

# **Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund**

**Report on the first and second regular sessions and annual  
session of 2015**



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**Part one**  
**First regular session of 2015**

**Held at United Nations Headquarters from**  
**3 to 5 February 2015**

## **I. Organization of the session**

### **A. Election of officers of the Executive Board (item 1)**

1. The Executive Board elected as President Masood Khan, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, and as Vice-Presidents Mwaba Patricia Kasese-Bota, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations, Laura Elena Flores Herrera, Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations, Heiko Thoms, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, and Kristel Lõuk, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Estonia to the United Nations.

### **B. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF (item 2)**

2. The President of the Executive Board said that this was a time of both great promise and serious peril for the world's children. Children around the world were under greater threat than ever before from humanitarian emergencies, sectarian strife and crises, such as the outbreak of the Ebola virus, which had devastated families and communities in West Africa. In the last few months, the world had been devastated by increasingly brutal attacks by extremist groups against children. On 16 December 2014, terrorists had killed 134 children in a school in Peshawar, Pakistan. The attack had traumatized his nation and the entire world and galvanized them to take actions to save children from such savagery and brutality.

3. The Executive Board observed a moment of silence in honour of all children who were victims of violence.

4. The President recognized the heroic work of UNICEF staff all over the world. He said that the UNICEF equity agenda helped to shine a light on the poorest of the poor and the marginalized, many of them women and children. Together with Guatemala and Luxembourg, Pakistan was Co-Chair of an informal group of 30 Member States that made up the Group of Friends for Children and the Sustainable Development Goals. The group would work through the two intergovernmental processes for the post-2015 development agenda and financing for development to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights of children.

5. He noted that the UNICEF Executive Board is unique in the United Nations system because political differences are put aside by the Board so that work can focus on achieving consensus in the best interests of the child.

6. The Executive Director acknowledged the recent death of a steadfast friend of UNICEF, Mr. Mårten Grunditz, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations. The Executive Board observed a moment of silence in honour of Ambassador Grunditz.

7. The Executive Director then spoke of an issue with profound implications not only for UNICEF but also for the entire world: the information technology revolution. He stated that information technology was exciting but also frightening, because it could be used to bully children through social media, recruit them online into extremist groups, exploit them sexually or even to increase inequities between children who have a connection to the Internet and those who do not. At the same

time, technology has promised to create new opportunities to make the world a better place for children.

8. Today, mobile phones and rapid messaging technology are being used to reunite families in South Sudan, speed up HIV test results in Malawi and Zambia, and register children's births in Nigeria. Technology has also helped the most disadvantaged make their needs known. U-Report, for example, uses short message service (SMS) technology to bring communities in direct contact with their Governments and UNICEF. There are now "U-reporters" in 11 countries, accounting for more than 3 million messages exchanged per month.

9. Technology has also strengthened the ability of UNICEF to keep children's rights at the centre of global discussions. More than 2.5 million people visit the UNICEF website using mobile phones every year. About 1.2 million people follow UNICEF on Twitter and 3 million people are reached each week on Facebook. More than one third of this audience is aged 25 years or younger.

10. Technology has fundamentally transformed the ways in which ideas, influence and information are shared and used, allowing communities, civil society groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations, businesses and ordinary citizens to amplify their own voices.

11. Two years ago, UNICEF had conducted an examination of trends over the next decade, called UNICEF 3.0, which focused on partnerships — with donors, NGOs, communities and others. Traditionally, such partnerships had been based largely on contractual arrangements in which one party supplied resources, another arranged for goods and services to be delivered and yet another delivered them. Such transactional relationships did not always allow room for thinking through problems together and for finding new and more efficient ways to assist those in need.

12. UNICEF 3.0 challenged the organization to find new ways to work together to improve the lives of children everywhere, moving from formal partnerships to structured networks and alliances, informal partnerships, campaigns and movements that were more organic and horizontal. Of course, UNICEF activities had always revolved around partnerships, primarily with Governments, which would continue to drive its work. This, however, did not mean that partnerships were frozen in time. At the session, the Executive Board would discuss ways to maintain a UNICEF presence in high- and middle-income countries. This was an important opportunity, not only to continue the effective partnerships UNICEF had built with countries over the decades, but also to collaborate to find new ways of reaching the children being left behind in every society, including developed countries.

13. The focus of UNICEF partnerships with donors was moving beyond resources alone. Both sides were increasingly working through challenges together, using their expertise and experiences to develop solutions that worked. Partnerships with the private sector were breaking the confines of traditional donor-recipient cooperation, as the Supply Division was now working with companies to reduce the costs of essential commodities such as vaccines, and to improve the specifications for products, ranging from toilets to water purification devices.

14. UNICEF must also look for new opportunities to work through structured networks and Global Programme Partnerships such as the Global Polio Eradication Initiative. Through this public-private partnership comprising over 200 countries and 20 million volunteers, more than 2.5 billion children had been immunized. The



Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI Alliance) was achieving similar results, lowering the costs of life-saving vaccines and helping the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and their partners to vaccinate half a billion children over the past 15 years, all by bringing together businesses, investors, Governments, United Nations agencies and other partners, including, very importantly, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

15. Not all partnerships needed to be formal networks or alliances. The battle against Ebola was showing how a variety of partners could come together in different ways. Informal partnerships often came alive through South-South and triangular cooperation, as countries shared ideas and best practices with one another. Campaigns were another way to bring partners together in action for children. The No Lost Generation, End Violence and Imagine campaigns had reached millions of people and raised awareness about the rights of children. Social movements could also be a powerful pillar of support development efforts of Governments. The initial success of the Scaling Up Nutrition movement was due not only to Government commitment and resources but also to the commitment and action of networks of activists and experts from around the world.

16. In a horizontal world, UNICEF and the United Nations could not simply proclaim leadership and impose sustainable development goals. Meeting these goals should be an opportunity to build or strengthen broad-based movements for saving the environment, ending extreme poverty and promoting women's rights and child survival, health, education, nutrition and protection.

17. UNICEF had worked closely with five leading NGOs — ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages and World Vision — to put children at the heart of the new development agenda. UNICEF was supporting Action/2015, a diverse and growing movement of more than 1,200 organizations, coalitions and partnerships in more than 125 countries. UNICEF was working to embrace the new horizontal world in its complexity and use these changes to fuel new partnerships, collaborative efforts, ideas, solutions and movements that would improve children's lives, safeguard their futures and build a better world.

### **C. Adoption of the agenda (item 3)**

18. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2015/1) for the session.

19. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 39 observer delegations, including 2 intergovernmental organizations, 10 National Committees for UNICEF and 2 NGOs.

## **II. Deliberations of the Executive Board**

### **A. Oral report on UNICEF follow-up to recommendations and decisions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Programme Coordinating Board meetings (item 4)**

20. Following introductory remarks by the Director, Programme Division, the Associate Director for HIV/AIDS, Programme Division, presented the report.

21. Delegations commended UNICEF for its work, as part of the United Nations coordinated response to HIV, to empower young people to protect themselves against and from HIV, to enhance social protection for people affected by HIV and to prevent mothers from dying and babies from becoming infected with HIV.

22. UNICEF and its partners were commended on achievements in the treatment of children, but more work was still needed. Innovative methods were required to increase access to antiretroviral treatments for pregnant women and children, including further improvements to diagnostics and treatments for paediatric HIV to stimulate lower costs and appropriate formulations.

23. Delegations expressed support for the leadership of UNICEF in ramping up programmes to address the HIV epidemic among adolescents, particularly young women, and through All In, the multi-partner initiative to close the gap in treatment and prevention among adolescents. They stressed that youth-friendly services that linked sexual and reproductive health with HIV were critical. Comprehensive sexuality education in and outside schools was necessary to ensure that young people had adequate knowledge about HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. This was important in the light of complex social problems such as gender-based violence, stigma and discrimination. The rights and empowerment of adolescents should be at the centre of those efforts.

24. Speakers urged UNICEF to work with partners to better understand the impact of social protection programming and improve the evidence base for these interventions. This would be especially relevant for the post-2015 development agenda.

25. Speakers expressed appreciation for the alignment between UNICEF HIV programmes, the Strategic Plan for 2014-2017, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Unified Budget Results and Accountability Framework. They encouraged UNICEF to utilize its ongoing experiences to help improve the UNAIDS strategic focus, country-level coordination and leadership. UNICEF was also asked about the implications of the upcoming revision of the UNAIDS strategy and the fast-track strategy for its HIV work and focus up to 2015 and beyond.

26. A speaker described her Government's national strategic plan for HIV 2013-2020 and the national HIV support programme aimed at vulnerable children, which is carried out in collaboration with UNICEF and other stakeholders.

## **B. UNICEF programme cooperation (item 5)**

### **1. Country programme documents**

27. The Vice-President of the Executive Board (Zambia) informed the Executive Board that in accordance with its decision 2014/1, country programme documents would be considered and approved at the present session on a no-objection basis. Drafts of the country programme documents for Madagascar (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.1) and Mali (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.2) had been posted on the Executive Board website (<http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard>) during the period from 10 to 28 November 2014 to give members of the Executive Board an opportunity to comment on them. The comments received had been shared with the respective regional and country offices and Governments and taken into account, as appropriate, in the final versions of the documents now before the Executive Board. A costed evaluation plan for each country programme had been posted on the Executive Board website, as had the United Nations Development Assistance Framework results matrices. Further discussion was to be held only if at least five members of the Executive Board had informed the secretariat in writing that they wished to bring a country programme document before the Executive Board for further discussion. The secretariat had received no such requests.

