Nations system to address infrastructure needs throughout countries, in line with national priorities, not just in urban cities, through broad partnerships. The reinvigorated resident coordinator system was a primary tool to implement the United Nations climate ambition at the country level where infrastructure’s impact was most important.

Question 5: How does its focus on women and girls inform UNFPA actions on climate change, and why is it important to bring women’s and girls’ perspectives to action in leaving no one behind and climate change?

9. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme), UNFPA, shared examples of how climate change and climate-related disasters were having a disproportionate impact on women and girls as evidenced across the globe in increased gender-based violence, trafficking, unwanted pregnancies, inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, among others. UNFPA was working closely with other United Nations organizations to ensure women and girls in climate-affected areas had access to sexual and reproductive and maternal health, mobile health teams, basic services, livelihood assistance, as well as psychosocial support to survivors of gender-based violence. UNFPA, together with other United Nations entities and by supporting South-South cooperation, worked at the policy level with national stakeholders and in communities with women and youth-led organizations to find solutions and build climate resilience. UNFPA supported alternative service delivery facilities for maternal health in emergencies that helped to ensure safe deliveries, cash for health payments, and preoperative blood transfusion kits for neonatal care. UNFPA leveraged its expertise in data and evidence gathering, using population risk and geospatial data systems, to inform the building of resilient health and protection systems. Under the leadership of the resident coordinator, and jointly with other United Nations organizations, UNFPA was working to regain the lost ground due to COVID-19 and put the world back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and leave no one behind.

Question 6: How are United Nations entities collaborating to adequately adapt and build resilience to climate shocks to protect food systems and ensure no one is left behind?

10. The Deputy Executive Director, WFP, said the climate crisis was a daily reality whose most pronounced impacts were taking place in the most vulnerable communities along the fault lines of conflict, climate extremes, food price inflation, and socioeconomic inequalities. It was crucial to acknowledge that the international aid and development system, and its financial instruments, had a major challenge in addressing this situation owing to underinvestment in contexts of fragility, poor social cohesion and conflict. It was therefore key for the United Nations system to work together. The most effective way to reduce vulnerabilities to climate and other crises was through an integrated approach that built on a wide range of actors across the United Nations system and its partnerships. This system-wide collaboration had to take place across the humanitarian-development-peace continuum to be effective and sustainable. United Nations development organizations had a central role as key agents in building resilience through their close engagement with the most vulnerable groups and through their work with Governments to integrate climate protection, resilience-building, and social protection in national development planning. That

included addressing the root causes of vulnerability and supporting fragile countries and communities to build resilience and leave no one behind.

Takeaways from the panel discussion

11. The moderator of the discussion pointed to three main takeaways: (a) leaving no one behind was a central transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda that went hand in hand with the need to reach those furthest behind, and required investments in disaggregated data and empirical evidence to inform policy design and address intersecting inequalities; (b) it was crucial to invest in preventing future climate-related shocks and build resilience against crises through synergetic action, stronger social protection systems, and coordinated delivery by identifying and targeting the most vulnerable and applying a gender-responsive lens; and (c) an urgent bold and global response was needed, commensurate with the scale and gravity of the crisis, that prioritized technology and accessible financing for climate action built on strong interagency coordination and partnerships across the humanitarian-development-peace continuum.

Interactive segment: voices from the field

Government representatives

12. The Vice-Minister of Environment, Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition, Ecuador, said Ecuador was collaborating with United Nations organizations to address the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution through the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals which sought to promote equality, generate economic opportunities and eradicate poverty. Ecuador was a pioneer in addressing climate change through a gender lens, having integrated gender in its management of climate change through a comprehensive strategy and enabling environment that fostered equality and non-discrimination in climate change policies. As a result, the country's ecosystems and biodiversity had improved and responsible production and consumption were being promoted through a gender lens. Ecuador was working with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNDP, and WFP, through the Green Climate Fund, on climate-focused programmes in the Amazon to promote forest preservation and sustainable deforestation aimed at integrating a broad range of stakeholders, including indigenous communities. The programme included capacity strengthening to stimulate a sustainable source of income, with the aim of reducing inequalities and closing the gender gap.

13. The Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services, the Maldives, said the Government had introduced health services, shelters, emergency funds, and agricultural grants and injected income to support climate-affected households to mitigate the worst climate change effects on women and girls. To ensure full implementation of its gender-responsive climate policy, the Maldives had prioritized the mainstreaming of gender through its strategic action plan and had made tremendous progress. The Government enacted a series of legislation upholding the principles of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, and the increase in the number of women in political leadership roles had given women a more powerful voice in formulating climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction efforts at the local level. The Government had signed the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework that promoted greater participation of women in social, economic, political and public life, and the Government recently approved its national gender equality action plan, 2022-2026, with UNDP support, that used innovative solutions to complex development challenges. The plan introduced gender-responsive budgeting and audits

with UNFPA support that included climate change costing and disaster risk reduction planning. The Maldives was also working with UNICEF to introduce environmental sustainability and climate action within its enabling policies while mobilizing youth as agents of change.

