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UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, draft for review*Summary*

UNICEF was established in 1946 to protect children from the worst consequences of the Second World War. Seventy years later, the organization's mission to protect children and promote the full attainment of their rights is as urgent as ever.

The draft UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 is anchored in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and charts a course towards attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and the realization of a future in which every child has a fair chance in life. It sets out specific and measurable results for children, especially the most disadvantaged, and defines the change strategies and enablers that support their achievement.

Working together with Governments, United Nations partners, the private sector, civil society and children themselves, UNICEF remains steadfast in its commitment to realize the rights of all children, everywhere, and to achieving the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a world where no child is left behind.

*E/ICEF/2017/5.

Context of working with the other United Nations entities

Shared responsibility for a better future

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR) present a unique opportunity to align the Strategic Plans 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, to improve the delivery of results at country level towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The response reflects the principles of the 2030 Agenda, including the pledge to *leave no one behind* and to *reach the farthest behind first*. The four entities will also be guided by the common principles developed by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the United Nations Development Group. They will retain the flexibility necessary to address decisions arising from follow-up to QCPR-mandated processes.

Alignment can be best accomplished through a two-pronged approach. First, 'collaborative advantage' to reduce overlap and duplication, pool expertise, build stronger partnerships, and achieve greater harmonization, innovation and programme and operational efficiencies. Second, clarification of comparative advantage, using the strengths of each entity to provide flexible, context-specific support.

Areas of collaborative advantage

The entities will seek collaborative advantage acknowledging that poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is one of the greatest global challenges (QCPR, para. 8). Complementing work that directly addresses poverty and inequality, the entities will also contribute to prevention, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, in accordance with national plans, needs and priorities, and respecting national ownership (QCPR, para. 24 (b)); address climate change; advance gender equality and empowerment of women and girls; and strengthen data for sustainable development. These areas have been selected based on their relevance to a changing environment, positive multiplier effects across the Sustainable Development Goals, early experience with implementation of the 2030 Agenda and shared prioritization across the entities. Collaboration will be open to other issues and broader partnerships as well, in response to country context and priorities.

Commitment to action

The respective Strategic Plans will include common outcome indicators, drawing upon indicators for the Sustainable Development Goal targets, to track coordinated action while maintaining individual accountabilities through agency-specific outputs and output indicators. The four entities are committed to stronger linkages between results and resources in integrated results and resources frameworks and strengthened and further harmonized results-based management, including reporting. They will also work to achieve more effective collaboration with other entities in the United Nations system; stronger partnerships with Governments, the private sector and civil society; and greater coordination, accountability and transparency in business operations.

At the field level, shared results will also be pursued through United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) or related instruments. The new generation of UNDAFs not only aligns United Nations country programming to the 2030 Agenda, but also provides a catalyst for collaboration through several common elements: core programming principles; country assessment across the humanitarian-development nexus; theory of change with a corresponding results matrix; outcomes that are captured in country programme documents and workplans; resource mobilization strategies for joint initiatives; monitoring and evaluation frameworks; and standard operating procedures. The entities will also employ financing arrangements, including pooled funding where efficient and effective, that can advance collaboration in the field and increase country-level access to resources needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

A. Context of global opportunities and challenges

1. The world has made considerable progress towards realizing the rights of children in recent years. The number of children who die before their fifth birthday declined from 12.7 million in 1990 to 5.9 million in 2015. The primary school net enrolment rate in low- and middle-income countries reached 91 per cent in 2015, up from 83 per cent a decade and a half earlier, and gender parity in primary education continues to improve. These are but a few examples of the many advances made for children.

2. While much has been achieved, many of the world's most disadvantaged children have not benefited from this progress. Compared to children in the highest income group, the poorest children are nearly twice as likely to die before the age of 5, twice as likely to be stunted, and five times more likely to be out of school. Adolescent girls are more likely to be illiterate than adolescent boys. And while 1 billion people have emerged from extreme poverty since 1990, children account for half of the almost 800 million people who remain trapped in its vicious cycle.

3. Realizing the rights of all children, closing the remaining gaps in the achievement of their rights and meeting the relevant targets of the 2030 Agenda are the overarching aims of this Strategic Plan, and will require intensified efforts from all stakeholders.

4. The Strategic Plan will be implemented at a time of immense challenges. Conflict and civil strife, natural disasters and climate change, global epidemics, rapid urbanization and mass population movements all threaten the prospects of a fair chance in life for many children. Changes in the global economic and political landscape are also shaping the contexts in which children live. A key determinant of children's well-being today is whether they live in fragile, conflict-affected, or disaster-prone contexts: such children are twice as likely to die before the age of 5, to be out of school, or to lack access to safe water. Approximately 28 million children have been uprooted by violence and conflict, and 300 million children are estimated to be living in slums. Rapid demographic shifts and the growing youth bulge in Africa and parts of Asia will require the scaling up of essential services for children.

5. Despite these challenges, numerous opportunities exist to accelerate progress for children. Continued efforts to strengthen governance will not only improve capacity for domestic resource mobilization, but also enable greater accountability for the delivery of services. The private sector is playing an increasingly active role in development. Social media is empowering citizens to exercise their voices, and civil society is assuming an expanded role.

6. Against this background, considerable evidence exists about what works to deliver results for children, and what must change in order to accelerate progress. UNICEF and its partners have learned that starting with the most deprived children is not only right in principle, it is also cost-effective and practical. Such a focus will help the world to move more swiftly towards the realization of the rights of all children, and is essential to meeting the commitment of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.