28. The Director, Programme Division, made some general comments about the two country programme documents.

29. The Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, presented the country programme document for Madagascar. She thanked the Executive Board members and delegations who provided extensive comments in the lead-up to finalizing the country programme document (comments were posted from Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America). These comments helped to crystallize the components of the country programme document and intensify its focus.

30. The representative of Madagascar said that the country programme document had been prepared under the leadership of the Ministry of Economy and Planning, in an inclusive process that had involved the participation of and consultation with all stakeholders, including through sectoral consultations with the UNICEF country office and the Regional Office. The proposed programme responded to national priorities and, as part of the process, would contribute to achieving the targets contained in the country's national development plan and further enable key sectors, including the private sector and civil society. The year 2015 marked 30 years of UNICEF operations in Madagascar. The Government hoped that as the country emerged from five years of social and political crises, cooperation with all partners, particularly UNICEF, would continue to ensure that no generation of children was left behind.

31. The Vice-President commented that the country programme document demonstrated a commendable spirit of solidarity and partnership with the plans and priorities of the host country.

32. After providing a brief summary of recent UNICEF efforts to combat the Ebola virus outbreak and respond to the ongoing level 3 emergency in the Central African Republic and other crises, the Regional Director, West and Central Africa, introduced the country programme document for Mali. He noted that the programme

of cooperation had benefited from the comments of several delegations, in particular Belgium, Canada, Norway, the United Kingdom, Sweden and the United States.

33. The representative of Mali said that the serious security crisis that had occurred in 2012 in the northern part of the country had dealt a harsh blow to the Government's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals regarding children, who were the major casualties of the crisis. With the support of the international community, Mali was focusing on returning children to school, on the socioeconomic reintegration of those affected by the crisis and on the promotion and protection of the rights of that fragile segment of society. The proposed country programme would undoubtedly lead to improved basic social services, social cohesion, economic recovery and the return of public administration in the northern regions of the country.

34. The Vice-President added that the UNICEF programme complemented the work of the Government in providing fundamental and key interventional services for children.

35. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/1 (see annex II).

## **2. Extensions of ongoing country programmes**

36. The Vice-President said that, in accordance with its decision 2009/11, the Executive Board was informed of the one-year extensions of the country programmes for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and the six-month extension of the country programme for Ethiopia. The Executive Board was requested to approve the two-year extensions of the country programmes for Myanmar and Papua New Guinea. These proposals were presented in document [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.3](#).

37. The representative of Papua New Guinea thanked UNICEF for aligning the country programme with the country's medium-term development plan for 2011-2015, which had been extended to 2017. That would ensure better coordination with the national planning cycle and allow particular focus on accelerating immunization; early childhood care and development; education for girls; ending violence against children; and strengthening access to justice for children.

38. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/2 (see annex II).

## **C. UNICEF work with countries transitioning from middle- to high-income status (item 6)**

39. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, External Relations, the report ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.6](#)) was presented by the Director, Division of Data, Research and Policy.

40. Several delegations expressed support for UNICEF continuing to work in countries making the transition, particularly in the context of the organization's universal mandate. One speaker said that because of the UNICEF child rights mandate, it was an existential discussion about the core values of the organization. Within the current shifting dynamics of the world today, including the discussions on the sustainable development goals and financing for development, the debate

provided an important precedent for a larger discussion within the wider United Nations system.

41. At the same time, however, speakers stressed the vital importance of ensuring that the primary focus of UNICEF continue to be on children in least development countries and sub-Saharan Africa. A group of delegations reiterated the recommendation of the previous President of the Executive Board that UNICEF develop a clear and comprehensive strategic action plan for Africa's children. UNICEF should not only increase by a significant percentage the allocation of regular resources to Africa, but also work with donors and partners to allocate more non-core resources to country programmes in Africa.

42. Two delegations, welcoming the proposed new policy, discussed the role of UNICEF in their countries as they made the transition from middle- to high-income status. In one case, the Executive Board had approved the transformation of a country programme from a traditional programme into one that generated resources from the private sector within the country, a mandate supported by an additional government contribution in the form of office facilities. UNICEF gradually had transformed its development assistance role to a true partnership that was engaging citizens, experts, the media, the private sector and Government authorities. The country now contributed to global regular resources and was recognized as a model for advancing children's rights and for a sharing good practices in its region. The second country had made the transition from recipient to donor country, establishing a National Committee that was a major contributor to UNICEF, and offered its experience as a model for other countries.

43. Other speakers encouraged UNICEF to challenge the paradigm of donor and recipient countries and continue to pursue South-South and trilateral cooperation.

44. A delegation suggested that the issue of working with countries transitioning from middle- to high-income status would best be addressed through a strategic inter-agency plan to be considered by the General Assembly. A second speaker cautioned against using concepts that had not been agreed by Member States until a satisfactory and common understanding had been decided by the Economic and Social Council and the upcoming third International Conference on Financing for Development. The draft decision presented in the report would have a systemic impact on the financing model of other funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and a piecemeal approach to reform should be avoided.

45. Other delegations stated that the Executive Board was the best platform for developing mechanisms to challenge the status quo. It was important that in 2015 the Board commit to consider changing the way UNICEF worked, because business as usual was not an option. UNICEF was the agency that could implement the innovations within its organizational structure needed to support countries going through this transition, including through ensuring its ongoing physical presence in relevant countries.

46. Several speakers stressed that gross national income or gross domestic product should not be the main indicators for determining a country's status, as they often masked national inequities that affected children in middle- and even high-income countries. Middle-income countries were diverse and some were extremely vulnerable to external factors. There was no "one size fits all" model, and it was critical that country programmes take into account the particular needs and

requirements of individual countries. UNICEF should define measurements and indicators that provided a more focused view of the internal situation in each country so as to target resources more effectively.

47. In terms of the specific proposals in the report, a delegation said that countries might encounter legal impediments that would prevent them from using public resources to contribute to UNICEF. The condition that countries match UNICEF regular resources could be a disincentive because failure to mobilize funds from the private sector would mean that Governments would have to make up that deficit using public resources.

48. Another delegation said that the proposal did not take sufficiently into account in-kind contributions such as premises for country offices, and financial contributions such as overhead paid by Governments for cost-sharing for projects. It would be counterproductive to endorse any shift from a voluntary to a mandatory approach for financing by high-income programme countries. The very idea of turning new high-income countries that are still developing into net contributors to regular resources also deserved more debate because it could aggravate, rather than address, the current imbalance between regular and other resources from traditional donors. Requiring high-income developing countries to contribute to core resources while others continued to earmark their contributions was neither reasonable nor sustainable.

49. Other delegations saw as key the proposal that high-income countries match 100 per cent of the amount UNICEF invested in the respective countries as a contribution to regular resources. They asked about the rationale behind high-income countries only contributing to management of related cost after five years, and whether it would be possible to ask them to contribute sooner; if UNICEF had a plan for countries not living up to the requirements proposed in the decision; and if the proposal included the principle that all fundraising units must follow the same rules and regulations.

50. Several delegations suggested that going forward, UNICEF provide information about its experiences in high-income countries, including the effects on human and administrative resources, and that the issue be included in a comprehensive assessment connected to the midterm review of the Strategic Plan in 2016 and the related review of the allocation of country programming resources. The review of UNICEF activity in high-income countries should include experience in mobilizing civil society for fundraising and child rights advocacy, and the opportunities and constraints for the establishment of a National Committee.

51. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/3 (see annex II).

#### **D. Update on UNICEF humanitarian action and proposal for an increase in the ceiling of the Emergency Programme Fund (item 7)**

52. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, presented the update on strengthening humanitarian action and the proposal (E/ICEF/2015/P/L.4).

## **1. Update on strengthening humanitarian action**

53. Delegations applauded the UNICEF staff working in extremely challenging circumstances, often at great personal risk. They underscored the important role of UNICEF in protecting children and their families when natural disasters occurred and during violent conflict. The organization's Ebola response was a good example of its role in responding to humanitarian crises.

54. Speakers said that UNICEF held a unique position in breaching the divide between humanitarian action and development efforts and contributing to the implementation of the resilience agenda. They commended the initiatives taken to integrate and link humanitarian and development programmes. They encouraged UNICEF to continue to develop joint approaches across its humanitarian development programmes to support timely and coherent transitions from relief to development.

55. Delegations welcomed the efforts of UNICEF to strengthen its organizational capability to respond effectively to humanitarian crises, including staffing, more targeted strategic partnerships, increased surge capacity and improved monitoring and evaluation systems. They expressed support for the Executive Director's actions to ensure that essential personnel were in the right place with the right skills at the right time, including through the expansion of the Emergency Response Team.

56. UNICEF was encouraged to continue to work with host Governments before, during and after emergencies to ensure effective responses that supported existing capacities. It was suggested that UNICEF country programmes in crisis-prone contexts always include updated emergency preparedness and response plans. Delegations welcomed UNICEF efforts to better adapt humanitarian action to emerging operational contexts and to implement risk-informed programming at the country level.

57. It was suggested that UNICEF should use its knowledge and expertise to contribute to innovations within the humanitarian system as a whole, in order to support joint system-wide improvements. The humanitarian system could benefit from innovations and partnerships with the private sector.

58. Delegations expressed support for UNICEF work in responding to sexual and gender-based violence and for its role as subcluster co-lead with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in this area within the global protection cluster. They encouraged UNICEF to continue to work with its partners to integrate prevention, response and sexual and reproductive health into comprehensive responses to sexual and gender-based violence.

