



**New Zealand Permanent Mission to the United Nations
Te Aka Aorere**

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNICEF

ITEM 12: INTERNAL AUDIT AND INVESTIGATION

**New Zealand Statement delivered by
First Secretary, Rachael Pringle**

12 June 2024

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



Thank you Mx President, tēnā koutou rangatira mā!

New Zealand would like to thank UNICEF and all of its audit and investigation staff for their detailed reporting this year. More harmonised reporting across the Funds and Programmes greatly assisted us to identify trends and differences between the various entities.

We have one main observation to make:

Localisation, a crucial part of the UN's capacity building, helps to sustain the beneficial impacts of interventions far beyond the time they are implemented. We applaud ongoing efforts to work with and through local partners. However it is clear from the list of investigations that localisation also introduces substantial risk, ranging from safeguarding and sexual misconduct to financial irregularities and other unacceptable behaviours. This then creates reputational risks that might inhibit both funding and trust by vulnerable beneficiaries. Sexual exploitation of girls and young women by implementing partners, including many cases that led to unplanned pregnancies, goes against everything UNICEF stands for.

New Zealand strongly supports a plan by UNFPA to proactively address the risks posed by implementing partners through contract revision, training and policy support, and encourages UNICEF – and indeed all the Funds and Programmes - to ensure that harmonised contractual and policy expectations are set, training is jointly delivered, and consistent disciplinary responses applied where implementing partners' behaviour falls short.

New Zealand wishes to express again its appreciation for the improvements in transparency and process demonstrated by UNICEF and its accountability functions, which we acknowledge are the result of continuous efforts.

Thank you.