Narrative to accompany High-level Theory of Change for UNICEF Strategic Plan

1. What is the purpose of the High-level UNICEF Theory of Change and how does it work?

➢ The high-level Theory of Change (ToC) explains how UNICEF sees impact level change happening over the course of the Strategic Plan (SP) in 2025 and beyond (to 2030 in this case). It provides a one-page conceptual outline to frame the strategy at the heart of the SP.
➢ It describes a causal logic, moving from left to right in the ToC, to explain how UNICEF will work in partnership with others to convert inputs and activities into outputs, outcomes and impact.
➢ The ToC should have analytical integrity: it is designed to indicate a feasible set of causal pathways through which UNICEF, working in partnerships with others, will contribute to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the child-related SDGs and child rights.

2. How does the ToC link to the Goal Area ToCs and the Results Framework?

➢ The ToC provides the conceptual basis for the Goal Area ToCs, which are organized by Goal Area.
➢ Goal Area ToCs will use the logic of the ToC to describe what results will be delivered for each Goal Area, and how they will be delivered; they are much more specific and detailed than the overall ToC but should share the definitional and conceptual features of the high-level ToC.
➢ The Goal Area ToCs are instrumental in shaping the Results Framework. They explain how we expect change to come about and specify the corresponding results and indicators that support the tracking of whether change is actually happening as anticipated.

3. What do the different elements of the ToC mean and how do they inter-act?

➢ The different elements of the ToC can be described as follows:

   o Enablers: organizational structures, systems, culture, staff and financial resources/assets as “supporting conditions” which UNICEF will continuously invest in, that are conditions for UNICEF to be a more agile, values-based and effective organization.
   o Change Strategies: ‘game changing’ operational strategies that will be particularly support acceleration in the achievement of UNICEF’s planned results through the period of this SP; they do not represent everything that UNICEF does.
   o ‘UN working together’: this reflects that UNICEF will work in partnership with other UN agencies within the framework of UNDS reform to achieve the planned results.
   o Medium-term results (by 2025): medium-term outcomes (e.g. countries have better policies, plans and increased investment for children) to which UNICEF will make a meaningful contribution; corresponding results and indicators at this level will be expressed as much as possible as outcomes (e.g. number of countries with improved child rights legislation) rather than as outputs (e.g. number of UNICEF-supported programmes supporting improved child rights legislation).
   o Longer-term results (by 2030): shared results whose measurement will be based primarily on SDG outcome-level indicators (e.g. increased access to education and health services);
   o Impact: shared results whose measurement will be based primarily on SDG impact-level indicators (e.g. prevalence of FGM, child mortality rates).
   o Principles: principles underlying all of UNICEF’s activities that indicate the critical ‘hows’ of how UNICEF will work (e.g. human rights-based approaches; principles of humanitarian action).
Cross-cutting Programme (to be included in Goal Area ToCs): thematic priorities (e.g. climate action; disability) that are not situated as individual Goal Areas because they must be mainstreamed – with corresponding results and indicators – across all Goals Areas.

Spheres of control and influence: a sliding (non-binary) scale that shows – moving left to right – changing UNICEF accountability from attribution (for inputs / enablers) to contribution (to development impact).

Sample Indicators: examples of indicators that might correspond to different levels of the ToC; these will be further specified in the commissioning and development of the Goal Area ToCs and the Results Framework.

Here is an example of a causal pathway showing how the ToC might work in practice (each step would have corresponding results and indicators):

Deploying over 1,000 UNICEF Health Specialists (enabler), UNICEF will accelerate our work on health systems strengthening (change strategy) in partnership with specialist UN agencies such as WHO and UNFPA (UN working together) to increase financing for quality maternal and newborn child health plans (medium-term results) that will support increases in antenatal visits (longer-term results + ‘gender equality’ principle) in turn leading to the reduction of under 5 mortality (impact) including in humanitarian settings (‘humanitarian’ cross-cutting priority).

4. What do the contents of the boxes mean where they are written in shorthand?

The ToC uses shorthand (one or two words) to prevent it from becoming cluttered. Listed below are more detailed explanations of what is meant in each box; these will be refined and expanded as the SP is further developed, led by the relevant business units in UNICEF.

Principles:

Accountability: UNICEF’s accountability to children, to broader beneficiaries and to other stakeholders and enhancing the accountability of all actors to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Anti-racism and Non-discrimination: UNICEF strives to be an organization that contributes to the global movement for social and racial justice. It embraces and promotes diversity, equity and inclusion across all its internal systems and processes, as well as all its areas of work for children (programmes, advocacy, partnerships, supply and procurement, etc.)

Equity / Inclusion / LNOB: focus on the poorest, most marginalized, most vulnerable and excluded groups, including the extreme poor, indigenous groups, ethnic and linguistic minorities and migrant communities; Black Lives Matter.

Gender Equality: gender-sensitive programming and gender equality.

Human Rights: adopting a rights-based approach to programming.

Humanitarian Principles: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, do no harm.

Cross-cutting Programme:

Climate Action: ensuring that all of UNICEF’s work drives climate goals.

Disability: ensuring that disability is at the heart of all of UNICEF’s.

Gender: putting gender equality at the heart of everything UNICEF does; responding to the needs of LGBTQI+ individuals and groups.

Peacebuilding: addressing the root causes of conflict, crisis and fragility and improving vertical and horizontal social cohesion.