B. Building on the lessons from the previous Strategic Plan

7. Key lessons have emerged over the period of the previous Strategic Plan, 2014-2017.¹
8. There is a clear need to scale up equity-focused programming and advocacy, including through better targeting of interventions to focus on the most disadvantaged children and the strengthening of national systems. Increased investment in equity measurement through disaggregated data will be of critical importance in the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, and particularly for the accompanying results framework.
9. Evaluations have highlighted the importance of community engagement for demand creation and social mobilization. As the Ebola response made clear, promoting healthy behaviours requires approaches tailored to the norms of each community. Communication-for-development initiatives have proven vital in addressing the demand-related barriers to child well-being.
10. The voices of children and their families are critical forces for strengthening accountability in governance. UNICEF should intensify support for initiatives that enable citizens, communities and civil society to share their feedback on actions taken by Governments and partners towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
11. In light of the scale, frequency and complexity of humanitarian crises, risk-informed programming and systems strengthening have become vital for prevention, response and early recovery. Emergency preparedness and enhancing the resilience of communities and service delivery systems should be core to the work of UNICEF in all country contexts as a key means of strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus.
12. Experience across all regions confirms the importance of integrated approaches that address the underlying causes of service gaps. In protecting children from violence and exploitation, for example, a key lesson is the importance of effective referral pathways between the child protection system and the social protection, education and health systems.
13. The 2016 QCPR emphasizes the use of such integrated approaches. In this regard, UNICEF will continue to strengthen its partnerships with Governments and within the United Nations development system, with a view to accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
14. UNICEF will also continue to build upon its strengths and comparative advantages, including its strong and diverse country programmes, network of National Committees, critical role in responding to the needs of children in humanitarian situations, keen focus on achieving at-scale results for children, growing partnerships with the private sector and civil society, and advocacy for the rights and needs of all children.

C. Guiding principles of the Strategic Plan

15. The Strategic Plan is grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides the foundation for everything UNICEF does. It is also guided by other international human rights treaties and instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All

¹ The lessons learned are summarized in this paper. See the “Midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017: Lessons learned”, for additional details.

Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

16. Building on its predecessor, the Strategic Plan pursues a vision of realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged. UNICEF works to promote the rights of all children in programming, advocacy and operations. It does so by starting with the most deprived, because a focus on equity accelerates progress towards achieving the rights of all children.

17. UNICEF works with partners to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all children, without distinction of any kind whatsoever.

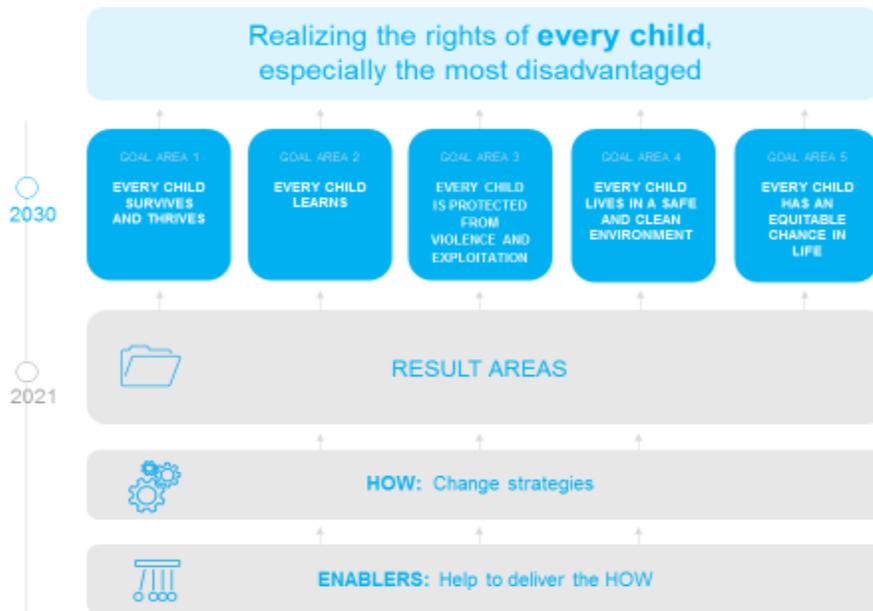
18. The 2030 Agenda serves as the long-term framework for the Strategic Plan. In particular, it focuses on elements that bear special relevance for children, namely Sustainable Development Goals 1 to 6, and 16. In addition, UNICEF will work with partners to address the key drivers of child well-being related to inequality, urbanization, climate change and the widespread lack of human security, which undermines the realization of the rights of all children. The Strategic Plan also responds to the outcomes of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development; the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

19. The Strategic Plan results framework reflects the collaborative advantages of UNICEF and other United Nations entities, to pool expertise and reduce duplication in the achievement of results for children. It is also based on comparative advantages and core functions of UNICEF in relation to United Nations partners and in support of the 2030 Agenda. These functions relate to normative work undertaken by UNICEF in support of child rights, capacity development and systems strengthening, including at the community level; leveraging resources and partnerships for children; collecting and analysing disaggregated data on children, and several other areas of work that are elaborated in the change strategies of the Strategic Plan.

II. Key elements of the Strategic Plan

20. The Strategic Plan describes the results to be achieved by UNICEF by 2021 in the context of the 2030 Agenda (the WHAT). It also describes the groups of children who will be reached in diverse contexts (the WHO); the change strategies necessary for the achievement of results (the HOW); and the internal factors that support the change strategies and the achievement of results (the ENABLERS). See the figure below.