59. It was noted that for 2014, UNICEF has reported good results for nutrition and health, and weaker results on protection and education. UNICEF was urged to strengthen education in humanitarian crisis, promote child protection and prioritize education in emergencies. Speakers stressed the paramount importance of including education in the initial humanitarian response because education could be life-saving through the access it gave to information, protection, health care, and water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. Education was too often far down the list of priorities in humanitarian crises, and needed to be prioritized in early recovery and long-term development aid. Speakers cited the leadership of UNICEF, particularly the Executive Director, in the No Lost Generation strategy, which was a good example of addressing the harmful disruption to children's education in

emergencies. One noted the importance of reintegrating children affected by conflict into their communities. They also noted that in the recent emergency in the Philippines, UNICEF and the global education cluster efforts in education had served almost 1 million children, and the education sector work was highly rated in the programme evaluation. This was cited as a great achievement.

60. Delegations commended UNICEF for continuing to strengthen and build innovation into its humanitarian action. Innovation was a key to unlocking new ways of solving humanitarian problems, such as building on cash trends for technologies and developing a greater role for the private sector. Speakers also commended UNICEF for its leadership in preparations for the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit.

61. Delegations encouraged UNICEF to thoroughly implement recommendations from evaluations of humanitarian programmes and to strengthen both its role as cluster lead globally and in humanitarian contexts and its cooperation with partners, especially NGOs. They encouraged UNICEF to take into consideration the outcomes of the current independent review of the global protection cluster.

## **2. Strengthening predictability of the UNICEF response to humanitarian crises: Proposal to increase the Emergency Programme Fund ceiling**

62. Delegations voiced widespread support for the proposal to double the ceiling of the Emergency Programme Fund from \$75 million per biennium to \$75 million per year. However, the increase should not have a negative impact on the ability of UNICEF to attract voluntary contributions, and UNICEF should ensure alignment of the Fund with other international financing mechanisms, such as the Central Emergency Response Fund. At the same time, UNICEF should work proactively to find long-term solutions to supporting humanitarian activities through innovative approaches to securing emergency funding.

63. A speaker said that the Central Emergency Response Fund could be more successful if its resources were channelled more rapidly to implementing agencies, and called upon UNICEF and all other agencies to ensure more timely distributions to NGOs. A delegation encouraged all humanitarian organizations to continue to make good use of the Central Emergency Response Fund and disburse funding in a timely fashion. It was also crucial that, once disbursed by the Central Emergency Response Fund, the funds be used rapidly in the field. It was suggested that all agencies benefiting from the Fund improve its outreach by better presenting its achievements.

64. One delegation suggested that, given the good results shown by UNICEF and the high level of utilization of the Emergency Programme Fund during 2014, the possibility of further increasing the ceiling could be investigated, with the issue reassessed in one year.

65. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/4 (see annex II).

## **E. Extension and expansion of the Vaccine Independence Initiative and its revolving fund (item 8)**

66. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, the report ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.5](#)) was presented by the Director, Supply Division.



67. In general statements made at the opening of the annual session, many delegations expressed support for the extension and expansion of the initiative and its revolving fund. One delegation asked if freight costs were included in the payments from the revolving fund or if the requesting country would be responsible for those charges. The Director replied that the disbursements covered the cost of freight, which was thus part of what was replenished and paid at the end of the process rather than at the beginning.

68. Another speaker asked about the donors to the revolving fund, how the fund was replenished and if the mechanism helped to lower the prices and increase the quality of the goods purchased. The Director replied that there had been original donors to the capital fund, but because it was a revolving fund it replenished itself and the capital remained intact. The aim of increasing the fund was to meet more financing needs for countries. As for quality and price, vaccines purchased by UNICEF were prequalified by WHO. UNICEF also worked with national Governments to ensure that the products they imported were licensed, and facilitated the exchange of relevant documentation with the national regulatory authorities. UNICEF had a number of ways to achieve the lowest prices, including pooling quantities of vaccines, to give greater leverage in negotiations with industry, and multi-year tenders, to reduce the risk to manufacturers of having to guess the quantities UNICEF and Governments would buy each year.

69. To a question raised by the Vice-President about the cost of vaccine shipments to landlocked countries, the Director replied that medicines were predominantly shipped by sea but vaccines were almost exclusively shipped by airfreight because the cold chain had to be maintained from the point of manufacture through to the end users. UNICEF employed temperature monitoring devices that recorded the temperature of the vaccines throughout the shipment until they reached the consignee, who inspected and confirmed the good condition of the vaccines. A vaccine vial monitor on every vial of vaccine purchased by UNICEF detected any changes in temperature. In terms of moving vaccines more efficiently in landlocked countries, UNICEF worked continuously to improve supply chains.

70. Asked about the other commodities to be acquired through the expanded initiative, the Director said that the majority of requests made were for immunization supplies, but because of the effectiveness of the initiative for financing vaccine purchases, national Governments saw its potential for purchasing other products as well. These were predominantly health and nutrition products, particularly ready-to-use therapeutic food and essential medicines, and also supplies for the Ebola response and for water, sanitation and hygiene. The Supply Division was tracking and monitoring the requests and could report back at a later date.

71. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/5 (see annex II).

## **F. Evaluation reports and management responses (item 9)**

### **1. Real-time evaluation of the UNICEF response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines**

72. The report, which had been made available on the UNICEF website, was presented by the Director, Evaluation. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, the management response was presented by the Regional Director, East Asia and the Pacific.

73. The representative of the Philippines expressed his country's profound appreciation for the tremendous assistance extended by UNICEF in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan. UNICEF had mobilized the highest level of response possible. Its appeal for \$120 million had been fully funded thanks to the extraordinary generosity of national, institutional, international and individual donors. UNICEF had been able to deploy emergency teams and supplies to support the essential protection, health, nutrition, education, and water and sanitation needs of the effected families and children. A year later, UNICEF continued to assist the rebuilding efforts in the affected communities. The continuing UNICEF response was sustained and comprehensive in scope and the Government was in overall agreement with the evaluation.

74. A group of delegations stressed the importance of an independent evaluation function within UNICEF and encouraged the organization to allocate sufficient resources for this work and to follow up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations.

75. They commended UNICEF for carrying out this real-time evaluation, for reviewing the recommendations and for making detailed plans for follow-up. There were many positive findings in the report. Work in health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene and cash transfers had received high marks, while work in nutrition and protection had received lower ones. The fundraising work carried out through the National Committees for UNICEF had been truly outstanding. The evaluation highlighted many of the relevant challenges. The management response showed that UNICEF was already incorporating recommendations and lessons learned in its emergency work.

76. The primary lesson learned from this evaluation was the importance of emergency preparedness and response plans, and delegations encouraged UNICEF to consider integrating a minimum level of such plans into all country programmes in crisis-prone contexts, in an initiative led from headquarters.

77. The delegations encouraged UNICEF to continue the analysis of how available funds were spent. Although efficiency considerations were difficult to assess in a real-time evaluation, they were at the heart of evaluations and must be addressed.

## **2. Evaluation of UNICEF upstream work in basic education and gender equality 2003-2012**

78. The Director, Evaluation, introduced the report, which had been made available on the UNICEF website. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, the evaluation was presented by the Director, Programme Division.

79. A group of delegations said that the evaluation was comprehensive, detailed and analytical, providing a good overview of the direction in which UNICEF was moving. The evaluation showed the importance of long-term engagement. It also demonstrated the importance of having skilled and credible staff who could build confidence and trust among Government representatives, donors and relevant stakeholders, and secure long-term financing.

80. Delegations requested more information on how the results of upstream work would be documented, including issues related to sustainability, attribution and

aggregated results. Because actual policy change often required multi-year interventions, they encouraged UNICEF to prioritize reporting on intermediate changes as well as on actual change and impact results; and to report on the strategies used and results achieved in different contexts.

81. It appeared that UNICEF was still struggling to find its role within emergency and conflict-sensitive contexts related to upstream work, although the Zimbabwe case study provided a good example of how UNICEF could use an upstream focus to support the transition out of emergency mode in the context of a humanitarian emergency.

82. Delegations encouraged UNICEF to align its work more closely with the AIDS agenda and supported the recommendation on the need to strengthen the capacity of the education team for upstream work. They asked how UNICEF was ensuring exchange of knowledge and experience among the global, regional and national levels. Given a lack of relevant and useful analysis on how gender had been included in upstream work, they asked UNICEF to assess whether an additional evaluation was required, focusing specifically on gender and gender equality in upstream work. They further urged UNICEF to integrate gender and gender equality aspects into all evaluations.

83. Delegations noted that the evaluation also stated that UNICEF work on capacity-building focused too much on individuals rather than institutions. They requested UNICEF to seek stronger collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other relevant organizations, especially at the country level, using the “Delivering as one” concept.

## **G. UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2013 and report of the Board of Auditors (item 10)**

84. The Executive Board had before it the UNICEF financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2013 and report of the Board of Auditors ([A/69/5/Add.3](#)); the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors contained in its reports on the United Nations funds and programmes for the financial period ended 31 December 2013 ([A/69/353/Add.1](#)); and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions ([A/69/386](#)).

85. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Management, the reports were presented by the Deputy Director for Accounts in the Division of Financial and Administrative Management, the Acting Comptroller.

