

UK National Statement: Agenda Item 13: Assessment on Governance and Oversight Functions of the Executive Boards, UNICEF Executive Board Annual Session, xxx June 2024:

Thank you President.

The UN development system is uniquely mandated to promote sustainable development. On the most important thing, there is consensus: we must accelerate delivery of the SDGs.

UN development agencies have the global reach, leverage, expertise and convening power to have a transformational impact on poverty, climate and nature and achievement of the SDGs.

But the system has to be fit for today's and future challenges. And it must be inclusive, effective and responsive to the needs of all countries if it is to maintain legitimacy. The UK is deeply invested in making sure it can succeed. All Member States should have their voices and priorities heard at these agencies. This isn't just having a seat at the table, but being able to effectively engage in the content of discussions and decisions.

Agencies needs to be agile, well-coordinated and be able to respond effectively to global development challenges. They must meet the organisational and ethical standards we should expect of an organisation with responsibilities towards a large portion of the global population.

We learned in 2022 with UNOPS, and with the constructive process of reform that followed, that we cannot take for granted that reading reports and turning up to Executive Board meetings is delivering good governance.

We need to be able to spend time considering development challenges from the point of view of people and countries who are closest to the problems. We need time to examine, to question, and to discuss.

Inspector Hunte's recommendations are a strong starting point for us to ask collectively if we are achieving what we need from the UN development system. We welcome his recommendations, especially around consolidation of processes to reduce the resources needed by agencies and MS to fulfil their responsibilities. We must use the space that has been opened to properly consider the recommendations together, and we believe that bringing together a diverse group of Member States with the agencies to conduct this task will deliver the best outcomes and keep any changes practical and realistic. This will deliver a return on time and resources invested by Member States and agencies.

*[Only include if UNICEF sit on the panel]:* With the achievement of the SDGs as our overarching priority, we must be able to fulfil our accountability and responsibilities in a spirit of collaboration and partnership between MS and the UN system. We look forward to hearing what processes and practices UNICEF are adopting to deliver shared accountability responsibilities more efficiently at the Executive Board.

Thank you.