

Making Coherence Work for Children

UNICEF's Commitment to UN Coherence

September 19

UNICEF is strongly committed to UN Coherence and its primary objective to achieve sustainable results in an effective and efficient way. This basic principle guides UNICEF's approach to engagement in UN Country Teams, UNDAFs and country programme planning processes. We collaborate with UN organizations to implement development and humanitarian programmes for the protection and promotion of children's rights, as mandated by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).¹ We build these partnerships, not for the sake of partnerships, but for the sake of children. We strive to be a leader in UN Coherence, not for greater influence but for greater impact and for the greater goal of reaching the MDGs with equity. This paper articulates how UNICEF can become a stronger partner and leader in UN Coherence that works for children.

Why UN Coherence matters to UNICEF

1. UN Coherence is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, for supporting government priorities and fulfilling our commitment to reach and impact the lives of children everywhere. For UNICEF, partnerships are at the heart of this mandate. We cannot achieve sustainable results on our own. We must mobilize partners to strengthen policies and actions and generate increased resources for children.
2. We work with other UN organizations, guided by the principle that our respective comparative advantages and capacities are critically important to our shared objectives. UN Coherence allows us to mobilize a broad coalition around an equity-focused approach to reaching the most vulnerable and deprived children. Working together should lead to greater relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, while reducing duplication and fragmentation, and, ultimately, intensifying our collective impact where it matters most. We want to make this a reality.

How we promote and lead on UN Coherence

3. We strengthen national leadership and coordination in support of national priorities, human rights obligations and development strategies. UNICEF is committed to working through and strengthening the capacity of national systems, coordination mechanisms and processes, in line with the Paris and Accra Principles of Aid Effectiveness.
4. UNICEF leads efforts to refocus on equity and achieve results while striving to reduce transaction costs. To this end, we participate in joint actions, activities and programmes that are strategic, relevant and contribute to greater results for children. UN Coherence does not imply that every agency engages in everything equally. We support initiatives that improve the quality of our programmes and simplify and streamline reporting requirements - a critical step towards increasing the efficiency of country teams and national partners. In this regard, innovations and lessons learned from the 'Delivering as One' experience can help generate system-wide improvements.
5. UNICEF actively engages partners and/or provides leadership within a number of inter-agency mechanisms, such as the CEB and its subsidiary bodies, and humanitarian coordination mechanisms, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), to promote the adoption of good practices, based on our extensive field presence.

¹ UNICEF is mandated by the UN General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behavior towards children. UNICEF works with all its partners to achieve the sustainable human development goals adopted by the world community and to realize the vision of peace and social progress enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

6. UNICEF participates proactively in humanitarian reform to improve the effectiveness of action through ensuring greater accountability and better results in humanitarian and post-crisis assistance. Our work is driven by the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action and our responsibilities as a cluster lead agency. As both a development and humanitarian agency, UNICEF supports integrated strategic frameworks and seeks to strengthen the linkage between the international humanitarian architecture and the UN's development work.

Moving UN Coherence forward

7. UNICEF continues to pursue coherence with the same evidence-based decision making and normative principles that we apply to all of our actions. Best practices, innovations, and lessons learned by the UN system as a whole will continue to be reflected in our advocacy and our programmes for children and women.
8. UNICEF is implementing all its responsibilities under the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review and will proactively provide input to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. UNICEF continues to support the successful implementation of the UNDG Management and Accountability System, to promote mutual accountability among UNCT members and to increase the oversight and support of headquarters and Regional UNDG/Regional Directors' Teams. To this end, UNICEF will work closely with partners to implement the agreed recommendations of the recent external review.
9. UNICEF continues to support an empowered Resident Coordinator (RC) and a strong RC System that values the diversity of member agencies, and will help establish flexible processes. The RC represents the UN system as a whole on common priorities, bringing other members of the UNCT when s/he meets with leaders on issues of relevance to those agencies' mandate.
10. Advocacy is important for achieving results. 'One Voice' articulates a common vision for UNCT members, including UNICEF Representatives, to 'speak as one' when communicating on common issues. It does not imply that only one member speaks. Agency representatives speak to issues that pertain to their respective mandates. Maintaining UNICEF's voice at the highest levels of government is critical to keep the realization of the rights of children at the forefront of national development agendas.
11. The smooth and efficient functioning of the RC system requires RCs of the highest caliber with great leadership skills, selected through a rigorous, transparent and merit-based selection process. It also requires a robust appraisal system. UNICEF will work with other agencies to simplify and improve these mechanisms. This includes creating opportunities for UNICEF staff to return to the organization after serving as the RC in any country, recognizing the value of their experience as RCs.
12. UNICEF continues to participate in joint programming to increase the strategic focus of the UN and improve coordination, accountability and results for children. This includes, where relevant and effective, joint programmes. Noting that "no one size fits all," UNICEF advocates for a lighter, flexible, dynamic approach to joint programming that is responsive to diverse contexts and country situations.
13. Predictable, un-earmarked and multi-year funding will remain critically important for the achievement and sustainability of development and humanitarian results. Multi-donor trust funds, common budgetary frameworks and joint funding mechanisms can serve as useful mechanisms to increase transparency and accountability. They should complement and not compromise the ability of UNICEF and other agencies to mobilize resources. Processes should be kept as light as possible with clear criteria for the transparent allocation of funds and streamlined budget management processes. Coherence mechanisms should be pursued for the benefit that they bring to all partners, and should not be motivated by specific funding modalities.

14. UNICEF is committed to maintaining its brand as an important component of our interaction with national partners, donors, media and the general public. This is a valuable contribution to the UN system for increasing recognition and visibility of the UN system and agency mandates.
15. UNICEF Regional Offices continue to play a strong and proactive role in conjunction with the Regional undg Teams, trouble-shooting for and providing strategic advice, technical assistance, and quality assurance to UN Country Teams. They oversee Country Office efforts to integrate Coherence across programming processes, and to monitor and report on global and regional undg commitments and priorities. Regional Offices participate in regional and sub-regional thematic groups, communities of practice and other fora, and dialogue with political and economic organizations. Regional Directors also oversee RC and UNCT performance through annual appraisals.
16. UNICEF has made it a priority to streamline its business processes. We will promote lighter, simplified and more efficient business processes among UN agencies at the country level. We will continue to support partnerships that add clear value to our mandate and complement our strengths and weaknesses, allowing us to build on the best systems and practices available among agencies.
17. A results-driven coherence agenda requires additional support to Regional and Country Offices. HQ ensures that global policy making is informed by lessons from the field and addresses any issues arising within UNICEF and among global partners. HQ actively supports Country Offices and shares information and agreements for country level implementation. UNICEF will encourage and recognize staff contributions to UN Coherence at all levels. To support UNICEF field staff involved in UN Coherence, HQ continues to develop and update innovative, creative and useful knowledge sharing tools and systems such as Handy Guides, the ASK-help desk, database and newsletters and will provide hands-on guidance upon request. It is in the field where UN Coherence matters the most.

UNICEF is strongly committed to a more coherent UN, working with partners to achieve greater results for children.