

First regular session of the UNICEF Executive Board (February 7-10, 2023)

Item 11: Private Fundraising and Partnerships: 2023 Workplan and proposed budget

New York, February 7, 2023

Statement by H.E. Mr. Olivier Maes,

Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg

Madam President,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Moldova, Montenegro, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States and my own country Luxembourg.

At the outset, we would like to thank UNICEF for their presentation.

We welcome UNICEF's enhanced private sector engagement, particularly in the context of increasing financing challenges. The surge in private sector revenue in 2022, both from existing and new private donors, and its significant contribution to both UNICEF's core resources and other resources revenue, shows the potential of increased private sector partnerships and engagement.

We commend UNICEF's inclusive approach, based on close collaboration with its 33 National Committees for UNICEF and its country offices, which play a key role in securing global visibility for children's causes and maximising financial contributions from the private sector.

We look forward to seeing progress on the implementation of the four outcomes of the private sector fundraising and partnerships workplan for 2023, to generate income and influence private sector business practices that impact children at scale, as a means to contribute to the delivery of UNICEF's Strategic Plan results.

The efforts to date of UNICEF's Division of Private Fundraising and Partnership, have been instrumental in accelerating partnerships with the private sector and advocating for the consideration of children's needs and rights by businesses and private donors. Investments made in digital capabilities and the collaboration with the UNICEF Programme Group, strengthening country office capacity to engage with businesses, have been important steps. We encourage UNICEF – especially regarding the new innovative financing instruments – to ensure consistent and transparent reporting on their development in this annual report.

We consider that targeted communication towards the private sector and private donors will likely continue to be a key ingredient for future success. Therefore, continued close collaboration with UNICEF's Division of Global Communication and Advocacy and its Information and Communication Technology Division will be crucial. Engaging promising new markets for private sector fundraising and investment, based on its private sector resource mobilization network, will be equally important. Furthermore, collaboration with International Financial Institutions and Development Finance Institutions, as well as the broader financial sector, can help to leverage new sources of funding for children.

In this context, we welcome UNICEF's innovative finance approach, with its focus on specific high-impact funding mechanisms and pilot projects. We would have appreciated receiving a copy of the innovative financing strategy for children (IF4C) and more details in advance and look forward to learning more about it during the session this upcoming Friday. The World Bank instrument to facilitate sustained investment in private sector fundraising could be an example in this regard. We look forward to reviewing and discussing a more detailed performance assessment of this instrument at the Annual Session.

It is important that these operations are in full compliance with all relevant policies and procedures, and conducted in a transparent manner, also in view of potential risks to regular resources. Robust governance systems and accountability and oversight mechanisms need to be in place, comprehensive due diligence be carried out when engaging with external partners and financial instruments, and a regular exchange of information with the Executive Board needs to be ensured. Given the financial and reputational risks, full compliance with UNICEF's Financial Regulations and Rules, as established by the Executive Board, is required.

Member States and Development Finance Institutions, where their domestic regulations permit, can contribute to strengthening private fundraising and partnerships by reducing risk and involving the private sector through guarantees, matching funds, or other relevant instruments. We recognize that the commitment of private philanthropists, foundations and corporations to advancing the rights and well-being of children can be an important complement to, but not a substitute for, the contributions of Member States.

In closing, we encourage UNICEF to continue its efforts in relation to private sector fundraising and partnerships, and to seek synergies with other UN funds and programs, in a spirit of complementarity and comparative advantage. This will be crucial to generate the necessary resources to bring about transformative change for children and to ensure that no child is left behind.

I thank you, Madam President.