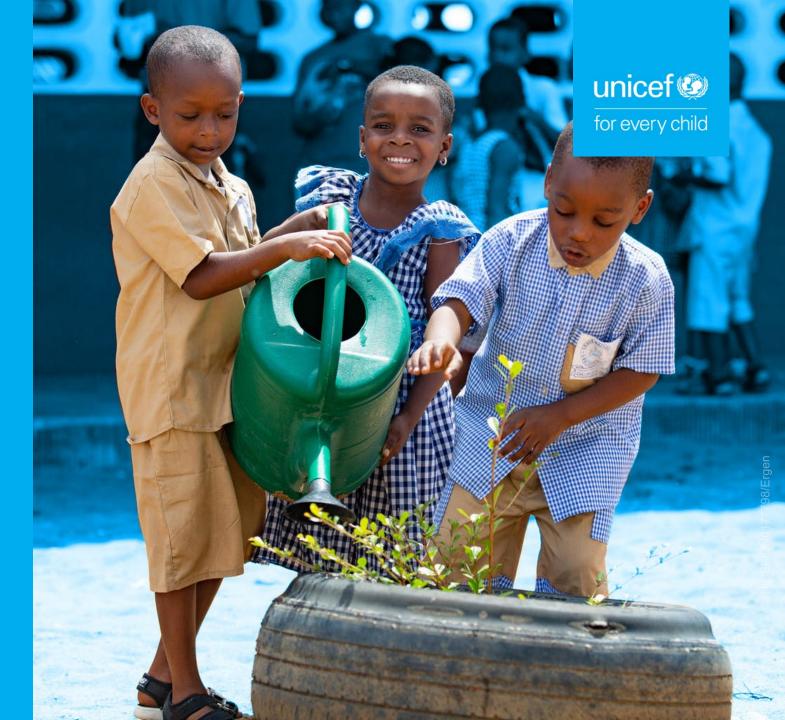
Evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency (CLARE II)

Robert McCouch
Director of Evaluation

UNICEF Executive Board – 2022 annual session – 14–17 June 2022

Item 7: Evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency

Reference document: E/ICEF/2022/19



Evaluation purpose, scope and approach

- Objective and purpose: provide an updated assessment of how well UNICEF is fulfilling its cluster lead agency (CLA) responsibilities since the last evaluation 7 years ago, and offer insights and recommendations for improvements in the exercise of this role
- Scope: covers global, regional and country-level perspectives (from 9 "focus" countries); WASH, Education, Nutrition, Child Protection with equal attention; both coordination and leadership aspects of CLA role
- Approach: mixed methods collecting, synthesizing and triangulating qualitative and quantitative evidence from internal and external sources



Overarching findings

- UNICEF has generally delivered on the coordination responsibilities of its CLA role
- UNICEF worked to ensure that clusters have dedicated capacity and tools in place; produced policies/guidance; and provided technical/operational support
- Since the CLARE I, there have been achievements in the staffing of coordination positions in countries
- However, staffing gaps remain at the country level; clusters have taken on more tasks, often at the expense of more strategic work



Overarching findings

- There are positive examples of CLA leadership
- However, UNICEF has not performed as consistently well in its leadership responsibilities
- The role of the CLA is not a "shared responsibility"
- Cluster coordinator positions are not sufficiently incentivized within UNICEF (limited career path)
- Co-leadership arrangements at country level have often been reduced to practical divisions of labour, resulting in missed opportunities
- CLA accountability has sometimes been elusive; the provider of last resort concept remains unclear
- There has been limited direction, from UNICEF as CLA, on how clusters should implement key policy issues (centrality of protection; accountability to affected populations; humanitarian-development nexus and localization of aid)





3 overarching recommendations

Recommendation 1: Renew the recognition that the CLA role is a core imperative of the UNICEF mandate.

Recommendation 2: Better align UNICEF internal systems with its CLA responsibilities.

Recommendation 3: More actively contribute to strategic discussions within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in order to keep the cluster approach "fit for purpose".

Overall, the recommendations:

- speak to the need to weave across UNICEF systems a greater level of commitment and accountability for the CLA role; and
- represent a second opportunity for UNICEF to tackle some of the outstanding obstacles that have hampered performance of the CLA role to the fullest.

