

## Enabling results for children at scale:

### A shared value proposition of UNICEF Regional Offices

#### I. United Nations reform and the value of regional structures

1. The 2030 Agenda envisages a new paradigm for global development, in which the value proposition of the UN must be clear and evident at all levels, and all its structures fit for purpose. As part of the UN reform process, the Secretary-General's Office has commissioned a report on the **strengths of the regional structures of the UN system and opportunities to enhance their sustainability**.<sup>1</sup> Building on these findings, the UN Secretary-General presented a report to the 44<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,<sup>2</sup> which responds to the call for *"options, on a region-by-region basis, for the longer-term reprofiling and restructuring of the regional assets of the United Nations"*, with five mutually reinforcing areas of transformation.<sup>3</sup> The **role played by Regional Offices (ROs) in the achievement of results for children**, under the policy guidelines set by its Executive Board are as follows:<sup>4</sup> *"The Regional Office serves as a mechanism of guidance, support, oversight and coordination of country offices within the region. It provides trend analysis of commonalities and diversities, flexibility to manage resources within the region to support individual countries. The Regional Office is the key facilitator of peer review and exchange among UNICEF offices within each region so that decisions at country and regional level are informed by the rich experiences and draw on the capabilities of UNICEF staff and partners."*

2. Of note, in addition to above mentioned role of ROs, they also contribute to wider UN coherence and coordination at the regional level through the Regional Directors' Team and other mechanisms. These efforts with sister UN agencies include but are not limited to, quality assurance of UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and UN Country Teams as well as joined technical support and expertise, through inter-agency thematic groups or Issue Based Coalitions.

#### II. Dimensions of value propositions of UNICEF regional structures

3. The key accountabilities of Regional Offices, in practice, include:

- (i) Leadership and representation of UNICEF in the region, advocacy to improve the situation of children and women, and collaborative work with regional partners within a mandate of UN coherence;
- (ii) Strategic planning and policy development to define regional strategies and plans in the context of global priorities;
- (iii) Technical guidance, oversight and performance monitoring of the progress, effectiveness and relevance of country programmes; and
- (iv) Oversight of management, working practices, cost effectiveness and evaluation and audit exercises.

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<sup>1</sup> A Sustainable Regional UN, CEPEI, April 2019

<sup>2</sup> A/74/73 -E/2019/4. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> GA resolution 72/279, OP 19(b).

<sup>4</sup> The Organization of the United Nation Children's Fund. Executive Board Annual Session, 1-5 June 1998.

4. UNICEF ROs provide a strategic link between global-level guidance and policy and country-level programme design and implementation, ensuring that UNICEF’s mandate and accountability is reflected in quality programming in the field. The ROs help to ensure that UNICEF can adapt and maintain its relevance within – and remains intrinsically connected to – regional UN sustainable development frameworks, while creating a space that upholds UNICEF’s normative role on issues that might be sensitive at country level.

5. **Programme for innovation, scale up and sustainability.** ROs provide strategic advice and highly specialized technical assistance to COs – and by extension to member states – in line with UNICEF’s Strategic Plan and as a key contribution to the achievement of the SDGs.

- a. Beyond the key role of sector specialists in providing guidance and technical expertise to COs in core areas such as health, education and child protection, ROs are equipped to provide specialized skills in cross-sectoral (adolescent programming, gender and communication for development) and emerging areas (climate change and urban programming) that can be accessed by COs.
- b. ROs facilitate the implementation, documentation, validation and dissemination of best practices and effective solutions for scale-up, as well as fostering and convening knowledge sharing and South-South cooperation. ROs play a significant role in the identification of transferable models that can be adapted to other contexts, working with COs to design solutions that have the potential for replication, follow up on their implementation, and support their robust evaluation.
- c. ROs ensure that UNICEF country programmes have a strong focus on equity and – in line with organizational priorities, strategies and principles, as well as UNICEF’s Strategic Plan – provide technical support and quality assurance to COs at every stage of their programming and planning. The RO also oversees the distribution of thematic funding across the regions, based on first-hand knowledge of specific country needs.
- d. ROs also oversee and provide technical expertise to COs on the implementation of multi-country initiatives for development assistance, as well as for humanitarian response.
- e. ROs adjust their structures and capacity to adapt to – and support COs on – emerging challenges. Structures have been enhanced, for example, to respond to migration crises and large-scale humanitarian crises, while Climate Change Advisor positions have been established in several ROs to respond to the country teams’ need for expertise and guidance on this issue. In addition, dedicated Evaluation Advisor positions have been established in every RO in response to the Executive Board’s recommendation to strengthen UNICEF’s decentralized and independent evaluation function.
- f. ROs guide and support COs in harnessing innovations and scaling-up innovative solutions to strengthen the impact of programmes, as well as operational efficiency and effectiveness. This includes technical support to implement real-time monitoring tools that generate timely and reliable information to improve programme performance and to ascertain whether interventions are generating the intended outcomes for children. ROs also support the use of innovative approaches to promote citizen engagement and social accountability, including the U-Report platform, which informs users of public services about their rights and enables them to monitor and report on the quality of the services on offer.

