

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 72/279 ON

“REPOSITIONING OF THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM”

INFORMATION NOTE

UNICEF Executive Board – First Regular Session 2021

I. Introduction

UNICEF is pleased to provide its Executive Board with an update on its engagement in the repositioning of the UN Development System (UNDS). UNICEF continues to engage closely in the reform process, providing significant contributions and inputs, supporting implementation, and making necessary internal adjustments and alignments. It does so in close coordination with the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, and with the support of the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO).

This paper provides an update on recent UNDS reform developments since September 2020. It includes sections on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR), UNICEF’s support to the Resident Coordinator (RC) System and system-wide efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Efficiency Agenda and delivering results in a new UN Development System. In particular, it also outlines UNICEF’s operationalization of the programmatic components of the UNDS reform through a series of global agreements and initiatives with different UN agencies. These strategic partnerships contribute to translating the reform into practice in support of the SDGs, and our collective efforts of supporting national Governments.

II. The new Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR)

UNICEF welcomes the **adoption of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review** of operational activities for development of the United Nations system in December 2020. The resolution will be the basis for the collective work of the UNDS for the period of 2021-24, providing guidance for the system during the first half of the Decade of Action. It is an important milestone: for the first time in the history of the resolution, the document mentions children and youth participation, and provides a new, strong mandate on education. UNICEF appreciates the QCPR’s references to a longer-term planning horizon up to 2030, an emphasis on the outcome level, and the rallying of the UN agencies, funds and programmes’ (AFPs’) Strategic Plans around the SDGs. Of particular importance are also the clear QCPR provisions on gender, disability inclusion, environmental protection, climate change, as well as human rights – these are all key in advancing progress on the SDGs.

UNICEF is fully committed to implementing all QCPR mandates and reflecting them, as relevant, in our new Strategic Plan 2022-2025. An extensive consultation process ensures that strategic planning processes and outcomes advance the mandates of the QCPR and the objectives of UNDS reform.

As per standard procedure, UNICEF will continue providing a comprehensive annual update on the implementation of QCPR mandates as part of the Executive Director’s Annual Report, as requested by Member States.

Given that UNDS reform is being mainstreamed in the new QCPR, we would like to suggest that our reporting on UNDS reform could also be included in our QCPR reporting starting in 2021.

III. Supporting the empowered Resident Coordinator system

UNICEF is continuing to support (i) the new generation of RCs and coordination offices in country settings, (ii) the implementation of the country level chapter of the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF), and (iii) the agreed funding arrangements for the RC system, including through the collection of the 1% levy.

UNICEF continues to make important strides in advancing an empowered RC system through financial support as well as constructive engagement in various human resources initiatives.

In 2020, UNICEF transferred a total of \$5.9 million in **levy payments** (including payments for the last quarter of 2019 received in January 2020). Additional payments for the last quarter of 2020 will follow at the end of January 2021. As per the **UNSDG cost-sharing agreement**, it also already contributed \$8.3 million in the final days of 2020 in support of 2021 activities of the RC system.

The **UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Leadership Strategy** has been endorsed by UNSDG Principals, linking RC talent management and performance management functions. The UNSDG is now working on an implementation plan for the strategy, which UNICEF will operationalize once ready. The new UNSDG Task Force on RC Performance Management is currently discussing a new **Feedback Tool** which will be used to inform the performance appraisal of RCs, with UNSDG members aiming for a significant reduction of the initially proposed 79 questions. UNICEF has also included a goal related to common UN Country Team results in its **Country Representative's performance appraisal** on which the RC provides feedback at the end of the performance cycle.

IV. Strengthening system-wide support to the SDGs

UNICEF has continued to work with other UN entities, such as UNDP, UNFPA and UN Women and DCO, to strengthen the **alignment between the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) and the agencies' respective Country Programme Documents (CPDs)**. CPD and CF processes have been the theme of two joint informal meetings, on 9 October 2020 with the Bureaux of the Executive Boards of relevant agencies and on 18 January 2021 with all the Members of the Boards. In both meetings the agencies presented efforts made to ensure alignment in this first transitioning year from the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) to the UNSDCF. UNICEF's Procedure on the Development, Review and Approval of the CPD is being revised and one new section has been added to reflect the derivation from and alignment with the UNSDCF.

