

**Annual Session 2024 Executive Board of UNICEF**

**Item 3: Report on the midterm review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 and annual report for 2023 of the Executive Director of UNICEF**

**Statement by the Republic of Finland**

**11 June 2024**

Mr./Madam President, Madam Executive Director,

I will now share some remarks in my national capacity. First, I would like to thank UNICEF for its invaluable work in an increasingly challenging global situation.

At present, UNICEF is needed more than ever. Implementation of the SDGs has stagnated. Children, who make up one third of the global population, account for half of those living in extreme poverty. Over 450 million children – nearly 1 in 5 – live in or have fled a conflict zone.

Our joint efforts are needed to respond to these daunting challenges. Joint programming and close coordination with relevant UN entities and other partners on the ground is needed. Special emphasis should be placed on the rights of the most vulnerable children, such as children with disabilities. Later this year, the Summit of the Future offers a great opportunity to agree on transformative ideas and ensure that no child is left behind.

Mr./Madam President,

Finland highly values children's education and learning, and digitalization and innovations. We look forward to further developing our cooperation with UNICEF around these areas. The two UNICEF hubs – the Learning Innovation Hub and the Innovation Finance Hub – located in Helsinki, provide a great opportunity for this.

The Learning Innovation Hub aims at accelerating equitable access to world-class digital learning solutions, and to convene a global community of visionaries to innovate the future of learning for the most vulnerable children.

The Innovation Finance Hub develops new funding models to mobilize additional private and other non-ODA funding for the benefit of children. Our expectations are high, particularly when it comes to the Child Lense Investing Framework.

As the hubs now have an approved strategy, we encourage UNICEF to speed up its implementation and the recruitments at the hub. It is critical that the hubs have human resources and expertise that match their goals.

We encourage UNICEF to keep the Executive Board informed about the progress of the hubs, as well as the innovation agenda more broadly. Thus the Board would have adequate opportunities to consider and provide guidance to UNICEF's innovation work.

Mr./Madam President,

Strong and functioning governance, risk management and oversight processes are needed for the effective delivery of UNICEF's mandate. We look forward to UNICEF's positive engagement on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit's review of the governance and oversight functions of the Executive Boards.

To conclude, Mr./Madam President, I'd like to reiterate Finland's strong support to UNICEF and its invaluable, worldwide efforts..

Thank you.