6. **Advocacy, partnerships and convening capacity.** UNICEF’s convening role and engagement in strategic partnerships at regional level contributes to joint efforts to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. The ROs represent UNICEF at regional fora and international dialogues and play a key convening role on issues related to child rights, drawing on UNICEF’s field presence and deep knowledge of each country to provide region-wide perspectives.

- a. ROs play a central role in convening regional stakeholders around key issues for children to inform policy change and increase budgets for children. Further, with the enhanced role of regional and international financial institutions, ROs have initiated a series of regional discussions with these institutions and with finance ministries on common areas of investment for children in the pursuit of the SDGs.
  - b. ROs establish and mobilize strategic networks and partnerships with academic and research centers to strengthen the evidence-base on social and economic disparities through the high-quality analysis of regional trends and their impact on the most vulnerable children. The resulting knowledge is instrumental in defining innovative programming approaches at country level.
  - c. ROs also facilitate joint fund-raising efforts through regional-level dialogue with humanitarian and development partners, and by helping identify multi-country or cross-border areas of cooperation where donors can pool technical and financial resources to benefit several countries. These regional-level engagements complement and bolster CO efforts and enable UNICEF and donors alike to recognize opportunities to expand cooperation geographically and thematically, calibrate for efficiencies and achieve greater impact for children.
  - d. There is widespread recognition that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs will not be achieved without increased engagement with and by the private sector. ROs engage actively with private sector partners, support the analysis of private-sector trends and build capacity within COs to nurture shared value partnerships with the private sector to unleash its potential for enhanced programme delivery. ROs also support COs in identifying appropriate partners to promote child rights, including private-sector partners that adopt child rights business principles.
  - e. UNICEF ROs facilitate the provision of consistent and coherent advocacy and communication messages on the common values and norms of the UN to inform public opinion and advocate on human rights, as well as issues that are politically sensitive. ROs are well placed to foster the regional engagement of national stakeholders, including governments, parliamentarians, civil society, the private sector, academia, the media, international organizations, faith-based organizations and communities, as well as children and young people, lifting child rights issues beyond national borders.
  - f. **ROs have been able to position a common regional narrative or agenda for children around which stakeholders have convened.** These regional narratives have allowed a very diverse range of countries to aggregate both results to celebrate and gaps to be filled in relation to the most relevant SDGs for children and UNICEF's Strategic Plan, through commonalities that define a clear contribution for UNICEF results at scale. These regional narratives are being used to influence policy, inform advocacy and steer programmatic approaches across every region.
7. **Oversight, evaluation and UN coherence.** The role of ROs in providing oversight for COs encompasses technical support and quality assurance for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all country programmes.
- a. ROs ensure that corporate processes and procedures are followed properly and effectively at the country level, resulting in an organization that functions smoothly, mitigates risks and delivers results for children in an efficient manner. ROs also provide a critical oversight function to ensure quality control of planning instruments, including the Country Programme Document and management plans, and ensure that COs are fit-for-purpose for the effective and efficient implementation of their country programmes.
  - b. ROs provide quality assurance for country-led evaluations and harness the potential for cross-country learning through the conduct of thematic multi-country evaluations.