As part of UNCTs, UNICEF collaborates with the other UN entities and engages strongly in the development of UNSDCFs through the following:

- supporting the development of Common Country Analysis (CCA) reports, ensuring the Situation Analysis of Children and Women actively contributes to it;
- formulating UNICEF CPDs in a parallel but sequenced manner with the UNSDCF;
- informing UNICEF CPDs by the same Theory of Change underpinning the UNSDCF;

- unpacking UNSDCF outcomes into joint workplan outputs, including joint approaches to implementation and monitoring of results;
- engaging actively in the various UNSDCF results groups, vital to joint monitoring of results under the leadership of the RC;
- ensuring that draft CPDs can be considered alongside the draft CFs or results matrix, made available by DCO on a dedicated webpage, before consideration by the Executive Board for approval.

Furthermore, in line with the MAF, UNICEF Representatives ensure that the RC has the opportunity to review and comment on our CPD with regard to its alignment to the UNSDCF as part of the submission process.

The e-course on **Integrated Policy Approaches to the SDGs**, jointly developed by UNICEF and UNDP, was launched at the UN General Assembly. As of December, there were over a thousand individuals enrolled in the course from various UN agencies and partners across the world. The UNSDG Task Team on Integrated Policy Support co-hosted global webinars with DCO to promote the course. A new **SDG Acceleration Toolkit** has been reviewed and updated, with the launch planned for early 2021. The UNSDG's work on the mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS) approach, co-chaired by UNDP, ILO and UNICEF, offers additional illustrations of enhanced collective UN support. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Angola and the Maldives are in the process of starting virtual MAPS engagements, developed by the MAPS project team in order to continue providing integrated policy support at the national level.

Since July 2020, UNICEF has assessed its **programme delivery through various UN collaboration mechanisms** to develop appropriate strategies for a streamlined approach within UNICEF, maximize benefits derived from such mechanisms, and to enhance UNICEF's collaboration with other UN agencies around the SDGs. As part of this exercise, UNICEF has conducted internal consultations with UNICEF HQ, Country and Regional offices, as well as with select Member States and other UN agencies. A preliminary evaluation of data gathered so far shows a focus on the central role of the UNSDCF for programming and resource mobilization, the need for more conceptual clarity on UN agencies working together, a strong commitment to improved partnerships and joint priority setting among UN agencies, as well as the role of Joint Programmes and Pooled Funds for efficient management of limited resources.

V. Advancing shared business operations, common premises, and efficiency impact reporting

UNICEF strongly supports efforts to maximize programmatic gains through efficient and high-quality back-office operations and a cultural change in our corporate business operations as part of the UNDS reform. UNICEF believes that UN reform implementation will enhance its efforts at reducing administrative burden and enabling a greater focus on programme execution. UNICEF is relatively well placed, having already established a **Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC)**, and being one of the leading agencies in terms of implementing **Common Premises, Business Operations Strategy (BOS)** as well as supporting the rollout of **Common Back Offices (CBO) and Mutual Recognition**.

The **Business Innovations Group (BIG)** project team that was tasked with driving operational aspects of UN Reform was officially disbanded in May 2020. Most of the initiatives it was driving have been handed to DCO to implement and are overseen by the new **Business Operations Task Team (BOTT)** which was

established at the end of 2020 and is co-chaired by UNICEF's Deputy Executive Director for Management. It will oversee the implementation of BOS, CBO, Common Premises (CP) and Efficiency Impact Reporting. Going forward, the Chair of the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and Co-Chairs of the BOTT have proposed in a letter to the Head of DCO that the **efficiency workstream on GSSCs for system-wide services** should not be taken forward under either the HLCM or the BOTT. Instead, they suggest that DCO should take this workstream on under the overall leadership of the UNSDG.

Meanwhile, the HLCM has been tasked with driving the further **roll-out of Mutual Recognition**. The objective of Mutual Recognition is to better enable UN organizations to develop partnerships and to work together towards delivering on the Agenda 2030, and the specific mandates of the participating UN organisations by benefiting from the different organisations' comparative advantages while incurring minimum transaction costs. Whilst UNICEF and other agencies have signed the mutual recognition statement allowing an entity to use or rely on another entity's policies, procedures, system contracts and related operational mechanism for the implementation of activities without further evaluation checks or approvals being required, there has been a lack of guidance to support implementation of this at the field level. UNICEF has already rolled out guidelines on how to implement mutual recognition and these continue to be enhanced.

