

**UNICEF Executive Board  
Annual Session, 13–16 June 2023**

**Opening remarks by the President of the Executive Board  
H. E. Ms. Marie-Louise Koch Wegter  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations  
(13 June 2023)**

Distinguished delegates:

I look forward to engaging, focused and constructive exchanges over the next few days as we progress through the 19 agenda items for the session, which include 11 draft decisions. I am confident that our discussions, as always, will keep the rights, protection and betterment of the lives of children at the centre of our focus, and that we will keep politics out of the boardroom.

Let me give you a brief overview of the work ahead of us. This morning, we will start by considering the 2022 annual report of the Executive Director, which is the first report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2022–2025. This item will also include UNICEF report on recommendations from the Joint Inspection Unit in 2022. In the afternoon, we will consider the annual report on humanitarian action, which sounds the alarm on the large number of children in need of humanitarian assistance and reports on efforts by UNICEF to manage these extreme needs. Also, this afternoon, we will hear updates on UNICEF work on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and on organizational culture and diversity.

Tomorrow morning, we will focus on evaluation, audit and oversight matters, including the evaluation of UNICEF response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The draft revised evaluation policy is being shared for our review and additional comments ahead of its presentation for adoption at the September Board. The evaluation function is, of course, if allowed to work independently of organizational interests, a very important function for, not only UNICEF, but also for us as [the] Executive Board to our governance and oversight function. So, I urge all members of the Board to engage in this last iteration of the evaluation policy before its adoption in September.

We will also get a preliminary assessment of the so-called World Bank instrument. This is an innovative instrument and the Executive Board may, at some point, need to decide on its continuation. It is also an instrument that may inspire other UN agencies, so also for that reason the Executive Board should pay close attention to this assessment.

Tomorrow, we will also be presented with the annual reports on private fundraising and partnerships, the work of the Ethics Office and an update on UNICEF actions to implement the relevant UN reform mandates set by the General Assembly

On Thursday morning, we will consider the new country programme document for Chile, as well as the extension of several ongoing country programmes. The same morning, we will hear the first report on annual implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2022–2025, which will give us an update on UNICEF work to promote gender equality across its programmes.

And during the final meetings of the session, the Chair of the Global Staff Association will share the hopes, concerns and achievements of UNICEF staff. And on the final morning, the Executive Director will pay tribute to the exceptional contributions of the UNICEF teams during the annual awards ceremony.

I look very much forward to chairing this meeting alongside the other members of the Bureau: with the distinguished Permanent Representatives of Argentina, Poland and Tajikistan. I thank you in advance for your active participation and support in helping to make this session a success.

#ends