Key elements of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021



Envisaged impact

21. Overall, the Strategic Plan seeks to contribute to the realization of the rights of all children, especially the most disadvantaged. This envisaged impact will be achieved through five Goal Areas: (a) Every child survives and thrives; (b) Every child learns; (c) Every child is protected from violence and exploitation; (d) Every child lives in a safe and clean environment; and (e) Every child has an equitable chance in life. These Goal Areas are underpinned by the cross-cutting priorities of gender equality and humanitarian assistance. In addition, the Strategic Plan promotes synergies across multiple Goal Areas to address early childhood development, adolescent development, and issues affecting children with disabilities.

22. The Goal Areas are interlinked, reflecting the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda. Progress under each Goal Area requires, and contributes to, progress under the others. For example, results in basic sanitation contribute to improvements in child survival and learning outcomes, while also promoting a clean environment in which children can live and play. Progress in basic sanitation can also promote gender equality.

23. Consistent with the Results-Based Management Handbook of the United Nations Development Group, the Goal Areas of the Strategic Plan represent the outcomes for children resulting from the combined effort of all partners, including UNICEF.

24. The direct contribution of UNICEF in each Goal Area is captured in 25 result areas (outputs). The result areas have been identified on the basis of UNICEF comparative advantages in the 2030 Agenda in relation to United Nations partners.

25. The results framework of the Strategic Plan incorporates the impact, outcome and output indicators necessary for monitoring progress.

26. While the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 builds on its predecessor, it has evolved in several ways. The composite nature of Goal Area 1, which incorporates health, nutrition, early childhood development and HIV/AIDS, reflects the importance of integrated approaches to child survival and development. Goal Area 2 prioritizes learning, placing a stronger emphasis on outcomes in education while retaining due attention to access, especially for the most disadvantaged children. Goal Area 3 seeks to protect children from violence and exploitation. Goal Area 4 focuses on the impact of the environment on children's survival and development. And Goal Area 5 aims to address the key dimensions of inequity that prevent children from realizing their rights.

27. In addition to the Goal Areas and cross-cutting priorities, the Strategic Plan includes a learning agenda on the key emerging issues facing children. Adolescent suicide, mental health, road safety and child safety online are examples of areas where UNICEF will work with partners to learn more about what works for children and develop appropriate and scalable models for response.

A. Goal Areas

28. **Goal Area 1** aims to ensure that every child survives and thrives. It supports the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture); 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages); and 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) in both humanitarian and development contexts; and supports articles 6 and 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

29. More than 40 per cent of children under five are at risk of not reaching their physical, cognitive, psychological and/or social and emotional potential due to poverty or poor health and nutrition. The underlying causes include weak delivery systems, unsafe environments and protracted humanitarian crises.

30. Infectious diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria remain the leading causes of death among children under five, with neonatal mortality accounting for a growing proportion of deaths among this age group. Malnutrition is an underlying factor in approximately half of under-five deaths, resulting in about 3 million preventable child deaths each year. Undernutrition hinders a child's development, often with lifelong consequences.

31. The HIV epidemic is still having a disproportionate impact on children. Children under five living with HIV face the highest risk of AIDS-related death. AIDS also remains a leading cause of death among adolescents. New HIV infections among adolescents are projected to rise from 250,000 in 2015 to nearly 400,000 annually by 2030 if progress in reaching adolescents stalls.

32. In this context, UNICEF, leveraging its comparative advantages in relation to those of other United Nations entities, will contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal targets on neonatal and under-five mortality; HIV and AIDS; and stunting and other forms of malnutrition, while promoting early childhood development and adolescent health and nutrition.

33. UNICEF will support Governments to identify and address bottlenecks to the availability and use of quality health, nutrition, HIV, and early childhood services. Actions will include systems strengthening, especially at the subnational and community level, and in relation to preparedness for health emergencies; enhancing the quality of care; strengthening communications for development; improving procurement and distribution

systems; improving the generation and use of disaggregated data and evidence; and better coordination with the delivery of water and sanitation services (Goal Area 4) and social protection (Goal Area 5). UNICEF will also support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for childhood diseases.

Related results* under Goal Area 1

- 250 million girls and boys (6-59 months) receive vitamin A supplements annually.
- 6 million girls and boys (6-59 months) receive services for the treatment of severe wasting and other forms of severe acute malnutrition annually.
- X² children receive measles-containing vaccine and diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis/Penta 3-containing vaccine through UNICEF-supported programmes.
- X countries have introduced the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) in the national immunization schedule.
- 1.4 million girls and boys (0-14 years) and 1.2 million adolescents (10-19 years) living with HIV receive antiretroviral therapy by 2020.

*Selected results only. See the results framework for a full list of results, indicators, baselines and targets.

34. **Goal Area 2** aims to ensure that every child learns. Education is a right enshrined in articles 28 and 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is also a driver of equity, poverty reduction, empowerment, peaceful and inclusive societies and economic growth. Educating girls is particularly transformative: evidence shows that a mother's educational attainment is a strong contributing factor in reducing child mortality and increasing her child's school attendance, among other benefits. Education has a similar intergenerational impact on sustaining peace; mounting evidence points to the strong role of equitable quality education in building peaceful, inclusive societies. Education therefore supports the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all), in both humanitarian and development contexts.

35. Globally, more than half of preschool-aged children, 61 million primary-school-aged children and 60 million lower-secondary-school-aged adolescents lack access to learning opportunities. This includes children living in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, who account for more than half of out-of-school children. One reason for limited progress is the exclusion of the poorest and other vulnerable groups, including displaced children, those affected by armed conflict, children with disabilities and minority groups.