Following agreement at the final BIG meeting in May 2020 on a way forward for measuring efficiencies, an **Efficiency Impact Task Team** was set up in the third quarter of 2020 to implement an overall monitoring and reporting framework in order to capture and aggregate the impact of UN Reform as well as bilateral initiatives in the operations area to drive efficiency. The Task Team currently has 15 members and has agreed to issue the first report in Q1 2021 covering efficiency savings for 2019 and 2020. UNICEF is co-chairing this task team and is well placed to report on internal efficiencies as these have been collated for all HQ divisions since 2019.

It is expected that **almost all UNCTs will have a BOS** in place by the end of 2021, in line with the target set by the Secretary-General. **The CBO rollout has just started:** It is currently expected that around 50 countries will have implemented it by 2022, with the remaining offices anticipated to join by 2024 at the latest. UNICEF has issued guidance to its offices and is closely managing rollout through a project team.

UNICEF is highly committed to achieving the **common premises agenda:** the agency has spent \$5.08 million from its Capital Asset Funds (CAF) to support common premises initiatives and \$3.1 million from its Greening and Accessibility Fund, which is generated by the 3% air travel surcharge that supports the Greening and Accessibility initiatives globally since 2016. As a result, UNICEF has **already achieved in 2020 the UN Secretary General's reform target of 50% of offices to be in Common Premises by 2021**. On the equity aspect, which includes **accessibility of offices to people with disability**, UNICEF has achieved 42% of implementation rate of the accessibility level 1, and this will improve in 2021 with the perspective of decline of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For this reform area to continue successfully, host Governments must meet their obligations to provide a building or land suitable for housing all the UN agencies, and all agencies need to be on board and have necessary resources in place.

Energy efficiency and environmental sustainability have become a crucial component of UNICEF's operations and premises, as highlighted in the [UNICEF Procedure on Eco-Efficiency and Inclusive Access in UNICEF Premises and Operations](#). In this regard, UNICEF has implemented in 2020 various greening projects that resulted overall in achieving a 16% reduction of UNICEF's carbon emissions since 2016,

excluding air travel. Investments in eco-efficiency not only reduce UNICEF's carbon footprint, but are essential for the UN to meet its 2030 carbon emissions reduction targets, optimize operating costs especially at the time of shrinking resources, and maintain business continuity using clean power sources in the hardest to reach areas/off-grid areas we operate in.

VI. Delivering results in a new UN Development System

The preparation of the **UN Framework for Response to the Socio-economic Impacts of COVID** was a landmark achievement as a whole-UN response to a global issue. It was prepared swiftly and resulted in practical plans and a solid monitoring structure, with clear agency leads and responsibilities. UNICEF co-led the development of the pillar on social protection and social services with WFP, and contributed to all other pillars but one. The implementation of the framework – the preparation of Socio-Economic Response Plans by each UN Country Team – was also swift, although varied in speed depending on the capacity of the UNCT and the urgency of addressing socio-economic impacts. Almost all countries now have such a response plan in place and have started implementation.

Funding is of huge importance to delivering results in a new UNDS in response to the ongoing pandemic. Overall, UNICEF has mobilized over \$1.5 billion through its humanitarian appeal that has gone towards the joint UN response to COVID. With regards to funding the socio-economic response plans, many UNCTs opted to apply for support from the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (COVID-19 MPTF), which was established to support inter-agency work on the socio-economic impacts.

UNCTs are also tasked with reporting on the response plans. A standard set of indicators for UNCT's to report on has been agreed, at the global level. Lead agencies have been designated to lead the reporting on these standard indicators – UNICEF is the lead agency (jointly or alone) for nine indicators. In order to protect and maximize UNCT resources in light of the rapidity and scale of action required both for the public health emergency and to address the socio-economic impacts, UNICEF is advocating to reduce the reporting burden for its Country Offices significantly until the crisis subsides.

Resolutions by ECOSOC (2020/23) and the General Assembly (74/297) in 2020 have provided the Secretary-General and the UNDS with mandates to take forward the three outstanding elements of the UNDS repositioning package – a **new regional architecture**, a **strengthened system offer in multi-country offices (MCO)**, and **bolstered system-wide evaluations (SWE)**.

With respect to operationalizing a new **regional architecture**, all **UNICEF Regional Directors have started engaging in the new Regional Collaborative Platforms (RCPs)**.

As part of its commitments under the MCO review, UNICEF has accepted to take on a **system-wide lead role on data collection and systems specifically in the context of Small Island Development States (SIDS)** and has increased investment in multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS) to facilitate reporting on the SDGs. UNICEF MCOs in the Caribbean and the Pacific are ramping up capacities and are actively contributing to relevant UN joint strategic planning. They are contributing to system-wide Country Plans, the development of CCA reports and Multi-Country Sustainable Development Frameworks.

