

## **UNICEF Executive Board**

### **Item 9 : Update on Implementation Efforts on the Repositioning of the United Nations Development System**

**13 June 2024**

Mister President, Madame Executive Director, Excellencies,

I deliver this statement on behalf of the following group of member states: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, the EU as a donor, and my own country, Germany.

Despite worrying trends, we firmly believe the promise of Agenda 2030 can still be realized. However, business as usual will not suffice. We must pivot to a new phase of scale, pace and impact to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The UN working together is the only way to ensure an effective offer - tailored to each individual country - in support of the SDGs. We call upon UN entities to continue to increase collaboration and joint programming, moving away from siloed and sectoral ways of working towards integrated approaches. The UN Development System (UNDS) is moving in this direction - but too slowly. We expect UN entities at the highest level to be prioritizing opportunities to advance this work, including at the ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development segment.

We welcome the revision of the Funding Compact, which is more streamlined and strategic. Only a sustainably funded and capacitated UNDS can deliver on the promise that all of us have committed to. We must therefore also ensure an adequately and sustainably funded Resident Coordinator (RC) system. RCs lead UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to efficiently deliver - in a coordinated manner - on their mandates, including all aspects of the UN Development System's normative work.

We commend UNICEF for the results that have been achieved so far. Reform initiatives have in many instances strengthened coherence and reduced duplication. This is exemplified by unprecedented efficiency gains – 553 mln USD in 2023 across UNDS entities. UNICEF recorded over 321 mln USD in savings from efficiencies since the beginning of the reform in 2019. This encourages furthering progress to safeguard resources and advance the SDGs.

We would like to call your attention to **4 specific areas** that require improvement:

First, challenges regarding the implementation of the Management Accountability Framework, such as the lack of alignment of UNDS activities with Cooperation Frameworks, still hamper the proper functioning of the RC System and the UN at country level. We appreciate UNICEF's efforts to ensure alignment of Country Programme Documents with Cooperation Frameworks. We note, however, that for all UN entities there is a perverse incentive: success is unfortunately mostly defined by new funding and projects attracted, rather than overall contribution to the SDGs as part of the agreed upon integrated plan. This leads to mandate creep and competition for funding. 48% of UNICEF representatives indicated that they perceive resource competition as a significant obstacle to the success of the reforms. As member states we unfortunately also contribute to this. This needs to be addressed. *Can you share your ideas on what can be done to reduce competition in funding and increase your alignment with Cooperation Frameworks?*

The second issue is that joint planning and programming continue to be constrained by compartmentalization. We need a seismic shift: joint budgeting, planning and programme delivery, in a truly integrated manner for common results, where entities complement - rather than compete with - each other by working across siloes. This will also enable reporting on joint results. *Can you share your plans to improve integrated planning and budgeting and impactful programme delivery?*

Thirdly, more transparent information sharing needs to occur between UNDS entities at country level and RCs. RCs need to be able to identify and address potential overlaps and ensure coherence. *How will you enhance reporting to the RCs? Which systematic shifts can be made at HQ to support the country level?*

And finally, the dual reporting model needs to be applied more consistently: the percentage of country representatives that give feedback to the RCs and vice versa needs to increase. *What are you planning to do to increase this?*

We know that a lot is already happening in these areas, and in many areas UNICEF is a champion of the reforms. But the UNDS collectively needs to go the extra mile and we as Member States need to support you better in this process. *What steps do you believe need to be taken to effectively advance these efforts? And in preparation for the upcoming QCPR, could you please formulate your most important priorities and requests?*

Last but not least, we want to thank you for filling out the UNDS reform checklist, which has been very helpful for us as Executive Board and sets an example for other UN entities.

Thank you.