

UNICEF Executive Board First Regular Session 2026

Joint Statement on Item 11: Progress on the consideration of the review of governance and oversight of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF and UN-Women by the Joint Inspection Unit

Wednesday 11th February 2026

Mister/Madam President,

Distinguished Members of the Executive Board,

I am presenting this statement on behalf of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye and my own country the United Kingdom.

We thank the Joint Working Group for the update and would like to express our appreciation to all its members for the time and commitment they continue to invest in advancing this important process on behalf of the Executive Boards.

The implementation of the JIU recommendations remains a critical endeavour to strengthen governance and oversight across our Executive Boards, and in doing so, enhance the effectiveness and credibility of our work. Our shared objective is to make Board processes and working methods as efficient and harmonized as possible, while fully preserving robust oversight and accountability mechanisms.

Over the past year, much of the Working Group's efforts focused on establishing itself, defining its working methods as well as other supporting documents. Against this background, we particularly welcome the progress made since the Second Regular Session 2025, notably the preparation and circulation of questionnaires to all five funds and programmes, which marked the start of the implementation phase.

We recognize that the Working Group undertaking a thorough assessment of the relevance and feasibility of the JIU's individual recommendations is an essential intermediate step to improve the future functioning of the Executive Boards. This process is especially important as it complements the UN80 Initiative, with processes guided by common objectives, such as increased efficiency, more clearly defined responsibilities, and strengthened governance structures.

As outlined in the roadmap, we subscribe to an approach that allows for the early implementation of those recommendations that can be realized with limited effort or only require minor adjustments. This approach would create the necessary space and time to engage more deeply with recommendations that warrant further discussion and analysis in order to identify the best way forward.

In our view, it is important that the Executive Boards see clear outcomes emerging in a timely manner, ideally already by the Annual Session 2026. We therefore implore the Working Group to move decisively towards delivering first concrete results. This would help maintain momentum and provide confidence that the process is translating into practical improvements in our governance and oversight functions.

We remain committed to supporting this process in a constructive and forward-looking spirit and look forward to continued engagement with the Joint Working Group as it advances its work.

Thank you.