



NGO COMMITTEE
on UNICEF

Oral Statement

UNICEF Executive Board. First Regular Session 2022

Distinguished President, Distinguished Members of the Board,
Distinguished Executive Director Russel

On behalf of the NGO Committee of UNICEF, a coalition of UN accredited Civil Society Organizations whose work focuses on children's rights and well-being, allow me to address the Executive Board.

First of all we want to congratulate the election to the presidency of the UNICEF Board, and we want to extend a warm welcome to the new Executive Director Catherine Russell. We also want to acknowledge the immense achievements by your predecessor, Executive Director Fore during a most challenging time.

The NGO Committee on UNICEF continues to appreciate the efforts that have been put into developing the new Strategic Plan despite the difficult climate posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. We welcome the initiatives

outlined in the five Focus areas, underpinned by the Sustainable Development Goals.

In order to advance the vision of a society that includes every child and promotes the human rights opportunity and agency of children, the NGO Committee on UNICEF takes this opportunity to highlight a few specific areas:

We commend the attention paid in the plan to the ongoing scourge of violence against children, including violence in the form of trafficking and abuse. A billion children around the world continue to be impacted by violence - in the home, in school, offline and online - even more so now due to the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic.

We value the strong emphasis on education, especially after the catastrophic shutdown of schools during the first year of the Pandemic, which resulted in learning loss for millions of children worldwide and had a particularly detrimental effect on children in low income countries. It is vital that every effort be made to make up for this learning loss, including support for teachers and investment in digital infrastructure so children everywhere can benefit from digital platforms not only during school closures but also as a means to access instruction not available in their particular location.

We take notice that children's mental health is included in the plan, as are programs to support parents and families, while increasing provision of family-friendly policies, including adequate parental leave; paid

breastfeeding breaks; affordable, accessible, quality childcare; and child support grants by governments and private sector employers.

We welcome UNICEF's decision that it will mainstream disability inclusion in all its child protection work.

As a coalition, and individually in our diverse capacities, our members are ready to contribute meaningfully to the achievement of the goals set out in the Strategic Plan, working in partnership to fulfill our joint responsibility to reach children from a wide range of backgrounds and leave no one behind.

Thank you (Mr. President.)