86. Delegations welcomed the fact that the Board of Auditors had once again issued an unqualified audit report on the financial statements for the period under review and complimented UNICEF on the progress made on the recommendations of the previous report. A group of countries requested a copy of the management actions and clear plans that were in place for addressing the issues raised by the Board of Auditors, possibly with deadlines and milestones.

87. Delegations also welcomed the significant progress UNICEF had made in the past year on the general oversight of National Committees and encouraged further

progress in this regard. While the overall National Committee retention rate had dropped from 28 per cent in 2012 to 24 per cent in 2013, there was still room for further improvement in the retention rates and reserve policies of the Committees. UNICEF was urged to follow up on this matter.

88. A group of delegations noted with concern the observations of the Board of Auditors about serious deficiencies in the systems and routines for selecting, monitoring and evaluating implementing partners. Speakers said that, according to the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, 32 per cent of overall expenditure was incurred through implementing partners. This high percentage underlined the need for sufficient assessment of the partners' capacity prior to a cash transfer and for efficient systems for monitoring of partners. They asked how UNICEF would improve the selection, monitoring and evaluation of its implementing partners. Maintaining strong procedures in these areas would help to build the financial-management capacities of implementing partners, which were crucial for the implementation of UNICEF country programmes.

89. Delegations encouraged UNICEF and its United Nations partners to address these issues at the inter-agency level, especially because they had already been raised by the UNICEF internal auditors in 2012 and by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit in 2013 and had been highlighted as weaknesses within the United Nations Development Programme and UNFPA.

90. It was noted that the report of the Advisory Committee also pointed out the importance of information-sharing regarding with other United Nations entities as part of improved control and risk management regarding implementing partners. Although the harmonized approach to cash transfers was a good tool in this regard, external and internal audit reports had shown that adherence to the harmonized approach to cash transfers varied among country offices. Because the harmonized approach to cash transfers had been revised in 2014, it now provided an even better framework for UNICEF collaboration with implementing partners. Delegations urged UNICEF to provide necessary support and resources to country offices for the effective implementation of the harmonized approach to cash transfers.

91. Delegations welcomed the unqualified audit opinion for 2013 that each agency had received during the second year of implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards, which clearly were bringing positive changes. These included better transparency, monthly reviews of financial information and the streamlining of processes to reduce manual inputs. Speakers encouraged UNICEF to continue its efforts in these areas.

92. Speakers also welcomed the progress made in addressing the significant employee benefit liabilities and encouraged UNICEF to share these positive experiences with donors and other United Nations agencies facing these challenges. In line with the recommendation of the Board of Auditors related to UNICEF cost management, they supported the recommendation to continue the analysis of the cost of country offices' private sector fundraising activities. Such an analysis could provide information about best practices for raising funds and inform strategic discussions on the best use of resources.

93. A group of delegations expressed support for the recommendation of the Board of Auditors to establish baselines and targets for all indicators in the Strategic Plan. This was crucial for measuring results and programme effectiveness in relation to

the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the Strategic Plan. The delegations looked forward to the establishment of a mechanism to link the resources and indicators of the Strategic Plan to those at the country level to support global reporting of resource-related achievements.

94. A delegation asked how consolidated accounts were evaluated by each agency in countries where there was one United Nations country office. The Deputy Director replied that to her knowledge, in countries where the United Nations was working as one, the agencies still maintained separate accounts.

## **H. Private Fundraising and Partnerships: 2015 workplan and proposed budget (item 11)**

95. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, External Relations, the Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships presented the division's 2015 workplan and proposed budget ([E/ICEF/2015/AB/L.1](#)).

96. A group of delegations said that, in view of the economic situation in several countries where UNICEF had National Committees, it was right to expect moderate growth in 2015. They said that they expected the proposed strategy of concentrating on expanding markets and on income streams with high cost-benefit potential to be highly efficient and trusted that it would determine how UNICEF investment capital would be used. They also expected the investment funds to be used to provide start-up financing for new income streams as pledged, and that they would generate new revenue for regular resources.

97. The delegations further said it remained uncertain to what extent the previously established pledge programmes would require further UNICEF investment or whether such programmes, once they received initial start-up financing, would be funded by the market.

98. The delegations requested more information on how the investment funds were allocated among National Committees and field offices and how much income they generated. The strategy to further strengthen fundraising by field offices was a correct approach. Financial contributions by individuals and the private sector in countries where UNICEF had field offices provided a great opportunity to achieve UNICEF income objectives and to broaden the UNICEF donor base. If these countries wanted to receive start-up financing, they had to abide by the same criteria used by the National Committees, including adherence to the contribution rate of 75 per cent and a retention rate of 25 per cent.

99. The delegations expressed their gratitude for the excellent work of the National Committees. This included both their important financial contribution and their advocacy for children's rights around the world and in their respective countries.

100. The representative of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF said that 2014 had been a year of unprecedented humanitarian crisis and violation of children's rights, especially in conflict situations. National Committees had responded with alacrity and flexibility by mobilizing more than 1 billion constituents, partners and volunteers, as well as Governments. They had raised substantial earmarked funds to support UNICEF on multiple fronts and continued to do so. The visible presence and impact of UNICEF in emergencies was an important

demonstration to their constituents of the UNICEF mission of upholding and realizing the rights of children everywhere, particularly those in the most extreme circumstances.

101. The National Committees had embarked upon a challenging and ambitious four-year strategic plan, under which their contribution to private sector income would increase to \$1.4 billion by 2017. The year 2014 had been a record year of achievement for National Committees. National Committees welcomed an expanded engagement with the private sector in a greater number of countries, with a view towards increasing contributions to regular resources.

102. The immediate focus for 2015 was to build on that result and secure the sustainable means to underpin continuing growth. That would be achieved primarily through the recruitment of monthly pledge donors, building on the Committees' base of over 4 million such donors, known as global parents. Funds from these donors go directly to regular resources.

103. Other key sources of income growth for National Committees were scalable partnerships with the corporate sector and foundations, deeper engagement with major donors and legacies.

104. The task of National Committees was greatly assisted through the provision of investment funds approved by the Executive Board, which were already showing good projected returns. A pattern of oversubscription for investment funds indicated further untapped potential.

105. In all these efforts, National Committees could draw upon decades of experience in entrepreneurial fundraising partnerships and effective advocacy.

106. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/6 (see annex II).

## **I. Pledging event (item 12)**

107. The Executive Director began the event by thanking partners who supported UNICEF. He said that a substantial, predictable and increasing flow of regular resources was central to the work of UNICEF, especially as it responded to a growing number of emergencies.

108. He noted that in 2000, approximately half of UNICEF revenue had been regular resources, compared with one fourth today. There were some positive signs in contributions, including in 2014, when Government partners had increased contributions to regular resources by 9 per cent compared with 2013. For 2015, however, it was possible that the high value of the United States dollar and its effect on exchange rates could affect regular resources revenue and the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

109. The Director, Division of Public Partnerships, presented examples of results achieved through the use of regular resources in the Central African Republic (accessing water, sanitation and hygiene in emergencies), Viet Nam (improving institutions and services for children) and Belarus (reducing inequities for children with disabilities).

110. The representatives of 11 Governments pledged their support for UNICEF in the amount of \$26 million.<sup>1</sup>

111. The Executive Director thanked the Governments that had made pledges, emphasizing the importance of working with partners to achieve results for children.

## **J. Other matters (item 13)**

### **Provisional list of agenda items for the annual session of 2015**

112. The Secretary introduced the list to Executive Board members for their information.

## **K. Adoption of draft decisions (item 14)**

113. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2015/1 through 2015/6 (see annex II).

## **L. Closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board (item 15)**

114. The Executive Director said that the new Executive Board, with its new President and Bureau, had made a very encouraging start to the year. At the session and the joint meeting of the Executive Boards, delegations had discussed the new and innovative means that UNICEF was using to reach the hardest-to-reach children and do business within the organization. The Board had taken important decisions to raise the Emergency Programme Fund ceiling, expand the revolving fund of the Vaccine Independence Initiative and affirm the principle of UNICEF engaging with countries transitioning from middle- to high-income status. It had approved two country programmes and held discussions that affirmed the importance of, and would help UNICEF to improve, its evaluations and HIV/AIDS programmes.

115. Running as a thread through everything that the new Board had done, he said, was something old — the common, absolute commitment to the rights of children everywhere, especially of the most disadvantaged.

116. Even as he looked forward to the coming year, it was with some regret because the President of the Executive Board, Ambassador Khan, was departing New York to take up a new assignment. As Vice-President and now as President, the Ambassador was leaving an inspiring legacy of competence, commitment, clear vision and impartial leadership to achieve results.

117. The President said that with the Executive Director at the helm of UNICEF and the able team that was behind him, UNICEF would continue to move to higher planes of performance and productivity. As had been reiterated throughout the session, 2015 was a pivotal year for UNICEF and the entire United Nations system.

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<sup>1</sup> For details of Government contributions to regular resources pledged or paid for the years 2014 and 2015 (as at 5 February 2014), see [E/ICEF/2015/CRP.2](#) on the UNICEF Executive Board website. Contributions also include pledges received during the 2014 United Nations Pledging Conference in November 2014 and those received outside of pledging events. As at 5 February 2014, UNICEF had received total pledges of \$107 million for regular resources in 2015 from 29 Governments.