36. By itself, however, access to education is not enough to guarantee that a child learns. Globally, an estimated 250 million children in primary school are not learning the basics of reading and mathematics. There are also large learning gaps within and between countries. Weak education system capacity and protracted crises are common underlying causes among those countries that have been unable to meet children's learning needs. Working with

² The use of "X" in this and subsequent sections of the document implies that necessary information is still being sought from country offices, and will be included in the version of the draft Strategic Plan that will be submitted for approval at the 2017 second regular session.

partners, UNICEF will emphasize strengthening education systems to ensure that schooling translates into learning outcomes, especially for the most marginalized children. Greater emphasis will be placed on deepening engagement with communities and children themselves in designing relevant education programmes, identifying and addressing exclusion and monitoring implementation. UNICEF will also work to ensure access to education for crisis-affected children and youth, including through targeted service delivery.

37. UNICEF will also focus on improving systems that develop the skills of children and adolescents throughout the life cycle for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability, both in and out of schools. These efforts will be anchored in inclusive national education and training sector policies.

Related results* under Goal Area 2

- X of the most marginalized children, including X girls, will be supported annually to access education/early learning (including 8.2 million in humanitarian crises).
- X countries will have an effective education systems for equitable access.
- 15.5 million deprived children receive learning materials.
- X countries will have an effective education system that promotes skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability.

*Selected results only. See the results framework for a full list of results and indicators.

38. **Goal Area 3** seeks to ensure that all children are protected from violence and exploitation. The duty to protect children from violence and exploitation is enshrined in numerous articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including articles 19, and 34 to 38. Goal Area 3 will directly contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)³ and 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels) in both humanitarian and development contexts.

39. Global estimates point to hundreds of millions of children experiencing some form of violence, exploitation, or harmful practice. One in 10 girls under the age of 20 has experienced forced intercourse or other sexual acts. Boys are also at risk of sexual violence. Almost 750 million girls and women were married as children, and at least 200 million girls and women have undergone female genital mutilation/cutting. In addition, hundreds of thousands of refugee and migrant children are at grave risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, including trafficking and smuggling.

40. Leveraging its comparative advantages in relation to those of other United Nations entities, UNICEF will seek to protect children from violence and exploitation, focusing on reducing violence, eliminating harmful practices against girls and enhancing children's access to justice.

41. UNICEF will focus on the specific protection needs of boys and girls and on strengthening the protective environment through critical investments in national systems,

³ In addition to Goal Area 3, Goal Areas 1, 2, 4 and 5 also contribute to specific aspects of Sustainable Development Goal 5. These will be articulated in the results framework of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021.

community dialogue and behaviour change. In particular, UNICEF will support Governments to strengthen and expand their social service infrastructure, and will work with communities to increase their capacity to protect children.

42. To ensure that children participating in justice and administrative processes are treated in accordance with international standards, UNICEF will support the strengthening of justice systems. UNICEF will also advocate for policy and legislative changes in accordance with children's rights, and will support capacity development of national human rights institutions to facilitate access to child-friendly remedies.

43. In humanitarian situations, UNICEF will support community-based approaches to psychosocial support, including through the provision of safe spaces. UNICEF will also work to prevent family separation and support reunification for unaccompanied and separated children, and will strive to prevent child recruitment and support the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups. It will seek protection for children exposed to grave violations in situations of armed conflict, strengthen capacity to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, and scale up support services to survivors.

44. UNICEF will support the monitoring of child rights violations, and will link these with timely and appropriate responses. UNICEF will advocate with all parties to a conflict to comply with international humanitarian and human rights standards.

Related results* under Goal Area 3

- X million children receive core prevention and response interventions addressing violence through UNICEF-supported programmes.
- 2.5 million girls and women are reached through UNICEF-supported child marriage prevention programmes.
- X unaccompanied and separated girls and boys are registered and receiving family tracing and reunification services and family-based care or appropriate alternative services.

*Selected results only. See the results framework for a full list of results and indicators.

45. **Goal Area 4** prioritizes a safe and clean environment for children, a right enshrined in article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Goal Area contributes to Sustainable Development Goals 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all); 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable); 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts); and 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

46. Millions of children around the world are affected by conflict and fragility, climate change, natural hazards, or unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and air pollution. A safe and clean environment for children is more important than ever.

47. Access to safe water, improved sanitation and proper hygiene is vital to children's well-being. It contributes to good health and nutrition (Goal Area 1), quality learning (Goal Area 2), and dignity, especially for women and girls. Recent decades have seen significant advances in expanding access to improved water and sanitation. But the "unfinished business" remains sizeable: an estimated 2.4 billion people still lack access to improved sanitation and 663 million people lack access to improved drinking water sources.

48. The environment for children living in cities also has a major impact on their well-being. Today, more than half of the world's children live in cities. It is imperative that city planning is responsive to the rights of children and that children's voices and those of their communities are part of the urban development process.

49. Some 28 per cent of the world's children live in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, a figure projected to increase to one third by 2030. Climate change and natural disasters also pose grave risks to children: more than half a billion children live in areas with an extremely high flood risk, and nearly 160 million children live in high, or extremely high, drought severity zones.

50. To address the challenges related to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), UNICEF will continue to work with partners to strengthen national systems, with particular attention to gender considerations. UNICEF will also support initiatives for WASH in schools and health centres, taking into account the specific needs of girls and children living with disabilities. Complementary efforts will focus on community platforms to address behavioural and social barriers to WASH.

51. In humanitarian situations, UNICEF will provide life-saving access to safe water and will support sanitation and hygiene, with a special focus on access to toilets and promoting critical hygiene practices.