UNICEF continues to support joint efforts under way for a **system-wide evaluation (SWE)** of the COVID-19 response. It is a member of the Advisory Committee of the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) and has participated in its lessons learned and evaluability assessment exercise. UNICEF has also seconded a senior staff to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to

support SWE efforts and continues to provide inputs to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) as a member of the SWE and COVID-19 Response Working Group.

VII. Strategic Partnerships – programmatic updates

UNICEF's commitment to the **programmatic component of the UNDS reform** is operationalized through a series of global agreements and initiatives with different UN agencies. These strategic partnerships contribute to translate UN reforms in practice, in support of the SDGs and efforts of national Governments.

These collaborative actions focus on: (i) themes where partners can see **acceleration of results and impact** at very large scale; (ii) areas that would be **transformational** in the way partners work; (iii) **leveraging existing capacities** and building on areas of ongoing work that have the greatest potential; (iv) areas that **reduce duplication of efforts**, parallel tracks and overlap, and will yield specific **efficiency gains and savings**; and (v) ways that UN partners can help **maximize the convening role** of national partners, and help build systems, as better partners and members of UNCTs.

Following are global examples of progress since the last Executive Board (September 2020):

- **Nutrition:** UNICEF and WFP finalized a **Partnership Framework on Child Wasting** in December 2020, in support of the UN Global Action Plan on Child Wasting and the ambitious SDG target to reduce the proportion of children with wasting to less than 3 per cent by 2030. The Framework adopts an integrated approach to prevention, early detection and treatment of child wasting, and places emphasis on ensuring access to life-saving prevention and treatment services for all, including in difficult to reach areas. The aim is to strengthen national systems to deliver a package of essential interventions that prevent mothers and children from becoming undernourished while supporting the integration of early detection and treatment for children who are wasted into routine services in facilities and communities.

Building on best practices, the framework helps operationalize the commitments of the two organizations for a more systematic collaboration, with UNICEF serving as the lead, coordinating agency and WFP as an essential partner, particularly in fragile contexts. It leverages the mandates and strengths more effectively, with a streamlined division of labour, and accelerates work together, and with other partners, to introduce simplified approaches that bring scale, speed and efficiencies to our efforts.

To kick-start this paradigm shift, UNICEF and WFP are scaling up operations in select countries from the Sahel and the Horn of Africa regions. Regional and country teams are working together in new ways to ensure that millions of vulnerable children receive the support they need, while incorporating a strong learning agenda to inform further expansion to additional countries and regions.

At the same time, to draw urgent attention to the **impact of COVID-19 on child malnutrition**, UNICEF, together with FAO, WFP and WHO, issued a *Call to Action* to protect children's right to nutrition in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic (covered in the Lancet series). The focus is on five urgent actions and related investments from Governments, donors, the private sector, and the UN, specifically to: (i) safeguard and promote access to nutritious, safe, and affordable diets; (ii) invest in improving maternal and child nutrition through pregnancy, infancy, and early childhood; (iii) re-activate and scale up services for the early detection and treatment of child wasting; (iv) maintain

the provision of nutritious and safe school meals for vulnerable children; and (v) expand social protection to safeguard access to nutritious diets and essential services. The Call to Action has mobilized an increasing number of partners to make early-riser commitments, including increased investments and doing business together differently, as part of the *Year of Action on Nutrition* (launched in December 2020).

- **Health:** WHO and UNICEF finalized a new **Strategic Collaboration Framework** in late September 2020 to accelerate public health efforts, particularly for the most marginalized and vulnerable populations. The Framework highlights four strategic areas that provide immediate impetus and potential for transformative results at scale:
 - **Universal health coverage through a primary health care and health systems strengthening (facility and community) approach**, with priority actions to expand the reach and quality of primary health care, bolster health sector reforms and accelerate the achievement of universal health coverage and SDG3 targets by 2030.
 - **Mental health, psychosocial wellbeing and development**, to drive multi-sectoral action for mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of children, adolescents and caregivers.
 - **Public health emergencies**, in all areas and contexts (low-, middle- and high-income), including the impact of COVID-19, to support countries to be better prepared to prevent, detect and respond to public health threats, and to ensure that children and their communities are better protected from exposure to, and the impacts of, public health emergencies.
 - **Maternal and child nutrition**, with six priority work streams to effectively prevent the burden of malnutrition in children, adolescents and women through the protection, promotion and support of nutritious and safe diets, essential nutrition services, and positive nutrition practices as well as early detection and treatment of children with wasting.

