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United Nations Children's Fund Executive Board

Compendium of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session of 2020

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2020/8**Report on the midterm review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 and annual report for 2019 of the Executive Director of UNICEF***The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the report on the midterm review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 and annual report for 2019 of the Executive Director of UNICEF, as well as the proposed revised results framework for the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021; the report on the implementation of the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021; the report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system; the report on the implementation of the common chapter of the Strategic Plans, 2018–2021 of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); lessons learned; and the data companion and scorecard, and decides to transmit the reports to the Economic and Social Council, along with a summary of the comments and guidance of the Executive Board;

2. *Notes with appreciation* the UNICEF response to COVID-19 in line with United Nations system-wide efforts and requests UNICEF to provide an update on its work and contribution to the system-wide effort at the global, regional and country levels to address the impact of the pandemic on children and on its operations and programmatic activities, beginning with the second regular session of 2020;

3. *Calls* for UNICEF to ensure the delivery of the objectives of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, and to continue to work as part of a coordinated international response, with a focus on supporting programme countries to build back better while mainstreaming environmentally sustainable policies in its operational activities, leaving no one behind;

4. *Takes note* of the results achieved at mid-point, and requests UNICEF to accelerate efforts, while recognizing that the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 during its second half is unknown;

5. *Notes* the priority of UNICEF to accelerate the mainstreaming of action on climate change, and requests UNICEF to report to the Executive Board in the annual report of the Executive Director on its operational and programming targets, corresponding efforts and results, including through its environmental and social safeguards, to make its programmes and operations consistent with climate resilience and low-carbon development as outlined in the revised results framework for the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021;

6. *Takes note with appreciation* of the clear and active commitment of UNICEF to building a positive work culture in response to the report of the Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority and the addition of the fifth “enabler” on organizational culture to the Strategic Plan to institutionalize accountability;

7. *Urges* UNICEF to improve progress towards the partially met outputs of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, including in the areas of education, HIV/AIDS and child poverty, and requests UNICEF to analyse and assess the targets set for the outputs of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, especially those which have consistently been under- and over-achieved, and present the findings to the Executive Board in the context of consultation on the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, including by factoring in the challenges of the existing strategies to reflect new and revised strategies for

achieving its outputs;

8. *Requests* UNICEF to take into account the lessons learned from the first two years of implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, as well as from its previous strategic plans;

9. *Takes note with appreciation* of the course of action proposed in the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and requests UNICEF to start preparations early for the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, in full consultation with the Executive Board, taking into account the lessons learned from the midterm review, the joint report on the evaluability assessment of the common chapter, dated 30 March 2020, and the outcome of the 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review for development of the United Nations system, and also requests UNICEF to ensure a participatory and timely process for the development of the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, with sufficient time for all Member States to consult and to provide feedback on draft versions of the Strategic Plan, and to provide an indicative timetable at the second regular session of 2020;

10. *Welcomes* UNICEF progress towards achieving the outputs of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and encourages UNICEF to further accelerate progress on the agreed commitments and mandates under the United Nations development system reform, including the funding compact and General Assembly resolutions on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in the remaining period of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021;

11. *Takes note with appreciation* of the UNICEF commitment to United Nations development system reform and encourages UNICEF to continue to work closely with United Nations entities, under the leadership of resident coordinators and within United Nations country teams, as well as with relevant stakeholders and other development partners, to support country efforts towards the Sustainable Development Goals through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework;

12. *Requests* UNICEF to accelerate its efforts to implement the common chapter, together with UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, including by developing the necessary tracking framework within the respective integrated results and resources frameworks of their current strategic plans, following the recommendations of the joint report on the evaluability assessment of the common chapter, dated 30 March 2020, and in the context of the repositioning of the United Nations development system, as laid out in General Assembly resolution 72/279, and also requests UNICEF to present a joint update on progress to the Executive Board at the second regular session of 2020;

13. *Notes* that UNICEF needs to scale up the implementation of its funding compact commitments, many of which are set for 2021, and requests UNICEF to continue the practice of providing a written update and informal briefing in the context of the structured funding dialogues, prior to the second regular session of 2020, on how the outcomes of the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 relate to the effective implementation of the funding compact in the remaining period of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021.