52. UNICEF will support municipalities to extend essential services to the poorest urban communities; work with local authorities to make city planning child-responsive; and strengthen the evidence base on children in cities.

53. Through risk-informed programming, UNICEF will support countries to make the policies and programmes related to climate change, disaster risk reduction and peacebuilding responsive to the needs of children, and will strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus by supporting systems to better prepare for, respond to and recover from shocks and stresses.

Related results* under Goal Area 4

- 60 million more people access safe drinking water services.
- 150 million more people access basic sanitation services.
- X countries have a child-sensitive national disaster management plan.
- X countries have data on intra-urban disparities including children in informal settings.

*Selected results only. See the results framework for a full list of results and indicators.

54. **Goal Area 5** aims to address the key dimensions of inequity that prevent children from realizing their rights. It supports the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere); 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls); and 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries); and supports articles 2, 23, 26 and 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

55. Much of the deprivation experienced by the most disadvantaged children is as a result of their being girls or young women, children with disabilities, children living in poverty, or children from certain ethnic or linguistic groups.

56. Leveraging its comparative advantages in relation to those of other United Nations entities, the UNICEF key priorities for Goal Area 5 include addressing inequitable roles and

practices among girls and boys, enhancing support for children with disabilities, reducing multidimensional child poverty, strengthening social protection for children and promoting adolescent empowerment.

57. To promote gender equality, UNICEF will seek to address discriminatory policies as well as the socialization processes that define gender roles and practices, and will support girls and boys to transform social narratives and promote behaviour change. Initiatives will include parenting and early childhood programmes, community engagement, adolescent outreach and life skills, gender-responsive training for frontline workers, and support for legal and policy change.

58. Children with disabilities are among the most marginalized of all children. They are less likely to attend school, access medical services, or have their voices heard. They are often excluded from receiving humanitarian assistance and are at higher risk of physical abuse. Disability traps people into poverty and further marginalizes children already at risk of exclusion.

59. UNICEF will continue supporting countries to address the many barriers that impede results for children with disabilities, with the aim of providing inclusive services. Furthermore, UNICEF will continue to invest in the generation and use of data on children with disabilities.

60. Poverty has lifelong consequences for children. Children are two times more likely than adults to be living in poverty, and a child living in poverty is also more likely to grow into an adult living in poverty.

61. UNICEF will support Governments to routinely measure and report on multidimensional child poverty, and will also support the adoption of national plans and budgets to address child poverty. UNICEF will continue working to expand and improve cash transfers for the most disadvantaged children, and to strengthen national social protection systems. In humanitarian contexts, UNICEF will implement cash transfer programmes that can form the basis of broader social protection programmes in future.

62. Adolescence is a crucial developmental period that profoundly influences the life trajectories of girls and boys in dramatically different ways. Too often the specific needs of adolescents are not prioritized, yet they have the potential to become powerful agents of positive change. Support for adolescent girls, in particular, has a multiplier effect for intergenerational outcomes.

63. To promote their empowerment, UNICEF will support national policies and service delivery systems that are responsive to the needs of adolescents. It will promote platforms for the systematic participation of adolescents in decisions that impact their lives and communities, and will support programmes that nurture them as informed social actors and peacebuilders.

Related results* under Goal Area 5

- X countries with at-scale programmes that address gender discriminatory roles and practices among children.
- 40 million additional children are covered by social protection programmes.
- X adolescent girls and boys participate in, or lead, civic engagement initiatives through UNICEF-supported programmes.
- X children with disabilities access assistive devices through UNICEF-supported programmes.

*Selected results only. See the results framework for a full list of results and indicators.

B. Cross-cutting priorities**Humanitarian action**

64. Principled humanitarian action is a core part of the UNICEF mandate and a cross-cutting priority of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021. The results framework outlines specific indicators on the organization's work in humanitarian situations.

65. The continuing trend of complex and protracted humanitarian crises poses grave risks to children's well-being. To protect children in humanitarian crises while preserving progress against the 2030 Agenda, UNICEF will contribute to efforts aimed at building resilient and responsive national, subnational and community systems and peaceful, inclusive societies, while responding to immediate human suffering.

66. Systematic preparedness action in advance of crises has demonstrated significant returns on investment. UNICEF will continue to promote risk-informed programming, increase its contribution to systems strengthening, and support children and their families to anticipate, withstand and quickly recover from shocks and stresses. UNICEF will also work with other United Nations entities, and with partners beyond the United Nations family, to promote joint analyses that cut across all pillars of the work of the United Nations.

67. At the same time, UNICEF will continue to strengthen its ability to deliver on its Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, focusing on a faster, more effective and at-scale humanitarian response. This will include a renewed emphasis on increasing the reach and quality of humanitarian assistance and ensuring the centrality of protection, with particular attention to grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict.

Gender equality

68. The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is central to the UNICEF mandate and the organizational focus on equity. Important progress has been achieved in promoting gender equality worldwide, including reductions in maternal mortality, increased gender parity in primary schooling and a reduction in the prevalence of child marriage. Yet much remains to be done. Rates of mortality and morbidity among women and girls in the least developed countries are still high. In many countries, girls continue to be less valued than boys and have fewer opportunities to survive and thrive. Around one quarter of young women were married before the age of 18, and one fifth become mothers before that age.

69. In fragile, conflict-affected and disaster-prone contexts, the specific needs of women and girls are often overlooked, and violations against them – including sexual violence – are commonplace. Boys, meanwhile, are exposed to specific risks in crisis situations; for example, they are more likely to be recruited into armed groups, or to face detention.

