

Annual Session of the UNICEF Executive Board

13-16 June 2023

Joint statement on Item 3 – Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF

Mr. President, Madam Executive Director, I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country Norway.

Let me begin by commending UNICEF for progress achieved in 2022, particularly in light of the invasion of Ukraine and the global repercussions, the ongoing threat of climate change, severe and protracted humanitarian crises across the world as well as pushback against child rights and gender equality. We note particularly the efforts of UNICEF related to vaccine delivery, your work on under- and malnutrition, on education, particularly inclusive education, on child marriage and on inclusive social security nets. We welcome the efforts to strengthen innovative approaches in different areas of work within UNICEF, including the important work of the Office of Innovation. Disaggregation of data is key to ensure that we are reaching the most vulnerable, and we commend UNICEF for continued improvements when it comes to both disaggregation by gender and by disabilities. We recognize the efforts of UNICEF leadership and staff at all levels in collectively achieving these results and protecting children's rights.

As this report marks the beginning of the reporting period for the current strategic plan, it provides an opportunity to focus both on what has been achieved so far and to look towards the future. The UN as a whole, and UNICEF with its special mandate, has a key role to push the normative agenda globally as well as at a national level. While we welcome your continued normative work on the rights of the child, we would welcome more information on how this approach is integrated across your work.

In the future, we would also encourage UNICEF to include additional reporting on joint UN efforts and joint reporting at country level, and on the impacts of these efforts. In addition, we would welcome more thorough reporting on systems-strengthening and on cross cutting issues.

To have sufficient and reliable data on progress becomes even more important as we approach year 2030. In anticipation of the annual report in 2026 we encourage UNICEF to prepare for an analysis of results and progress over the entire period 2022 - 2025. UNICEF's reporting on the goals as defined in the strategic plan is central for us as Member States. Qualitative financing, as per the commitments in the Funding Compact, rely on transparent, timely reporting to provide the necessary oversight of Outcome-level results. Accountability, for what is often collective results for the UN-system, is pivotal to maintain support for flexible funding modalities.

It has never been more important to ensure we are doing our outmost to achieve results for children of the world – our children. A good system of accountability is at the core of translating contributions to results on the ground. We commend UNICEF for their efforts in this regard, and the rapid implementation of the recommendations made by the Joint

Inspection Unit. We encourage UNICEF to continue to follow up on the remaining recommendations classified as outside the sole remit of the organisation, both related to more coordination of the follow up of implementing partners. We believe closer collaboration in this field will translate to even higher demonstrated impact on the ground.

We wish to end by commending UNICEF for your consistent efforts to achieve, and demonstrate, progress in achieving your mandate. You can count on our support in helping UNICEF fulfil its global mandate for the rights of children.