*Annual session
2 July 2020*

2020/9

Annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action and welcomes the outlined efforts and planned measures to further improve the quality and reach of UNICEF humanitarian efforts, including in response to the lessons learned outlined in the midterm review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021;

2. *Also takes note with appreciation* of the increased focus of UNICEF on the most vulnerable children in humanitarian response, and requests UNICEF to report on its efforts in this regard, as well as on taking into account the specific needs of girls and boys and the promotion of gender equality in humanitarian response as outlined under its own Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, within its annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action;

3. *Encourages* UNICEF to intensify efforts to provide quality education in humanitarian settings in light of the current learning crisis, including through the use of innovations and technologies.

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2020/10

Country programme documents

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* that the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Ethiopia and South Africa ([E/ICEF/2020/P/L.7](#) and [E/ICEF/2020/P/L.8](#)) were made available to Member States for their comments and input from 6 to 24 April 2020, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1 on modifications to procedures for consideration and approval of country programme documentation;

2. *Approves* on a no-objection basis, and in accordance with decision 2014/1, the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Ethiopia and South Africa ([E/ICEF/2020/P/L.7](#) and [E/ICEF/2020/P/L.8](#)).

*Annual session
1 July 2020*

2020/11

Extensions of ongoing country programmes

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the first one-year extension of the country programme for Algeria and the first two-month extension of the country programme for Côte d'Ivoire, both of which were approved by the Executive Director and are presented in table 1 of document [E/ICEF/2020/P/L.9](#);

2. *Approves* the three-month extension of the country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic, following two previous one-year extensions and one nine-month extension, as presented in table 2 of document [E/ICEF/2020/P/L.9](#).

*Annual session
2 July 2020*

2020/12 Evaluation reports and management responses

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the following documents presented to the Executive Board at the annual session of 2020:

(a) Annual report for 2019 on the evaluation function in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2020/12) and its management response (E/ICEF/2020/13);

(b) Evaluation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, its summary (E/ICEF/2020/14) and its management response (E/ICEF/2020/15);

2. *Also takes note* of the increase in overall evaluation expenditure to 0.86 per cent of total programme expenditure in 2019;

3. *Takes note with concern* of the substantial regional differences with regard to expenditures, requests UNICEF to increase the number of evaluations submitted per year by country offices in regions with low submission rates compared with other regions, recalls its decisions 2018/10 and 2019/14 and requests UNICEF to accelerate efforts to reach the target of 1 per cent by the end of 2020 without compromising the quality of evaluations;

4. *Takes note* of the delayed implementation of evaluation management-response actions, notably at headquarters, and calls upon UNICEF to accelerate their implementation across all regions;

5. *Encourages* UNICEF to continue to strengthen evaluation capacity at the regional and country levels;

6. *Takes note* of the importance of the Evaluation Pooled Fund for evaluation capacity development and the decentralized management of evaluations and encourages UNICEF to incorporate the Evaluation Pooled Fund into the integrated budget of the next UNICEF strategic plan to ensure, together with the allocation of other resources, the continuous funding of the evaluation function;

7. *Recognizes* the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and encourages UNICEF to commission different kinds of evaluative work that contribute to evidence on the effect of COVID-19 on the programmatic work of UNICEF and that enable adaptive programme management and organizational learning;

8. *Acknowledges* the conclusions reached by the evaluation offices of UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in their evaluability assessment of the common chapter and requests management, in consultation with the independent evaluation offices, to develop the necessary tracking framework within the respective integrated results and resources frameworks of their current strategic plans, following the recommendations of the joint report on the evaluability assessment of the common chapter, dated 30 March 2020;

9. *Welcomes* the UNICEF management response to the evaluation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan and notes with appreciation the UNICEF commitment to increase accountability and the mainstreaming of gender throughout the organization for improved gender-equality results;

10. *Requests* UNICEF to report to the Executive Board at the annual session of 2021, within existing reporting mechanisms, on the organization's sustained efforts

to strengthen its gender-related expertise at the country level;

11. *Notes with appreciation* the commitment of UNICEF to a transformative approach to gender programming in line with its mandate and in collaboration with national authorities.