70. Building on the Gender Action Plan, 2014-2017, as well as system-wide efforts to promote gender equality, gender results are integrated into each of the five Goal Areas of the Strategic Plan. These results include quality maternal care; menstrual hygiene management; women's and girls' nutrition; equitable learning and skills for girls and boys; reducing child marriage; and transforming gender discriminatory roles and practices. In addition to gender-equitable outcomes, there is a strong emphasis on addressing some of the barriers to the empowerment of adolescent girls. The Gender Action Plan, 2018-2021 will capture the full scope of actions.

Partnerships

71. In addition to its collaborative work with UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, to achieve results under the Strategic Plan, UNICEF will rely on strong partnerships with other members of the United Nations family, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Department of Peacekeeping Operations; Department of Political Affairs; International Labour Organization; Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict; Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Food Programme; and World Health Organization.

72. UNICEF will continue to strengthen its critical partnerships with Governments. Collaboration with civil society partners will remain essential, including continued engagement with international non-governmental organizations, global foundations and academic institutions. Strategic and operational partnerships will be solidified with international financial institutions, including the World Bank and the regional development banks. UNICEF will also expand its collaboration with the business community to leverage their core assets on behalf of children.

73. In addition, UNICEF will work with others to strengthen sector-specific partnerships, including the Early Childhood Development Action Network; Education Cannot Wait; Every Woman Every Child; Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition; GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance; Global Coalition to End Child Poverty; Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; Global Partnership for Education; Global Partnership to End Violence against Children; Global Polio Eradication Initiative; Scaling Up Nutrition movement; United Nations Girls' Education Initiative; and United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

74. In humanitarian situations, UNICEF will continue to invest in its role as cluster lead agency in nutrition, WASH and education, as well as its leadership role in the areas of responsibility for child protection and gender-based violence.

III. Change strategies

75. This Strategic Plan outlines the change strategies (the HOW) for the achievement of results under the five Goal Areas. UNICEF delivers change by combining high-quality programmes at scale, harnessing innovation and collecting evidence, in partnership with Governments, other United Nations partners, civil society, the private sector, communities and children. It uses these to leverage wider change nationally and globally through advocacy, communications and campaigning. UNICEF also builds public support around the world to volunteer, advocate and mobilize resources for the cause of children, and works with partners to achieve an even greater impact. The key change strategies UNICEF will focus on during 2018-2021 include:

76. *Programming excellence for at-scale results for children.* UNICEF will foster cross-sectoral and multisectoral programming that provides a holistic response to children and to the environment in which they live. It will support policy, capacity development and systems strengthening at the national and subnational levels to improve the delivery of essential services to the most disadvantaged children. UNICEF will also focus on enhancing at-scale capacity for humanitarian action; promoting risk-informed programming to reinforce the humanitarian-development nexus; strengthening gender-responsive programming; and promoting behaviour change and demand for services. Promoting cooperation, sharing lessons learned and fostering innovation and partnerships through South-South and triangular cooperation will also be emphasized

77. *Winning support for the cause of children from decision makers and the wider public.* UNICEF will become an even stronger advocacy, campaigning, fundraising and communications force for children, working with others to build alliances and movements for change. Through this public engagement, the organization will make progress towards the goal of recruiting 100 million supporters to the cause of children, to volunteer, advocate and give. This strategy also includes strengthening the UNICEF brand, and supporting young people and children as agents of change.

78. *Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children.* UNICEF will influence domestic financing and budgeting for children. It will also have a strong focus on mobilizing resources from Governments and the private sector – including individuals, foundations and corporations – to maximize longer-term, flexible and predictable funds in support of UNICEF programmes and advocacy for children.

79. *Harnessing the power of business and markets for children.* UNICEF will continue to leverage the power of private sector partners to improve the lives of children around the world, harnessing their core business and innovation, and advocating for them to uphold child rights. UNICEF will continue to influence global and local markets for children, including pursuing a research and development pipeline of vaccines, medicines and technologies for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal targets. This will require attention to reducing market barriers that inhibit access to essential supplies for children.

80. *United Nations working together.* In alignment with the 2016 QCPR, UNICEF will work with other United Nations entities to strengthen system coherence with a view to achieving better results for children and more integrated approaches to the 2030 Agenda. Efforts will focus on: promoting UNDAFs that are more strategic, aligned with national priorities and based on common needs assessments; enhancing the quality and depth of engagement in country-level results groups; leading or co-leading groups within relevant areas of strategic focus and comparative advantage; and implementing the Standard

Operating Procedures for Delivering as One. UNICEF will also collaborate with United Nations development system partners to develop system-wide actions for cross-cutting issues such as the reduction of poverty and inequality; gender equality and empowerment of women and girls; humanitarian-development integration; climate change; and disaggregated data for sustainable development. The respective Strategic Plans will propose indicators to track actions by the four entities in support of these five areas. Where appropriate, shared results will also be pursued at the field level through UNDAFs or related instruments.

81. *Fostering innovation for children.* This will include a renewed emphasis on the use of technologies to better engage communities and enhance social accountability. This change strategy will also involve identifying the most promising innovations for application in different contexts while supporting partners to adopt, adapt and scale up the most successful approaches.

82. *Harnessing the power of evidence as a driver of change for children.* Evaluations, research and data are key elements of sound programming, advocacy and leveraging partnerships for children. There will be a strong focus on research, policy analysis and evaluation of what works for children, and an emphasis on the collection and analysis of disaggregated data, while filling research and evaluation gaps on the evolving risks and opportunities for children. It will also involve a stronger focus on fragile situations and humanitarian crises, which require a deeper understanding of the specific risks to children and women triggered by different shocks and hazards.

