

**Joint statement for agenda item 13:
Update on UNICEF engagement with the international
financial institutions**

Madam President,

I deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Republic of Moldova, Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkiye, United Kingdom, United States, the EU as a donor, and my own country, Greece.

We welcome this update on engagement between UNICEF and the international financial institutions. This partnership is increasingly important in the context of mounting global challenges and a widening SDG financing gap in developing countries, which is estimated to have increased by at least 50% due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We commend UNICEF for deepening collaboration with the IFIs and the work undertaken to date to bolster these partnerships at all levels, including through dedicated resource and capacity building. It is critical that these partnerships translate to tangible progress on the ground - improving the lives of the most vulnerable who continue to be disproportionately impacted by interlinked crises. In this regard, we appreciate the examples of success shared by UNICEF, as well as lessons learned to date.

We encourage UNICEF to continue to diversify their funding base and build financial resilience particularly as pressures on ODA budgets continue to grow. We recognize that collaboration with IFIs supplements rather than substitutes traditional donor assistance. A full range of financing instruments between the UN and multilateral development banks is needed to scale up investments and fulfil the commitments we have all made to deliver on the SDGs.

We welcome UNICEF's role as a trusted and credible partner for supporting IFI-financed programmes across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. We hope that this joint work also provides added value in strengthening these fields when it comes to UNICEF's efforts to improve its capabilities implementing the Strategic Plan. Indeed, partnering with IFIs in fragile and humanitarian crises brings tremendous opportunities to deliver for children.

And protecting development gains from the risks posed by increases in fragility, conflict and violence will be key. With the World Bank and the IMF increasingly engaging on these issues, there is a clear opportunity for the UN to deepen its collaboration with the IFIs further, capitalising on one another's comparative advantages.

We have 4 questions to UNICEF.

First, how are you working with the IFIs in developing joint analysis and strategies at the country level, including

through use of UNDS reform tools, such as Common Country Analysis and Cooperation Frameworks?

Second, how are you working to balance risks with the expected impact of investments and improve agility within the partnerships?

Third, how are you actively working with the IFIs to overcome impediments such as direct contracting or divergent policies, rules and regulations, to enhance cooperation and ensure maximum impact?

Fourth, what steps are you taking to ensure that IFI support complements the humanitarian response in crisis-affected areas and helps build longer-term resilience of communities and countries?

Let me finish by thanking UNICEF for explicitly outlining what support is needed from Member States. Where applicable, we will continue to voice our support for enhanced IFI-UN agency collaboration in the respective governing bodies and leverage our own partnerships with IFIs to further strengthen collaboration, at global, regional and country levels.

We encourage a continued open dialogue with the Executive Board on IFI collaboration as UNICEF takes forward new initiatives outlined during 2023.

Thank you.