It was the year in which the post-2015 development agenda was expected to be adopted by the General Assembly in September. Member States must continue to use every tool and technique available, so that the widening chasm between the richest 1 per cent and the remaining 99 per cent of the population was bridged; so that families, communities and infrastructures would be resilient enough to withstand the next typhoon, the next earthquake, the next drought; so that staff, supplies and systems would be readily available when there was an outbreak of infectious disease; and so that the unending toll of human suffering caused by years of sectarian conflict would be halted.

118. The Group of Friends for Children and the Sustainable Development Goals, the informal group of more than 30 Member States that the President of the Board had co-convened on behalf of Pakistan, together with Guatemala and Luxembourg, had strongly supported the inclusion of all child-focused targets in the final post-2015 development agenda. The Group believed that investment in children was not just smart economics, but was also a model imperative. As it worked within the intergovernmental processes for the post-2015 development agenda and financing for development, it would continue to lean on UNICEF, its natural partner.

119. Reviewing the work of the Executive Board for the session, he said that the decision on support for countries transitioning to high-income status reflected the universality of the UNICEF mandate and recognized that inequality and inequities existed in all countries. By approving the extension and expansion of the Vaccine Independence Initiative, the Executive Board had recognized that expanding this long-standing mechanism would offer many additional advantages to children, by helping UNICEF and its partners to secure good prices, stable supplies and timely and efficient procurement. Approval of the 2015 workplan and budget for Private Fundraising and Partnerships would help the organization and its National Committees to expand revenue from the private sector, a close partner and a significant and growing source of funding for UNICEF, and to bolster private sector engagement and advocacy for child rights in industrialized countries. These decisions would contribute to a stronger, more flexible and more responsive organization, guided by its able leadership and its whole-hearted embrace of innovation.

120. He said this would be his last session as President of the Executive Board, as the Executive Director had mentioned. In keeping with past practice, Pakistan would continue to hold the presidency, and he assured the Board of his successor's full support and cooperation.

### **III. Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP**

121. This chapter is a summary of the discussions that took place during the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP/UNFPA, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Food Programme (WFP), held on 2 February 2015. The text was prepared by the secretariats of the funds and programmes and approved by the Presidents of the four Executive Boards.



## **A. In partnership with others: lessons learned on scaling up innovation to reach people in need**

122. The President of the Executive Board of UNICEF opened the meeting, welcoming all participants to the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP. He also welcomed the United Nations Secretary-General, who was participating for the first time.

123. The Secretary-General began the meeting with a few remarks, in which he stressed the increasingly important role of regional bodies and the need to strengthen skill sets and support to Member States at the international level. He underlined four main points, stating that:

- (a) Innovation was not an end in itself;
- (b) Partnerships were vital to maximizing knowledge, skills, best practices and resources;
- (c) Innovation required the right enabling environment; and
- (d) United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies had to be able to expand space for innovation and at times allow for failure.

124. The heads and deputies of the six United Nations organizations discussed the opportunities and challenges they faced in developing and scaling up innovative ideas, processes and products. It was the first time the six had discussed the issues of innovation, risk-taking and management, partnerships and financing with their respective executive boards.

125. The discussion was organized into a number of segments, including a “fail faire” — an exercise in which participants learn from failure — and a question and answer session with Member States. The six organizations shared their experiences in innovating and highlighted the value innovation provided to programming. Furthermore, a number of ideas were presented on how innovation could improve in the future, including through closer links to outcomes, knowledge-sharing and better communication with stakeholders. The need to bridge different aspects of United Nations operations, in particular humanitarian assistance and development, was highlighted.

126. Member States actively engaged throughout the session and provided a number of comments, notably stating that:

- (a) Innovation was an area in which Governments had to invest;
- (b) Links between innovation and results needed improvement;
- (c) Innovation could contribute more effective measurements of development;
- (d) The post-2015 development agenda promised to be an area where United Nations organizations could develop a more harmonized approach.

127. Furthermore, a number of Member States expressed their vision of the way forward, stating that the United Nations:

- (a) Should encourage data-sharing among all United Nations organizations in order to better utilize big data and strategic foresight methodologies;

(b) Leverage the expertise of a diverse set of actors because diversity was a critical component of innovation;

(c) Test, prototype and pilot new ideas along with rigorous monitoring and measuring in order to predict failures and successes.

128. In conclusion, the leaders of the six United Nations organizations stressed the importance of creating the right enabling environment for innovation that could: cultivate a greater, more inclusive impact; establish partnerships; and strengthen cooperation and sharing within the United Nations development system. They agreed that they needed to build innovation into their organizational cultures and that management should allow for possible failure in innovation.

129. In closing, the President of the Executive Board of UNICEF thanked delegations and the six United Nations organizations for their participation and commended them for taking an innovative approach to the joint meeting during the morning session.

## **B. Innovative approaches to programme design and implementation to support the operationalization of the post-2015 development agenda**

130. The President of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS welcomed the representatives of the six United Nations organizations and the guest speakers.

131. The Administrator, UNDP, highlighted that the United Nations system was in the process of reviewing how it worked in order to guarantee its best support to Member States in delivering on the post-2015 development agenda. This review process involved organizations' concerted efforts to become fit for purpose and included strengthening a range of innovative approaches to development practices that they increasingly use. She noted that new technologies allowed the United Nations system to reach ever wider audiences, while engaging end-users in identifying challenges and creating solutions could greatly contribute to successful implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Finally, the standard operating procedures for Delivering as One represented a step change in streamlining and coordinating United Nations system work at the country level.

132. The former United Nations Resident Coordinator in Montenegro presented some innovative approaches tried by the United Nations there. For example, a United Nations country team-led initiative had engaged youth in defining challenges and co-creating solutions on youth unemployment in Montenegro. A key lesson learned was that innovation required time and implied trial and failure.

133. The Director, United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office, and former Resident Coordinator in Zambia, highlighted key lessons learned in Zambia. She underscored that the entire country team should become collectively engaged, particularly at the policy level. Enhanced public engagement was another critical factor. She also cited the importance of simplifying procedures and processes at the local level, noting the implementation of the standard operating procedures, stressed that the United Nations should jointly endeavour to strengthen and support national capacities. Such innovations would drive the new round of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks with the participation of all stakeholders at the design and delivery stages, covering its main areas: data

acquisition and analysis; citizen engagement; sustainable development planning; and business operations. In their comments, delegations stated that:

(a) Innovation was necessary to address significant and emerging multidimensional challenges such as poverty eradication and climate change;

(b) Member States would require adequate resources and assistance for the successful realization of the sustainable development goals, while programme countries must seek to mobilize both public and private resources at the national level;

(c) The post-2015 development agenda was about service delivery, which required funding. Cost savings should therefore be further explored in the context of the current system of governance;

(d) The fit-for-purpose discussion should not lead to further expansion of bureaucracy;

(e) It was necessary to revisit the alleged fragmentation around the issue of climate change/environmental sustainability within the United Nations system;

(f) Repositioning the United Nations system should aim at strengthening its comparative advantages, for example, in the areas of statistics and data, while building on already existing systems and approaches.

134. The response from the panel included the following points:

(a) Major challenges moving forward would arise in relation to the transformative, larger, more complex and urgent post-2015 agenda, as compared with the previous Millennium Development Goals;

(b) The United Nations development system would need to be more cost-effective and collaborative, utilizing policy expertise for sustainable results.

135. In summarizing the discussions, the Executive Director, UNOPS, noted that harnessing the power of technology to gauge opinions across the world provided an inclusive basis to guide decision makers. People-centred development, she stressed, should not be a one-off exercise. The United Nations should remain on its path forward and continue to adapt, learn to anticipate and be ready to innovate.

136. The President of the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS closed the meeting by thanking delegations and the six United Nations organizations for their active participation and rich discussion.

**Part two**  
**Annual session of 2015**

**Held at United Nations Headquarters from**  
**16 to 18 June 2015**

## **I. Organization of the session**

### **A. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF (item 1)**

137. The President began by paying tribute to the heroic work of UNICEF staff around the world, in particular the UNICEF staff and security personnel who had been killed or injured in the terrorist attack in Somalia in April.

138. She noted that 2015 was a seminal year, as the target year for the Millennium Development Goals, for the expected adoption of the sustainable development goals and post-2015 agenda, and for making significant progress on strengthening financing for development. These efforts, along with the focus on equity, would make a great difference in the lives of children. No real progress could be made for children unless all children, particularly the most disadvantaged and marginalized, were reached with health care, nutrition, education, protection and an enabling environment in which their full potential was realized.

139. Children were even more vulnerable during conflict and crises, and UNICEF was making a crucial difference, thanks to its increasingly efficient operations and cooperation with United Nations agencies, Governments, NGOs and other partners, including through the cluster approach. Children needed further support as they faced widespread violations of their rights in the face of dwindling public and private funding resources. The worst-affected were the most disadvantaged and marginalized, and UNICEF was to be commended for championing the cause of equity.

140. The Executive Director began by recognizing Martin Mogwanja, the Deputy Executive Director for Management, who was retiring after nearly 40 years of service. Mr. Mogwanja would be succeeded by Fatoumata Ndiaye, currently the Director of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations.

141. Today also marked another milestone, as it was almost five years since he had arrived at UNICEF. However, rather than a time for commemoration, this session was an opportunity to take stock of progress made as UNICEF had refocused its efforts on equity. Why had UNICEF concluded five years ago that an equity agenda was vital? The basic answer was that pursuing equity was simply right. It was an expression of the right of every child to health, education, protection and survival. Too often, development progress was achieved by concentrating efforts on some, but not all, of the world's people and children. Five years later, the blight of inequality was being diagnosed and debated in virtually every society. There was a growing global understanding of the scope and cost of a highly unequal world. In developing countries, on average, children in the poorest households were twice as likely to die before the age of five as children in the richest households, nearly twice as likely to be denied a proper birth registration, more than twice as likely to be stunted and five times as likely to be out of school.

