



New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations  
Te Aka Aorere

**UNICEF Executive Board:**

**Second Regular Session 2022**

**Item 8: Update on Oversight Matters**

Delivered by: Rachael Pringle, First Secretary

6 September 2022

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



Thank you President.

Aotearoa New Zealand has appreciated the opportunity to engage both formally and informally with the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations and its counterparts, and better understand the variations between their settings.

Oversight and accountability are not the 'front-office' of the UN, but they are crucial in maintaining the trust and confidence of Member States and the global public. As we have repeatedly seen, scandals relating to financial or sexual misconduct in one agency can tarnish the others as well and tend to be long-remembered. Loss of trust adds further obstacles to agencies' front-line delivery and their fund-raising endeavours.

In this context, it seems clear to us that fully resourcing audit and investigation functions, and indeed investing in additional risk mitigation measures, is a prudent allocation of agency funds. Timely oversight changes the risk-calculus for potential wrong-doers, and limits the length and scope of any damage they may inflict.

Fully resourced accountability offices are also more clearly independent of the agencies they oversee: there can be no suggestion that budgets may be used to reward or disincentivise investigation decisions or outcomes.

Aotearoa New Zealand is a long-standing supporter of multi-year core funding, and regrets that core funding continues to decline as a percentage of agency incomes. We encourage other donors to recognise that the global community cannot lift its expectations with regards to the prompt and robust treatment of sexual and financial malfeasance without also ensuring appropriate resources are available to meet these expectations.

Aotearoa New Zealand encourages agencies to build the full cost of oversight into their project funding to ensure projects are not delivered at the expense of agency capability and credibility. Such an explicit commitment to oversight would also provide reassurance to project funders that their moneys are being effectively and honestly spent.

Through this and previous governance-strengthening processes, Aotearoa New Zealand has also taken to heart the fundamental role Member States have to understand and meet their governance obligations, and the lasting consequences of lapses in Board attention or knowledge. We look forward to working with others to identify how we might better fulfil these duties, and also ensure that lessons learnt by each Board and agency are shared, as appropriate, with counterparts across the UN system.

As the old saying has it, an ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure. We enthusiastically endorse activities within the agencies, oversight offices and Boards to strengthen systems, reduce risk, and respond robustly to wrong-doing.