IV. Operational effectiveness and efficiency

83. The Strategic Plan sets out a variety of measures to improve the internal effectiveness and efficiency of UNICEF (the ENABLERS). Enablers support the delivery of results and change strategies and are composed of four interconnected elements: (a) internal governance, as UNICEF continues its transformation into a more transparent and accountable organization; (b) management, focused on results, efficiency, effectiveness and collaboration; (c) people, including a workforce that is versatile, diverse, empowered and mobile across different contexts and sectors; and (d) knowledge and information systems that contribute to programmatic results or organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

84. *Internal governance.* UNICEF will continue to enhance its comparative advantages, including a mandate that covers the breadth of the humanitarian-development continuum, a strong field presence, significant programme and operations capacity across multiple sectors, and the ability to forge partnerships with United Nations entities and others at global, regional and country levels. UNICEF will continue to invest the majority of its resources in the least developed countries while pursuing work in other contexts in support of national priorities and in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In high-income countries, UNICEF will continue to be guided by Executive Board decision 2016/11 on the most appropriate type of engagement.

85. UNICEF will manage emerging risks through an updated enterprise risk management (ERM) framework that allows senior managers to use a single, comprehensive methodology. The updated ERM policy will support well-managed risk-taking and mitigating strategies.

86. Risk will also be managed by being even more transparent. UNICEF will build on its current solid ranking in the Aid Transparency Index by providing more frequent data on results and resources.

87. Furthermore, UNICEF will introduce an anti-fraud strategy articulating measures to strengthen deterrence, prevention and detection of fraud, including risks related to implementing partners and contractors. It will also identify a pathway for remedial action and recovery of losses.
88. Further efforts will be made to mainstream value-for-money considerations in decisions related to programmes and management.
89. Oversight functions will receive increased attention. Internal audit will continue to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal controls and its recommendations will strengthen the organization's risk management. Evaluation will continue to support the organization's work across all areas. The Evaluation Policy will be revised following an external peer review in 2017, focusing on improving the quality and use of evaluations, especially at the country level. UNICEF will continue to move towards the target of a minimum of 1 per cent of programme expenditures for evaluations.
90. UNICEF is committed to making its offices accessible and inclusive for all, and is also working to improve the eco-efficiency of its operations. This will result in lower operational costs and a lighter environmental footprint, and will help to deliver on the organization's commitment to maintain a safe and healthy environment for children.
91. *Management.* Building on previous work to strengthen the application of results-based management (RBM), UNICEF will increase staff training on RBM, and will strengthen results-based budgeting through the adoption of a new budget formulation tool.
92. UNICEF will continue to strengthen its Global Shared Services Centre for the delivery of efficient services. Through vertical integration and economies of scale, UNICEF will achieve cost savings and further reduce processing time, thus increasing staff time available for programme oversight.
93. By leveraging the skills and best practices of other United Nations entities, UNICEF will pursue horizontal integration through a Business Operations Strategy that aims to simplify and harmonize business processes. Particular emphasis will be placed on consolidation and enhanced quality of support services, collaborative procurement and common premises.
94. Flexible approaches to the deployment of staff and the establishment of business operations will be pursued. A more versatile and mobile staff, supported by advances in information and communications technology (ICT), will expand the reach and power of UNICEF actions. This will include adopting non-traditional operating modalities, such as assigning staff to work remotely, or in regional hubs.
95. *People.* UNICEF supports its staff at all levels through processes and systems aimed at:
- (a) ensuring the right people are in the right place at the right time;
 - (b) providing clarity on what is expected of staff, and ensuring they are equipped to deliver on those expectations;
 - (c) fostering a culture of continuous learning as well as professional and personal growth; and
 - (d) maintaining staff motivation and engagement, and an environment that allows everyone to contribute to their full potential.

96. Given the need for increasingly flexible options for deployment, staff must be able to meet new challenges wherever they occur, with a wide range of technical capabilities, core skills and knowledge.

97. UNICEF will continue to evaluate the performance of each individual, the organization will also increasingly focus on assessing and recognizing office-level contributions to results.

98. In line with the QCPR, UNICEF will continue its efforts to achieve gender and geographic balance in appointments at all levels, with due regard to female candidates and nationals from programme countries.

99. *Knowledge and information systems.* As UNICEF strengthens its position as a knowledge leader and advocate for children, it will require continued investment in knowledge-sharing and information management. This includes building digital engagement and fundraising platforms and leveraging social media to catalyse millions of volunteers for the cause of children.

100. To facilitate knowledge transfer and exchange, UNICEF will provide staff with the tools needed to support interactions and active collaboration with other United Nations System staff, partners and others, and will work to improve knowledge resources.

101. Governance of ICT will continue to be strengthened. New digital platforms, data sources and analytics, integrated with existing systems, will reduce inefficiencies and duplication and will manage various types of data for knowledge exchange. An overarching goal will be to provide connectivity and access to information and systems to all staff, regardless of their location or specific role.

102. In so doing, it will be critical to adhere to transparency principles and to deliver open source solutions to the greatest extent possible. This will entail increasing awareness around information and cybersecurity, and ensuring a solid enterprise architecture of core information systems that can harbour safe data for UNICEF as well as its partners and beneficiaries, while ensuring institutional resilience and business continuity, and keeping in mind 'green' thinking. The UNICEF response in emergencies will also expand from providing core telecommunications and Internet access to including crisis information management and use of geospatial technologies.