142. The disease of inequality was the product of a vicious intergenerational cycle. How could an economy spark or sustain growth if its citizens were uneducated or if at an early age, its children failed to develop their full cognitive capacity? Highly unequal societies were more unstable and grew more slowly and erratically. Sustainable economies could grow if every child had a fair chance in life.

143. Inequities were not inevitable. Global progress had shown that equity gaps could be narrowed, although much work remained because in some cases, progress was stalled or even slowing. The vicious intergenerational cycle of inequality could not be reversed without quality education. Without disaggregated data, inequalities would be overlooked, as nations focused on overall progress and national averages. UNICEF worked closely with Governments to improve the quality of data through Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys and Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis. The transformative Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) was helping to track the progress in overcoming barriers and bottlenecks that were keeping children from the support they needed. MoRES helped UNICEF and partners to collect evidence about and overcome these barriers to reach the most marginalized children and shape programmes more precisely around their needs.

144. As UNICEF continued improving its programmes, it must continue to improve as an organization by managing for results, including improved targeting of resources, and to measure their impact across programmes and services. This also meant better managing its most precious asset, its staff. An attack on one staff — such as the brutal attack that killed four staff members and killed or wounded several others in Somalia in April — was an attack on all within UNICEF. The best way to honour the bravery and dedication of all staff members was to meet the needs of staff with the same sense of commitment that UNICEF devoted to pursuing its mission.

## **B. Adoption of the agenda (item 2)**

145. The Executive Board adopted the provisional agenda, timetable and organization of work for the session ([E/ICEF/2015/4/Rev.1](#)).

146. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 32 observer delegations, including 1 intergovernmental organization, six National Committees for UNICEF and four NGOs.

## **II. Deliberations of the Executive Board**

### **A. Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: performance and results for 2014, including a report on implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (item 3)**

#### **UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (item 3)**

147. Following introductory remarks by the Executive Director, the reports ([E/ICEF/2015/5](#), [E/ICEF/2015/5/Add.1](#) and [E/ICEF/2015/6](#)) were introduced by the Director of the Division of Data, Research and Policy.

148. Many delegations paid tribute to the UNICEF staff members killed in Somalia and expressed appreciation to all UNICEF staff for their remarkable dedication to the cause of children.

149. Delegations commended UNICEF for its strong performance in 2014 and the results achieved across the seven outcome areas of the Strategic Plan. Speakers in

particular cited the work of UNICEF in helping to reduce maternal and child mortality, improve access to drinking water, increase access to primary education and promote the rights of children.

150. UNICEF was commended for its efforts in nutrition but a speaker said that many of the results were focused on processes rather than outcomes. In the face of growing food insecurity and global economic downturn, a delegation called on UNICEF to broaden its complementary feeding programmes for young children, including by forging partnerships with the WFP school feeding programme to help improve nutrition and reduce dropout rates.

151. Another speaker commended UNICEF for the progress achieved in the area of water, sanitation and hygiene, including its work related to gender and rights and value-for-money studies. A delegation said that water management should be a core business of UNICEF, and encouraged UNICEF and partners to examine the whole water cycle, including access to groundwater, and to ensure that assistance took into account the need to support existing urban water, sanitation and hygiene systems. UNICEF needed to retain and develop technical capacity at the field level.

152. Delegations expressed support for the equity approach and focus on the most disadvantaged children because of the gaps and inadequacies that remained in areas including health, skilled birth attendance, HIV/AIDS, water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and infant feeding, education, child protection, domestic violence and social integration, with persistent disparities and inequalities within and between countries.

153. Delegations stressed the continued importance of efforts to combat HIV/AIDS on a number of fronts: among adolescents aged 10 to 19, with additional efforts needed by UNICEF and partners to address AIDS-related mortality in this age group; stigmatization; the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV; adequate funding; and expedited research for a cure.

154. One speaker said that his country had faced the re-emergence of polio but, with support from the Government and international partners, had been able to halt its spread. Two delegations cited the work of UNICEF in Pacific island States, for example, through the Pacific Maternal Newborn and Child Health Programme and its quick response to recent measles outbreaks in some countries.

155. Almost all delegations expressed appreciation for the valuable UNICEF contribution to the collective response to the many humanitarian crises in 2014, including through its role as cluster lead in some cases, and also for its role in integrating humanitarian action and development goals. Some speakers, however, said that humanitarian activity should not be carried out at the expense of development goals, and one delegation said that the Executive Board's decision to raise the level of the Emergency Programme Fund should be temporary.

156. A number of delegations cited the UNICEF response to the Ebola outbreak, including the community care centre strategy, and to the recent earthquakes in Nepal and the ongoing conflicts in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and neighbouring countries. In the light of its "stellar performance" in the Ebola context, UNICEF should seek additional opportunities to provide inter-agency support to emergencies. Another speaker said that the anthropological analysis and focus on community engagement as lessons learned from the Ebola outbreak response needed to be analysed and documented to assess their applicability in other settings.

157. One speaker called upon UNICEF to take all necessary measures to end the recruitment of children and to increase efforts to attract funding for emergencies, including the Syrian crisis.

158. A delegation praised the “remarkable work” of UNICEF in the Central African Republic, which recently had led to the signing by armed groups of a commitment to free child soldiers from their ranks. Another speaker said that child protection in United Nations peacekeeping operations and security architecture, especially during and after conflict, should take into account the rights and needs of children.

159. UNICEF was commended for its efforts to link humanitarian assistance with resilience-building and longer-term development programmes. A speaker encouraged UNICEF to continue supporting both the humanitarian response system and its own process to ensure that regular programmes were more closely aligned with its emergency programmes.

160. Another said that UNICEF should take meaningful steps to reduce the risk to children of disasters, natural and man-made, and to build children’s resilience. The importance of minimizing the negative consequences on the most vulnerable groups, especially persons with disabilities, was also stressed.

161. Citing the collaboration between UNICEF and WFP in emergency response, a speaker said that the pilot project on returns on investment for emergency preparedness showed that such investment could result in significant time and cost savings. These were important reflections for the humanitarian community to take forward in preparing for the World Humanitarian Summit.

162. A delegation encouraged UNICEF to continue to promote eligible candidates to the Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator pools. Another found it a positive development that UNICEF staff were increasingly trained to work in humanitarian contexts around the world.

163. Several speakers stressed the importance of protection of children and the promotion of their rights. It was important to ensure the status of children as rights-holders entitled to dignity and equal protection under the law, and to recover the voices of the voiceless, in particular children and adolescents.

164. Delegations expressed appreciation for UNICEF work to combat violence against children, including through the #EndViolence and other campaigns. Addressing gender-based violence in emergencies was also of utmost importance. UNICEF played a critical role as the lead agency for child protection, and co-lead for gender-based violence together with UNFPA.

165. One delegation announced the recent launch of its national strategy for the elimination of female genital mutilation/cutting, which would be implemented in full collaboration with UNDP, UNICEF and UN-Women.

166. A delegation requested further information about UNICEF approaches to improving learning outcomes. The upcoming Oslo Summit on Education for Development would aim at mobilizing renewed political commitment to reach the 58 million children who were still denied the right to education and to improve learning outcomes for children and youth, including in emergencies. Education remained underfunded both for immediate humanitarian response and building preparedness and resilience.



167. One delegation encouraged UNICEF and other partners to continue to support the work of the Innocenti Research Centre, and proposed that the Centre's reports be discussed at future sessions of the Executive Board.

168. A number of delegations addressed the continued imbalance between regular and other resources. It was suggested that UNICEF consult with other agencies, for example UNFPA, facing the same challenge. There should be an exchange of ideas on how to attract new donors and involve traditional donors to a greater extent. The structured dialogue to take place during the second regular session would provide an opportunity for the Board to discuss funding gaps and incentives for increased core contributions and a shift to less restrictive other resources.

169. Several delegations stressed the importance of a climate of trust among all development partners. This included timely and early consultations between UNICEF and countries on sensitive issues on which there was inadequate understanding in the international community. UNICEF must align its actions with national priorities, work with total impartiality and promote the rights of the child in conformity with every society's particular culture and social patterns, and ensure national ownership of its programmes.

170. The importance of National Committees for UNICEF was highlighted by several speakers, both as partners in major national initiatives concerning children and in providing increased resources to the organization.

171. Delegations stressed the importance of partnerships to the success of UNICEF work, in particular innovative partnerships with the business sector, relevant experts and academia. A speaker recommended that the Executive Board take more active measures to create partnerships with new donors.

172. On the report itself, delegations said that the new format was a significant step forward, as it identified the level of performance for each development outcome in a transparent manner. With the data companion, UNICEF had provided an improved basis for substantiated discussion on its performance. The report provided a much clearer picture of the development outcomes that UNICEF delivered for children and families living in poverty. One delegation expressed appreciation for the inclusion of disaggregated data for gender and children with disabilities.

173. A speaker said that a more systematic description of progress achieved in relation to the results framework would have been useful. Another said that although the results section was structured by outcome areas, the report should indicate the expected outcome for each area and should make reference to the associated outputs as defined in the Strategic Plan. Regarding expenditure, the report did should take an integrated results and resources perspective, showing planned versus actual expenditure per outcome area. UNICEF should engage with other United Nations entities that had developed results-based reporting, including the use of scorecards to track progress against budgetary and development milestones and targets.