With immediate steps to implement this collaboration framework in practice, the two organizations are working together at the **frontline of the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic**, supporting countries in their preparedness and response efforts, and with priority focus **on the rollout of vaccines** in low- and middle-income countries.

- **Social protection:** UNICEF continues its proactive partnership with sister UN agencies through its role as a leading partner in the interagency social protection coordination group (SPIAC-B). One example is the collaborative work (co-led by UNICEF, UK AID and IFRC, with WFP, UNHCR, OCHA and ILO as part of the Grand Bargain sub-group linking humanitarian cash and social protection) to **further strengthen the use of national systems for humanitarian cash transfers** during emergencies, for a more sustainable approach that moves beyond parallel systems and ad hoc programmes.

Transformative collaboration among UN partners is also gaining momentum at the country level. The work of UNICEF and sister agencies in 33 of the 36 countries selected as part of the **SDG Fund's first call on social protection** is bringing agencies together based on comparative strengths and expertise. This work is expected to expand social protection coverage and preparedness as a key accelerator towards achieving the SDGs. Another example is work co-led with ILO on the EU global programme on "Improving synergies between social protection and public finance management". Building on organizational expertise, this innovative multi-country programme aims to **strengthen the public**

financing foundations of social protection systems, also towards expanded coverage and shock responsiveness of sustainable national systems.

In the same vein, UNICEF and WFP are accelerating efforts to **harmonize different approaches** in the area of shock-responsive social protection through joint work and programming at global, regional and country levels. One notable example, supported by the Government of Germany in the Sahel, is the joint programme to scale up **social protection to buffer the economic impact of COVID-19** in vulnerable populations in fragile settings. This joint programme focusses on: (i) supporting governments to assess and scale up existing social protection programmes fragile contexts; (ii) strengthening complementary services to cash assistance; (iii) strengthening social protection systems for future shocks; and (iv) generating knowledge and contributing to learning.

- **Socio-economic response to COVID-19**: UNDP and UNICEF have joined forces in support of the **socio-economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic**, building on the growing body of work between them under the overall [UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response](#). The collaboration focusses on pooling of assets and expertise in key areas of the UN framework where UNDP and UNICEF can jointly deliver the greatest impact, in line with their respective mandates and strengths. Teams across all regions are working on development and rollout of specific flagship initiatives, ensuring linkages to regional issue-based coalitions, and ongoing contributions to the wider development system. **Regional flagships** are emerging in three key areas of: (i) **development financing**, including support to public finance management, public policy, budget analysis, social equity and social protection (in all regions of UNDP and UNICEF work – see details below under *financing for development*); (ii) **youth empowerment and innovation** (Africa, Asia and Middle East), with the Asia youth initiative currently being rolled out, with related resource mobilization support; and (iii) **climate change, resilience and adaptation** (Africa, Asia and Middle East).
- **Financing for development**: UNICEF and UNDP are actively strengthening collaboration on financing for development, building on the strengths of UNDP on the macro-level and innovative financing and of UNICEF on financing and budgeting for social sectors. This work complements and builds on the ongoing collaboration the two agencies have with the World Bank and other International Financial Institutions. By end 2020, results included a series of global and regional webinars to share and harmonize approaches in relation to work on **Integrated National Financing Frameworks**, together with joint work in 40 countries on **financing under the SDG Joint Fund**.

Opportunities for collaboration within the **Secretary-General's Initiative on Financing for Development in the era of COVID-19 and beyond** have been identified, to mobilize and leverage global and national finance towards a sustainable and inclusive recovery. Alongside this, the two organizations are working on a **global financing flagship initiative** that encompasses regional development financing ideas in areas that leverage their collective strengths and existing country level partnerships. The flagship has a focus on supporting national partners in addressing financing gaps and ensuring inclusive and sustainable recovery, public finance management, work on integrated national financing frameworks, private sector reform and a big-ticket idea on innovative financing.

- **Linking humanitarian and development programming**: At the close of the first year of the **UNHCR-UNICEF Blueprint for Joint Action – a Fair Deal for Refugee Children** – ambitious plans are well underway in an initial group of 10 countries. The plans set out a transformative agenda that will see UNHCR and UNICEF jointly reaching up to 10 million refugee children, their families and host

communities with essential services in the key areas of **education, water, sanitation and hygiene and child protection** (including birth registration and response to gender-based violence). The initiative also focusses on supporting national actors with innovative approaches to capacity development, and the inclusion of refugee children in national plans and services (education, WASH, child protection). At the same time, with the **disruption of national services due to COVID-19**, UNHCR-UNICEF joint teams have adapted plans with renewed focus on providing alternatives to school (e.g. remote learning), that are accessible and appropriate for all children regardless of their status.