V. Risk management

103. In a changing world, an effective risk management framework that identifies and mitigates risk, while being firmly oriented towards enabling the organization to deliver, is critical. UNICEF has identified several risks that have the potential to limit the full roll out of the Strategic Plan. These include: siloed operations and funding arrangements; insufficient resources to implement the 2030 Agenda; unpredictable humanitarian crises and their lasting effects on children; inadequate implementation and monitoring capacity, particularly in sudden and complex emergencies; a varying focus on results for children among United Nations partners working together; inadequate establishment of systems and procedures for United Nations partners working together; rapidly evolving technological requirements; and challenges related to results-based budgeting in a decentralized organization.

104. The change strategies and enablers discussed above are explicitly designed to help to mitigate these risks, in particular through their emphasis on flexibility and agility – in systems, human resources, funding and management arrangements – and on partnerships and new technologies.

105. A team approach to implementation will help to overcome silos, as will flexible funding that allows UNICEF to leverage and commit resources where they are most needed. New resource partnerships, particularly through harnessing the power of business and markets, will be key in this regard, and will also help to mitigate the risk of insufficient resource mobilization. Limited capacity among some partners to monitor results can be overcome with continued investment in systems to gather, analyse and use evidence. Stronger community engagement enabled by innovative technologies will promote accountability for performance. A mobile, versatile workforce, enabled by agile deployment arrangements, will strengthen implementation capacity where it is most needed, including in sudden-onset emergencies, and flexibility in business operations will increase interoperability with key United Nations partners.

106. Robust ICT systems will be essential to achieving this flexibility, and to keeping pace with the risks and opportunities posed by rapidly evolving technology. They will also be vital for strong performance management systems that ensure resources are properly aligned to results. The integrated results and resources framework and new budget formulation tool will also be key, as will the planned guidance on value for money. A detailed discussion of the risks and mitigating strategies is described in a separate paper on the theory of change for the Strategic Plan, which will be presented to the Executive Board for information at its 2017 second regular session.

VI. Monitoring and evaluation

107. The results framework will outline impact- and outcome-level indicators of the Strategic Plan, largely derived from the Sustainable Development Goals. Baselines, annual milestones and end-of-cycle targets for output indicators will help to track the UNICEF contribution to the Goals. Monitoring information from all levels of the organization will be made available to the public through the UNICEF Transparency Portal <<http://open.unicef.org>>. The annual report of the Executive Director to the Executive Board will continue to serve as the vehicle for reporting on progress towards the Strategic Plan targets. The mid-term review of the Strategic Plan will provide opportunities for reflection and adjustment on the basis of lessons learned.

108. For purposes of monitoring the Strategic Plan, UNICEF will continue to strengthen its data and information systems, including expanding use of the organizational performance monitoring system (inSight). Improved knowledge-sharing platforms will facilitate the exchange of good practices across the organization and with United Nations partners and others. Internal guidance and the recently developed RBM learning package will facilitate translation of the Strategic Plan into sector strategies and country programmes. Introduction of the budget formulation tool will reinforce results-based budgeting principles by facilitating a bottom-up estimation of resource requirements.

109. UNICEF will also focus on enhancing the capacity of key systems at the country level, including information management and accountability systems, to provide more timely and better quality information for decision makers. In line with the QCPR, UNICEF will enhance evaluation capacity at country level. On the basis of broad consultations, UNICEF will design and implement a new plan for independent corporate evaluations, addressing key elements of the Strategic Plan, and will give increased attention to the sharing and uptake of evaluation evidence.

VII. Conclusion

110. The world is changing faster than ever before, and so too are the threats and challenges facing its children. Yet children's rights remain the same – immutable, indivisible and universal. To meet these challenges and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, UNICEF and its many partners must be sufficiently nimble and adaptable to respond to these changing dynamics while remaining steadfast in its core mandate to promote the fulfilment of children's rights. The Goal Areas, change strategies and enablers outlined in this Strategic Plan position UNICEF to meet this challenge and to deliver lasting results for children, bringing the organization closer to realizing the vision of the 2030 Agenda, a world where no child is left behind.

Annex

Table 1 — Integrated resource plan, 2018-2021

The completed table will be presented at the 2017 second regular session of the Executive Board, in conjunction with the UNICEF integrated budget, 2018-2021

	2014-2017							2018-2021						
	Regular resources		Other resources		Total resources		Trust funds	Regular resources		Other resources		Total resources		Trust funds
			Programmes	Cost recovery						Programmes	Cost recovery			
	\$m	%	\$m	\$m	\$m	%	\$m	\$m	%	\$m	\$m	\$m	%	\$m
1. Resources available														
Opening balance														
Income														
Contributions														
Other income														
Total income														
Trust funds														
Tax reimbursement adjustment														
Total available														
2. Use of resources														
A Development														
A.1 Programmes														
A.2 Development effectiveness														
Subtotal														
B United Nations development coordination														
C Management														
C.1 Recurring														
C.2 Non-recurring														
Subtotal														

D Special purpose														
D.1 Capital investments														
D.2 Private sector fundraising														
D.3 Other														
Subtotal														

Institutional budget (A.2+B+C+D.1)														
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Integrated budget (A+B+C+D)														
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Table 2 — Integrated results and resources framework, 2018-2021

The completed table will be presented at the 2017 second regular session of the Executive Board, in conjunction with the UNICEF integrated budget, 2018-2021

Outcome/result	Functional cluster	2018-2021			
		Regular resources	Other resources		Total resources
			Programme	Cost recovery	
\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m		
Programmes (WHAT)					
Change strategies (HOW)					
Organizational effectiveness and efficiency (ENABLERS)					
Special purpose					
Capital investments					
Private sector fundraising					
Other, including procurement services					
Total use of resources					