Resilience: building the capability of individuals, including mental health, communities and institutions to prepare for and respond to crises.
➢ Enablers:
  o **Agile and Responsive Business Model**: UNICEF’s operating model is relevant and adaptable to the changing global, regional and national contexts, enabling the organization to be effective, efficient, impactful and a leader in the multilateral system
  o **Strategic Internal Communication and Staff Engagement**: effective internal communication and active staff engagement
  o **Decentralised and Empowered Internal Governance and Oversight**: UNICEF having a healthy internal governance and oversight structure that encourages strategic risk-taking, bold innovation, empowered staff, while managing risk and encouraging compliance in line with the regulatory framework and integrity/ethics standards
  o **Dynamic and Inclusive People and Culture**: ensuring that the entire UNICEF workforce is skilled, motivated, agile, and empowered to perform at its best for the world’s children, in a culture that is based on our core values and where there is zero tolerance for all forms of misconduct
  o **Accelerated Resource Mobilisation**: resources generated for UNICEF through public and private sources

➢ Change Strategies:
  o **Advocacy and Communications**: advocacy, communications, brand building and fundraising with and for children to advance child rights and the realization of the child-related SDGs
  o **Digital Transformation**: harnessing digital tools both to improve UNICEF operations and as a programmatic strategy, including digital influencing, engagement and fundraising.
  o **Evidence and Knowledge Management**: research and evidence generation; the application of data and evidence to support evidence-based policies, planning, decision-making and delivery
  o **Gender Transformative Programming**: influence UNICEF’s internal systems to integrate gender equality in the programming
  o **Innovation**: innovative programming tools and methods including but not limited to applications of new technologies and product innovation
  o **Partnership and Engagement: Public and Private**: building public and private partnerships for more effective advocacy and programming, including partnerships with governments, intergovernmental institutions (e.g. EU, World Bank and regional development banks), global programme partnerships (e.g. GAVI, GPE), UN, communities, civil society, parents and caregivers and young people; building coalitions for transformation; engaging markets, to accelerate progress toward increasing access to and use of life-saving commodities, and fostering local economic development
  o **Risk-informed Humanitarian and Development Nexus Programming**: systematically link analysis, planning and monitoring of results and financing across UNICEF humanitarian development and peacebuilding programming
  o **Social and Behavioural Change**: working with individuals, groups and communities to change attitudes and behaviours and to challenge harmful social and gender norms
  o **Systems Strengthening**: strengthening the components, functioning, responsiveness and accountability of systems (health, education, child protection, communities etc.) for system-wide impact for children and capacity to prevent and respond to crises and fragility; strengthen resilience systems and community of parents and caregivers

➢ Medium-term results (by 2025):
  o **Country-level / Regional- and global-level**: while the bulk of UNICEF results will be delivered at the country level, some will be at regional and global levels (e.g. aspects of advocacy and market shaping)
  o **Access to Inclusive and Equitable Essential Supplies and Services**: equitable access to affordable, acceptable, geographically accessible, appropriate and quality supplies and
services impacting the current and future needs of children; while shaping local and global markets, influencing donor and national financing priorities and strengthening national systems; increased service coverage; better quality services; greater inclusiveness and accountability for service delivery outputs and outcomes

- **Business for Results**: potential and relevance of business are mainstreamed into UNICEF’s decision to maximising progress for children and achieving the SDGs with necessary ambition, knowledge, skills and resources
- **Behaviours, Social and Gender Norms**: changing harmful social and gender norms; supporting positive behaviours (e.g. positive parenting; health-seeking behaviour) supporting community engagement for ensuring people-centered development & crisis response and recovery
- **Child, Adolescent, Youth Engagement and Empowerment**: engaging children and young people as both a means and an end to better policy, programming and empowerment
- **Data and Evidence-based Decision-making**: building out management information systems; generation and use of data and evidence for evidence-based policy-making
- **Financing**: increased, more effective, more efficient, more equitable and more transparent financing for children; not only public financing but also private financing, including out of pocket expenditure
- **Governance, Institutions, Policies and Laws**: improving the effectiveness, inclusiveness and accountability of institutions (public sector, civil society, other) at national and subnational levels and in different territorial contexts; changes in policies and laws to make them child-friendly and advance impact
- **Implement the CCCs for Humanitarian Action**: predictable, effective quality and timely humanitarian action supporting the building of resilient systems
- **Public Engagement and Support to Child Rights**: including citizens who advocate, volunteer or donate for child rights purposes and other stakeholders’ engagement and support to child rights, e.g. at country level, governments, inter-governmental institutions (e.g. EU, WB, regional development banks), supporters, donors and volunteers are mobilized for our cause for children locally and globally.
- **Reduce Fragility, Prevent Crisis and Build Peace**: addressing root causes of fragility and conflict, reduced vulnerability and increased coping capacity of individuals, communities and systems and strengthened vertical and horizontal social cohesion

➢ Longer-term results (by 2030):
  - **GA1**: Every child, including adolescents, survives and thrives: ECD, Health, HIV/AIDS, Nutrition
  - **GA2**: Every child, including adolescents, learns and acquires skills for the future: Education
  - **GA3**: Every child, including adolescents, is protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and harmful practices: Child Protection
  - **GA4**: Every child, including adolescents, has access to safe, resilient water, sanitation and hygiene services and lives in a safe and sustainable climate and environment: WASH
  - **GA5**: Every child, including adolescents, has access to inclusive social protection and lives free of poverty: Social Protection

➢ Impact:
  - **SDGs**: retain fundamental components, including the key programmatic areas for which UNICEF is best known such as primary health care and nutrition, learning and skills, child protection, social investments for children, and water and sanitation, and high-level results will be framed within the context of the 2030 planning timeframe for child-focused SDG targets.
  - **CRC**: Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - **CRPD**: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
  - **CEDAW**: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women