- c. ROs provide facilitation and technical support to the UN Country Team (UNCTs) in each country through capacity building support and guidance on the implementation of the Common Country Analysis, as well as the development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework across the regions. As part of their role in UN reform processes, UNICEF ROs coordinate closely with other agencies and entities to pursue opportunities to integrate common services to enhance the efficient use of resources. UNICEF also plays a key role in the regional UN Sustainable Development Group for common programming and the sharing of best practices across the UN system globally, regionally and at country level. ROs work closely with other agencies and regional economic commissions on data and statistics for several purposes, including the generation and analysis of data, statistical capacity building and the monitoring of regional trends and progress towards the SDGs.
  - d. ROs support the timely and sound roll-out of UNICEF's Business Operations Strategy at the country level through the oversight instrument, coordination and Programme Budget Review processes that have an impact on staff, premises and common services.
- 8. The development and humanitarian continuum, with a transboundary approach.** ROs play a pivotal role in supporting the COs in undertaking timely, effective and reliable humanitarian action in coordination with humanitarian partners through the cluster mechanism, humanitarian country teams, multi-country coordination and programming platforms, and in partnership with the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. ROs enable rapid scale-up in response to large-scale emergencies, as well as ensuring support for children and families caught up in less visible emergencies.
- a. In complex humanitarian settings, ROs are best placed to implement a humanitarian programme to connect efforts to reach vulnerable children across affected countries and geographical areas. As UNICEF responds to the many challenges faced by children in today's humanitarian emergencies, it is increasingly required to develop and implement sub-regional, regional and inter-regional strategies, responses and coordination measures that involve multiple countries and continents. By leveraging its regional presence, through its ROs, UNICEF is well placed to address these accelerating and shifting demands.
  - b. ROs increasingly emphasise bridging the divide between humanitarian action and long-term development, and on reinforcing both prevention and resilience, by helping countries to strengthen their analysis of underlying causes of vulnerability to disasters, fragility and conflict and by linking emergency responses to longer-term programme response, including preventive measures. This approach is essential within the wider context of the SDGs because it promotes closer connections among stakeholders in the humanitarian and development arenas beyond UNICEF.

### MAPPING OF UNICEF REGIONAL OFFICE ASSETS AND CAPACITIES

	<b>Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO)</b> Nairobi, Kenya	<b>East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO)</b> Bangkok, Thailand	<b>Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO)</b> Geneva, Switzerland	<b>Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO)</b> Panama City, Panama
Countries covered by the Regional Office	Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan (Republic of), Tanzania (United Republic of), Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.	Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Viet Nam.	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo (SCR1244), Moldova, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.  In addition to the above, technical cooperation in several European countries (e.g. on Child Protection)	Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Anguilla, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Montserrat, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Turks & Caicos Islands, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).
2018 Expenditure from Core Budget (IB+RR)	USD 18.3 million	USD 12.4 million	USD 13.3 million	USD 12.1 million
2018 Expenditure from Additional Funds (OR)	USD 15.3 million	USD 8.3 million	USD 24.0 million (includes Refugee and Migrant Response in Greece (13.9 M) and Italy (2.4 M))	USD 7.4 million
Number of Personnel	P5 and above: <b>25</b> P1/NOA – P4/NOD: <b>81</b> GS Staff: <b>25</b>	P5 and above: <b>21</b> P1/NOA – P4/NOD: <b>34</b> GS Staff: <b>21</b>	P5 and above: <b>20</b> P1/NOA – P4/NOD: <b>33</b> GS Staff: <b>16</b>	P5 and above: <b>17</b> P1/NOA – P4/NOD: <b>57</b> GS Staff: <b>24</b>
Senior Management	3	2	2	2
Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation, Reporting	12	12	5	7
Programmes, Policy, Data and Innovation	66	34	38	44
Communications & Advocacy	3	5	5	6
Partnerships & Resource Mobilization	6	8	6	11
Operations, Budget, HR	41	15	15	28

	<b>Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO)</b> Amman, Jordan	<b>Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA)</b> Kathmandu, Nepal	<b>West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO)</b> Dakar, Senegal
Countries covered by the Regional Office	Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cabo Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.
Expenditure from Core Budget (Regular Resources)	USD 16.1 million	USD 9.6 million	USD 13.0 million
Expenditure from Additional Funds (Other Resources)	USD 84.6 million (includes Whole of Syria programme)	USD 7.4 million	USD 17.3 million
Number of Personnel	P5 and above: <b>25</b> P1/NOA – P4/NOD: <b>67</b> GS Staff: <b>27</b>	P5 and above: <b>17</b> P1/NOA – P4/NOD: <b>28</b> GS Staff: <b>18</b>	P5 and above: <b>25</b> P1/NOA – P4/NOD: <b>75</b> GS Staff: <b>30</b>
Senior Management	2	2	2
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Reporting	9 (including 1 for Whole of Syria approach)	5	6
Programmes, Policy, Data and Innovation	65 (including 19 for Whole of Syria approach)	33	78
Communications & Advocacy	9	2	5
Partnerships & Resource Mobilization	2	2	3
Operations, Budget, HR	32 (including 7 for Whole of Syria approach)	20	36