174. In future reports, delegations would welcome improvements, including: a comprehensive summary of the indicator performance and the related expenditure and resources; continuing progress to fill the remaining gaps in the results framework with baselines and targets; reflections on how to address shortcomings and challenges; systematic information on gender equality expenditure per outcome, using the gender markers; better comparisons of results across outcome areas and over time that explicitly demonstrated the links between resources spent and results

achieved; data disaggregated by categories of countries; and a more detailed analysis of challenges such as social norms and underinvestment in social services.

175. Several speakers welcomed the continued efforts of UNICEF to implement the mandates of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. UNICEF was encouraged to continue coordinating operations and programmes with other United Nations agencies, including through joint programmes. Encouraging initiatives such as Delivering as One and the standard operating procedures should be further scaled up so that the United Nations could truly speak with one voice and deliver results. A delegation requested more information on the impact on UNICEF of harmonizing approaches to procurement, human resources management, information technology and financial management.

176. A number of delegations addressed the importance of the upcoming midterm review of the Strategic Plan. UNICEF was requested to consult closely with Member States and to present a timeline for the review.

177. Many delegations stressed the importance of the post-2015 agenda, underpinned by a strong framework for financing for development. There was a real opportunity through the sustainable development goals to create an ambitious plan for the next 15 years that would revitalize the approach to development. UNICEF would play a critical role in the implementation of the agenda and must continue to ensure that the most disadvantaged children and families were fully included. UNICEF must be fit for purpose to address the challenges following the adoption of the new goals. A human rights-based approach and its strong mandate would be key for UNICEF to deliver on the high expectations for the post-2015 agenda.

178. Several delegations said that innovation would be critical to achievement of the sustainable development goals. Innovation could significantly increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and speed of interventions for children, for example by utilizing new technology to expand access to education for all, improve the quality of learning and ensure empowerment of girls. It was noted that UNICEF and the Government of Finland were co-hosting a global innovations for children and youth summit in November 2015.

179. The Executive Board took note of the report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit ([E/ICEF/2015/6](#)) and adopted decision 2015/7 (see annex II).

## **B. Annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2014-2017 (item 4)**

180. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, the report ([E/ICEF/2015/8](#)) was introduced by the Principal Adviser, Gender and Development.

181. Delegations noted encouraging progress regarding early and forced marriage, adolescent health and sexual and gender-based violence. They agreed that gender mainstreaming across the seven outcome areas of the Strategic Plan was necessary to achieve comprehensive results. Gender mainstreaming should also be further integrated into the advocacy work of UNICEF, both in the field and in multilateral forums. Although gender-related expenditures had reached 9.2 per cent of total programme expenditures in 2014, this was far from the target of 15 per cent by end-2017.

182. A delegation stressed that UNICEF should remain engaged with national Governments to ensure that its implementation of the gender action plan took into account different national contexts and that these actions be realistic, practical and feasible.

183. A speaker welcomed UNICEF efforts to increase oversight and accountability for the gender performance of its country programmes, and another asked about the concrete steps that would be taken to ensure that 100 per cent of country programme management plans included provisions for results on gender equality.

184. Speakers expressed appreciation for the transparency of the report in identifying institutional challenges, and asked for information on concrete measures on the way forward.

185. Regarding gender staffing and capacity, delegations asked about the actual increase in dedicated gender experts in the field; how UNICEF intended to recruit gender experts at the country level; and how it planned to strengthen capacity-building across the organization and the level of resources to be committed to this important task. UNICEF should consider specialized personnel who would bring combined expertise in gender and such sectors as HIV/AIDS, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene and education. Delegations also asked for more information on the pilot initiative to develop talent among women and nationals in programme countries. A speaker urged UNICEF to generate more evidence-based positions to guide Member States on issues of gender advancement, staffing and capacity-building.

186. Delegations said that the link between individual results discussed in the report and their wider impact was not always clear, asked for more information about the collaboration at global and country levels with UN-Women and suggested that future reports include a section on partnerships.

187. Speakers urged UNICEF to include a results matrix and performance benchmarks, as presented in the Gender Action Plan. Based on the current reporting, it was difficult to ascertain whether implementation of the plan was on track or not.

188. Delegations said that reporting on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women did not give a sense of where UNICEF had met requirements. It would be useful if UNICEF reported on the gender marker by Strategic Plan outcome area, to show whether UNICEF had succeeded in integrating gender equality across programme areas. Regarding SWAP, UNICEF was asked to share more information in its annual reporting and to be a more vocal advocate.

189. A speaker described her Government's multi-partner and multisectoral efforts to end child marriage.

## **C. UNICEF programme cooperation (item 5)**

### **(a) Approval of country programme documents**

190. The President said that in accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1, country programme documents were considered and approved at one session on a no-objection basis. Delegations had been invited to share their comments on the country programme documents for Armenia, Turkmenistan, Uganda and Zimbabwe

from 23 March to 10 April 2015. The comments received had been shared with the respective regional and country offices and Governments and taken them into account, as appropriate. The final country programme documents had been made available on the Executive Board website by 18 May 2015.

191. Current procedures called for further discussion only if at least five members of the Board had informed the secretariat in writing of their wish to bring a particular country programme to the Executive Board for further discussion. The secretariat had received no such requests, so the country programme documents were approved on a no-objection basis.

192. The Director, Programme Division made general remarks about the four country programmes.

### **Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States**

193. The Regional Director presented the country programmes for Armenia and Turkmenistan ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.7](#) and [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.8](#)).

194. The representative of Armenia said that major priority areas outlined in the country programme document clearly articulated the renewed joint commitment to focus on most vulnerable and marginalized children and families. Broadening the funding base for the programme would remain a key priority and include co-financing mechanisms, tapping the potential of the private sector and the diaspora and working with emerging donors. Armenia has been enhancing its partnership base, including with youths to co-create development solutions. The country has also benefited from and contributed to cross-border sharing of knowledge and documentation of best practices in the region. The country programme will continue to benefit from investment in intersectoral cooperation, a “continuum of services”, including in social protection, and the alignment of policies with integrated national reform measures.

195. The representative of Turkmenistan said that the country had invested heavily in the social sector, including construction of mother and child health-care centres and modern preschools, primary schools and higher education institutions. The country programme was in alignment with the new national strategy and action plan for maternal neonatal child and health for 2015-2019, and had been guided by the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

196. A delegation noted constructive partnership between UNICEF and countries in this region.

197. Another delegation expressed support for the Armenia country programme, in particular its emphasis on combating child mortality and improving school attendance and the situation of children with disabilities.

### **Eastern and Southern Africa**

198. The Regional Director presented the country programme documents for Uganda and Zimbabwe ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.10](#) and [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.9](#)).

199. The representative of Uganda said that, thanks to the partnership with UNICEF and others, the country had made significant progress in health-care services, education and social and economic growth. Yet much remained to be done

in the areas of child survival and development, the comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS, child protection and the provision of quality education. The Government of Uganda and the United Nations country team had agreed to adopt the Delivering as One modality, which would contribute to the development of human capital and the realization of children's rights. The Government and people would work with UNICEF to implement the programme priority areas.

200. The representative of Zimbabwe said that UNICEF was one of the most visible and effective agencies in the country. During the public health challenge in 2008-2009, UNICEF had risen to the challenge at a time of great need and proven the relevance and value of the United Nations. The programme presented today was the outcome of consultations with the Government. In addition to relief and emergency preparedness, the country programme also stressed capacity-building for long-term development. It was only by making investments in education, health and transforming the economy that Zimbabwe could realize the democratic dividend, create jobs and ensure a sustainable future for its children.

201. The Executive Board approved the four country programmes in decision 2015/8 (see annex II).

**(b) Extensions of ongoing country programmes**

202. The President stated that in accordance with decision 2009/11, the Executive Board was informed of the one-year extensions of the country programmes for Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Somalia and Yemen. The Board was requested to approve the one-year extension following a two-year extension of the country programmes for Côte d'Ivoire and the second one-year extensions of the country programmes for Lebanon and Libya ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.11](#)).

203. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/9 (see annex II).

**D. Evaluation reports and management perspective and response (item 6)**

**Annual report for 2014 on the evaluation function in UNICEF, and management perspective**

**Formative evaluation of the MoRES approach, and management response**

204. The annual report on the evaluation function ([E/ICEF/2015/10](#)) was presented by the Director, Evaluation. The management perspective ([E/ICEF/2015/EB/1](#)) was presented by the Deputy Executive Director, Management.

205. The formative evaluation of MoRES was introduced by the Director, Evaluation, and the management response by the Director, Programme Division.

206. Delegations welcome the continued improvement in the quality of evaluations conducted by UNICEF, which had been accompanied by an increased focus on higher-level results and on preparation of management responses, and a reduction in the number of evaluations with a poor overall rating, from 30 in 2009 to 2 in 2013. They commended UNICEF for its efforts to strengthen decentralized evaluations and monitoring and evaluation at the country level.

207. Speakers commended UNICEF for its efforts to strengthen the independence of the Evaluation Office and encouraged the organization to continue to allocate sufficient resources for its work. The increased commitment of 0.5 per cent of programming funds to evaluations was a positive development, but still far from the target of 1 per cent. Delegations supported the management proposal to identify the bottlenecks in the regions to reach that target.