Annual session

2 July 2020

2020/13

Report on the midterm review of the UNICEF integrated budget, 2018–2021

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the midterm review of the UNICEF integrated budget, 2018–2021, presented in response to the request of the Executive Board in its decision 2017/14;

2. *Approves* the revised integrated resource plan as the financial framework for the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, based on projections of resources available, utilization and working capital required for liquidity;

3. *Notes and approves* the proposal made by UNICEF for the following budgets:

(a) For the Global and Regional Programme, an increase in the approved budget from regular resources from \$220.0 million to \$243.5 million, subject to the availability of resources, and an increase in the ceiling from other resources from \$810.2 million to \$930.1 million, subject to the receipt of contributions to other resources, for 2018–2021;

(b) An appropriation for the institutional budget for the period 2018–2021 of \$2.3 billion to cover the costs of development effectiveness, United Nations development coordination, management activities and, within special purpose activities, capital investments, noting that the revised projected funding for the appropriation is \$1.0 billion from regular resources and \$1.3 billion from cost recovery from other resources;

(c) In addition to the appropriation of \$2.3 billion, the projected funding for the institutional budget of \$134.0 million from other resources for development effectiveness and United Nations development coordination, subject to the receipt of contributions to other resources;

4. *Notes*, within special purpose activities, the projected utilization of resources for:

(a) The amounts required in accordance with the UNICEF Financial Regulations and Rules to defray the costs of the administration by UNICEF of special accounts on behalf of others, including procurement services and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children;

(b) Private sector fundraising, for which budgets will be submitted annually for consideration and approval by the Executive Board at its first regular session;

5. *Requests* the Executive Director to:

(a) Provide actual financial information, following the format of the integrated resource plan, and assess performance against the integrated budget in her annual report to the Executive Board;

(b) Submit to the Executive Board for approval annually at its second regular session an updated integrated resource plan, following review of the financial projections on which the plan is based;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to include information on imbalances across programmatic and outcome areas as well as Goal Areas as part of existing reporting ahead of the structured funding dialogues at the second regular session of 2020 of the Executive Board;

7. *Notes* the information provided on the actual implementation of the revised cost-recovery methodology;

8. *Renews* the authority given to the Executive Director to establish additional senior-level positions on an as-needed basis, to be funded from within the approved institutional budget envelope for the planning period, and requests that the Executive Board be informed annually of the number of positions established, in the annual report of the Executive Director;

9. *Notes* that a revolving Working Capital Fund under the regular resources sub-account has been established, and will be funded by allocating a portion of the investment revenue as an internal financing mechanism under the regular resources sub-account;

10. *Approves* that the Executive Director, with the advice of the Comptroller, can advance funds from the revolving Working Capital Fund to offices and divisions for the implementation of country programmes to ensure the continued financing of projects within established risk-management parameters, on the condition that the funds be repaid within the period set;

11. *Requests* UNICEF to report annually to the Executive Board on the status of the revolving Working Capital Fund in the document entitled “UNICEF Strategic Plan: updated financial estimates”, which is presented to the Executive Board at the second regular session;

12. *Also requests* UNICEF to provide the Executive Board with the operational guidelines for the fund at the second regular session of 2020 of the Board;

13. *Further requests* UNICEF to ensure that the fund is managed effectively and transparently based on best practice from similar mechanisms; that advances from the fund are provided only where there is a high probability of repayment by donors, in line with the current practice; and that the fund does not contribute to a further increase in other resources at the expense of regular resources;

14. *Requests* UNICEF to review at the first second regular session after the first full year of operation of the fund to what extent the fund functions as intended and whether there are any unintended negative consequences of the establishment of the fund;

15. *Also requests* UNICEF to integrate into the structured funding dialogue at the second regular session of 2020, in alignment with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), an update on the impact of COVID-19 on UNICEF funding streams in terms of both volume and quality with regard to the extent and thematic focus of the earmarking of

funds, taking into account the funding compact;

16. *Notes with appreciation* the efficiency gains and the relative increase in the programmatic budget, while noting the need to continue to ensure the highest quality of programming and requesting UNICEF to ensure adequate investments in corresponding development effectiveness activities.

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