Results achieved in 2020 will be available in February 2021 through a joint **UNICEF-UNHCR global results dashboard** hosted on UNICEF's *Insight* platform. Results will be updated regularly and will provide the basis for learning and expansion of the Blueprint approach to additional countries.

From an efficiency point of view, UNHCR and UNICEF have embedded Blueprint actions into existing country workplans and operational budgets, all humanitarian appeals and development proposals. While this mainstreaming is underway, **additional earmarked funding** to support the transformative agenda of refugee inclusion has been secured for UNICEF and UNHCR (with US\$ 54.7 million secured in 2020, and US\$ 8 million in the pipeline), alongside leveraging of existing portfolios to support the refugee inclusion agenda.

An iterative evaluation of the Blueprint is underway, with a baseline assessment complete across all ten countries and deep dives being undertaken in early 2021. Country teams are already reporting **programmatic and operational efficiencies** through strategic use of complementary expertise and human resources, the use of joint premises, and aligned procurement and distribution pipelines. At the global level, efforts are ongoing to identify even more effective ways of coordinating with partners and working together in the key sectors of education and WASH. These, and other cost efficiencies, will be further assessed through the iterative evaluation and global results monitoring mechanisms.

- **Innovative solutions:** The second round of **Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge** brought together more than 15 million bright young minds in 2020, to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing their generation. The Challenge called on young innovators to design solutions to improve education, employment, entrepreneurship and civic engagement. The Youth Challenge was jointly convened by UNICEF, UNDP, Plan International and the Scouts in 36 countries, building on experiences from the first Youth Challenge and the UNDP-UNICEF Big Think Challenge earlier in the year. From the 72 finalists, 8 winning teams have been selected and global incubation will be delivered jointly by UNICEF and UNDP, through a collaborative network of global, regional and country teams.

The Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge and The Big Think Challenge experiences will be externally reviewed in 2021, jointly funded by UNDP and UNICEF, with a view to identifying the most effective ways of further incentivising country level partnerships in support of youth and innovation.

Alongside these innovative collaborations, UNICEF and ITU have launched an initiative to connect every school to the internet. This initiative, **Giga** (<https://gigaconnect.org/>), is moving forward in 15 countries in support of the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. Giga provides the platform for digital connectivity and is helping fast track young the access of young people to educational resources and opportunities, and digital public goods.

UNICEF is also actively supporting **The Atrium** (<https://atrium.network/>), an interagency tool designed to **enable any UN entity to learn and experiment with blockchain**. Launched by the informal collaborative network of UN Agencies' innovation teams UNIN, UNDP, UNICEF and WFP, the platform

involves over 35 entities and features over 10 UN blockchain. The platform features *The Practical Guide to Using Blockchain Within the UN*, and other learning resources jointly developed by UN partners bringing skills and resources together more efficiently.

VIII. Conclusion

With the start of the implementation of the new QCPR on 1 January 2021, UNICEF's focus is now shifting to ensure that all QCPR mandates are being considered and followed. This is particularly important as UNICEF will formally present its draft **Strategic Plan, 2022–2025**, at the Annual Session of the Executive Board in 2021 and the final version at the Second Regular Session later this year. This new Plan is being developed in close consultations with Member States, along with a new Integrated Budget for the 2022–2025 period and several annexes including a new results framework. Several years into the UN reform process, UNICEF, just like the UNDS as whole, continues to ensure that strategic planning processes and outcomes advance the mandates of the QCPR and the objectives of UNDS reform.

A few outstanding reform mandates will keep UNICEF as well as members of the UNSDG busy in the first few months of 2021. In particular, we plan to constructively support the rollout of the **MCO and the Regional Reviews** as well as the **operationalization of system-wide evaluations**.

We are also ready to support the development of the **regional and global chapters of the Management Accountability Framework**. In parallel, we will actively engage in the review of the country level chapter of the MAF, based on the holistic feedback we collected from UNICEF representatives in early 2020. A coherent and comprehensive MAF will be the last outstanding reform tool which will guarantee successful implementation at all levels.

Based on the new QCPR provisions UNICEF expects the focus to shift to accelerated SDG implementation in which we will support Governments as part of the repositioned and significantly more joint up UN development system.