Youth representative

14. The youth representative, Zimbabwe, said climate change was a children's crisis. It was crucial to give young people and children a voice in climate action decisions so they could play their part in shaping the future. He drew attention to the UNICEF climate mapping programme in Zimbabwe that gave voice to youth and helped them to advocate for climate action at the local level and hold leaders accountable. The programme also allowed youth to participate in the debates at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties and other international climate change fora.

Interactive discussion between the presidents of the Executive Boards

15. The presidents of the four Executive Boards, the heads of the six United Nations organizations and members of the Executive Boards provided several comments in response to the six questions raised during the panel discussions on the United Nations development system's role in leaving no one behind as a principle for climate action to ensure a transformative path for the most vulnerable. They highlighted the following points:

(a) the joint meeting of the Executive Boards was an important platform for knowledge-sharing across the Boards to help accelerate system-wide action towards the 2030 Agenda under the leadership of the resident coordinators in the repositioned United Nations development system;

(b) the Executive Boards had to continue to play their oversight and guidance roles to ensure compliance with agreed organizational mandates and the strengthening and realization of United Nations entities' potential and capacities;

(c) the climate crisis disproportionately affected the most vulnerable, especially women and girls, youth, children, persons with disabilities, indigenous communities, and debt-burdened developing countries;

(d) transformative, collective action grounded in global solidarity was needed to support national efforts to build resilience against future shocks;

(e) the trend of major cuts in core resources for development was a major concern and would impede the United Nations system from fully supporting developing countries' efforts to achieve the Goals;

(f) food systems had to be more sustainable and resilient, and agroecological and innovative approaches accelerated, to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, and adaptation mitigation in food systems were essential for transformative change and ensuring no one is left behind;

(g) social protection systems were needed to help populations respond to and prepare for climate-related crises;

(h) rationalizing international agricultural trade could correct distortions in the global market and help farmers in developing countries compete;

(i) flexibility and speed were needed to ensure timely provision of emergency concessional financing focused on positive resource transfers to countries in social and economic distress;

(j) the international community should aim to channel at least \$250 billion (of the \$650 billion in special drawing rights) to address the liquidity crisis in

developing countries, and developed countries should fulfil their commitments to provide \$100 billion per year toward climate finance and allocate 0.7 per cent of gross national income;

(k) women were indispensable players in achieving peaceful, just, and inclusive societies and in promoting economic and sustainable growth;

(l) climate-related challenges and crises required joint United Nations development system efforts and beyond to succeed;

(m) the strategic plans of the United Nations organizations were blueprints for a stronger, more impactful United Nations development system, in line with reform, that mainstreamed gender and climate change and put partnerships at their core;

(n) United Nations organizations had to strengthen their efforts through joint planning, implementation, resource mobilization, reporting and monitoring processes – leveraging their comparative advantages and cooperation within the humanitarian-development-peace continuum – based on climate and gender-responsive analysis in the common country analysis, in full commitment to the reform agenda and transparency, coherence, due diligence and accountability;

(o) the proposal to establish a (non-process driven) checklist to monitor implementation of United Nations development system reform was welcomed and viewed as a useful tool to track collective and individual organization’s progress.

16. In summing up the interactive discussions, the President of the Executive Board of WFP said the climate crisis, compounded by conflict and economic inequality, had made it difficult to achieve zero hunger as set out in the 2030 Agenda. While collaboration among United Nations organizations had increased, there was the need for even greater partnerships to effectively respond to the climate crisis and its impacts. The interrelated challenges of climate change, conflict and food insecurity could not be solved by one organization alone. Integrated programmes were needed that drew on the strengths of each organization and augmented the impact of their collaborative efforts. United Nations reform had therefore to focus not on processes but on improving the lives of people, particularly the most vulnerable.

Closing remarks

17. In closing, the President of the Executive Board of UNICEF thanked delegations and the six United Nations organizations for their participation in the joint meeting. He stressed the importance of close collaboration across the United Nations development system to address the triple challenge of COVID-19, conflict and climate change. Joint action was crucial, building on the examples of integrated approaches highlighted during the meeting and capitalizing on each organization’s comparative advantages, to continue progress against the Sustainable Development Goals. There was clear evidence that when working together and when focused on the most vulnerable and leaving non one behind, the United Nations system was able to transform systems that built resilience and protected the lives of people and the planet.