208. Speakers welcomed the engagement of the Evaluation Office in joint evaluation activities in 2014. It was vital that United Nations agencies collaborate and coordinate their efforts to build on the lessons learned and make further progress in making joint programs coherent, efficient, relevant and sustainable in their respective national contexts.

209. The Evaluation Office was commended for its participation in the peer review of the WFP evaluation function and asked when the next such review of UNICEF would take place, since the last had taken place in 2006.

210. Speakers encouraged UNICEF to support stronger engagement of stakeholders in evaluation activities. It was equally important that UNICEF contributed, with other agencies, to strengthening the capacity of Member States for evaluations in accordance to their national policies and priorities. One delegation stressed the importance of having evaluations take place at appropriate times in programme cycles so that they could offer timely recommendations to management.

211. A group of delegations noted that several evaluations had not been completed by end-2014, largely because of the attention devoted to massive humanitarian interventions. While recognizing the heavy burden this placed on UNICEF staff, they said that they expected the implementation rate to increase in accordance with the evaluation plan.

212. Delegations said that there had been very few evaluations on policy advocacy and partnerships and they would welcome more evaluations of this work. Policy advocacy was an essential aspect of UNICEF work and critical to the implementation of the sustainable development goals. They also encouraged UNICEF to follow up on the acknowledged room for improvement on cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender and equity.

213. Speakers welcomed the active engagement of UNICEF in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the International Evaluation Partnership Initiative. UNEG was increasingly important to enhancing coherence by establishing norms and common rules and by developing and sharing guidelines.

214. It was suggested that UNICEF communicate the results of evaluations throughout the organization and follow up on implementing the recommendations. Delegations acknowledged that the management response to evaluations had greatly improved over previous years, reaching 92 per cent in 2013 from the 2009 baseline of 10 per cent. Remaining challenges included weakness in formulating recommendations, lack of stakeholder buy-in, communication gaps and capacity limitations. They encouraged UNICEF to ensure that suggested remedial actions, such as internal consultations, did not compromise the relationship of the Evaluation Office with UNICEF operations and communications personnel. It was important that policies and procedures were in place and communicated to the evaluation staff and consultants to ensure the independence of the Evaluation Office.

215. Delegations said they were pleased that UNICEF had followed up on and completed the actions requested by the Executive Board at last year's annual session. The report provided information on implementing the plan for global thematic evaluations and on steps taken to implement the revised evaluation policy, and gave guidance on evaluation coverage. In the future, the information and analysis in the report could be made more reader-friendly and systematic. The report could also give a better overview, including better explanation of the centralized evaluation function and the decentralized evaluations.

216. Delegations said it was positive that individual evaluation reports, such as the formative evaluation of MoRES, were presented at the Executive Board's meetings. They supported, within existing resources, the continued improvement of MoRES, particularly to incorporate the national context more fully and ensure proper alignment of programmes to national priorities.

217. The Director of Evaluation responded to the comments, noting that UNEG is likely to agree to undertake a peer review of the UNICEF evaluation function.

218. UNICEF management had communicated to all budget managers from regional and country offices the need for UNICEF to meet the 100 per cent target for evaluation activities. Dashboards to monitor this had been developed and were in use.

219. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/10 (see annex II).

## **E. UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2014 annual report to the Executive Board, and management response (item 7)**

### **UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee annual report for 2014**

220. The report ([E/ICEF/2015/AB/L.2](#)) was introduced by the Director, Office of Internal Audit and Investigations. The management response ([E/ICEF/2015/AB/L.3](#)) was presented by the Deputy Executive Director, Management. The Audit Advisory Committee annual report for 2014 was available on the website of the Executive Board.

221. A group of delegations said that the reports provided the Executive Board with confidence that both functions (internal audit and investigations) were providing independent and objective oversight of UNICEF and that UNICEF had generally adequate and effective governance in risk management and control frameworks. They welcomed the strategic approach of the Office to risk-based planning, which made the most of limited resources and prioritized audit focus areas to those that presented the greatest risk to the organization.

222. Given the limited resources and complexity of UNICEF operations, they encouraged all audit bodies (for internal and external audits) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their work by sharing their annual audit workplans. The reports of the Office would benefit from commentary on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk-management and control frameworks being assessed in the form of an assurance opinion limited to the risk-based audit work undertaken.

223. It would be helpful if the respective heads of audit and oversight could include a statement in future reports to the Executive Board on whether the resourcing of

their function was adequate. They encouraged all audit bodies to continue collaborating with Member States and other audit bodies to share best practices, address issues of common concern and identify opportunities for efficiency gains and cost-savings.

224. The delegations encouraged UNICEF to provide comparative trends of audit results in future annual reports, and to engage with other funds and programmes that used different rating protocols to give greater consistency in audit reporting across the United Nations development system.

225. The delegations urged UNICEF to make the high-risk areas of results-based management and reporting, governance and accountability, and supply and logistics a priority and hoped to see improvements throughout 2015. They requested a more detailed analysis of audit reports receiving an inadequate rating, with the aim of uncovering findings that could be relevant across functions in country offices and help to identify common weaknesses across the organization.

226. Regarding the significant increase in financial resources provided to UNICEF and the increasing scale of humanitarian operations, they asked if those changes had implications for the UNICEF control framework and how the organization would address this challenge. They urged UNICEF to ensure that adequate resources were allocated for implementing effective control systems.

227. The delegations urged UNICEF to continue to strengthen training and capacity-building of staff so they could fully implement all policies and procedures. They agreed with the Audit Advisory Committee on the importance of change management and urged UNICEF to assure that new processes and systems were accompanied by adequate training and support for management. They welcomed management's efforts to improve the guidance available to country offices on results-based management and the development of a new e-learning course on that subject. However, audit recommendations to revise the budget policy and develop and communicate a results-based-budgeting implementation strategy for programme and institutional budgets were long overdue.

228. There had also been an increase in outstanding audit recommendations older than 18 months and they expected to see commitment from management to achieve the timely, full, complete and sustained implementation of these recommendations. Outstanding investigations at the end of 2014 mainly consisted of allegations related to fraud, corruption and other irregularities, which required substantial resources and time. They urged UNICEF to implement mechanisms and resources to address such cases even more effectively, with the aim of fully achieving the zero-tolerance policy on misconduct, fraud and corruption.

229. Consistent with the report from 2013, the most common themes of investigations into misconduct were fraud and the misuse of programme funds by third parties. They emphasized the critical importance for UNICEF to strengthen its capacity to manage implementing partners and build the capacity of its partners to observe agreed-upon standards and procedures. They encouraged UNICEF to share information with other United Nations entities operating in the same countries, particularly on blacklisted suppliers.

230. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/11 (see annex II).



## **F. Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2014 (item 8)**

231. The report (E/ICEF/2015/9) was introduced by the Principal Adviser, Ethics.

232. Delegations expressed appreciation for the vital contributions of the Ethics Office to fostering a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability throughout UNICEF. They applauded the Executive Director and senior management for their continued leadership, support and commitment to the work of the Ethics Office and for setting the right tone at the top. They encouraged management to actively ensure that all staff were aware of policies and procedures that protected their right to speak up without fear of retribution.

233. The increased number of requests to the Ethics Office for protection against retaliation — from two in 2013 to seven in 2014 — was evidence that employees had faith in the organization's mechanisms to address wrongdoing and that the efforts to spread awareness of the policies were working.

234. Speakers commended management for including a performance indicator on speaking up in the Global Staff Survey, although only 51 per cent of staff felt that they worked in an environment that supported a speak-up culture. They asked for information on further steps being taken to improve the speak-up culture. The Ethics Office's receipt of increasingly diverse requests for advice showed the success of efforts to increase staff's awareness of the ethics of the international civil service and methods to avoid or mitigate conflicts of interest.

235. Delegations commended the Ethics Office for launching the ethics dialogue facilitator initiative and looked forward to the launch of the new ethics awareness course. They were pleased that the ethics training package now included a concrete guide on how to document incidents of perceived harassment. The inclusion of information on the role of managers in fostering a respectful and harmonious workplace was a critical step in setting the right tone at the top.

236. A speaker noted the success of the financial disclosure programme, as in addition to achieving a 100 per cent compliance rate, more staff were proactively indicating appropriate mitigation efforts for conflicts of interest in their disclosures, reflecting increased awareness of the policy and procedures. However, 20 per cent of participants in the verification exercise had not disclosed required documentation. The Ethics Office should provide staff with instructions emphasizing the importance of complete disclosure.

237. A delegation expressed support for the zero-tolerance approach to fraud and for the adoption of measures to deal with fraud including misappropriation of funds by third parties, inappropriate conduct by staff and harassment and abuse of power, all of which were detrimental to the work and image of the organization.

## **G. Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association (item 9)**

238. The Chairperson acknowledged the condolences expressed by delegations following the deaths in Somalia of the four UNICEF staff members, and the deaths and injuries of others.

239. The results of the Global Staff Survey undertaken in late 2014 showed high satisfaction with UNICEF as a work environment. Staff also identified challenges including a limited sense of empowerment among staff; the need to further strengthen office leadership and management, nurture a culture of openness and share workload and eliminate duplication; and the need for expanded opportunities for career and professional development and improved work-life balance.

240. In advance of the opening of the Global Shared Service Centre, a comprehensive human resource mitigation strategy had been put in place to cushion the effects of the transition on the approximately 200 affected staff. The Executive Director had extended the strategy to include all staff on abolished posts, which had resulted in the retention of many staff members who otherwise would not have been protected.

241. The attack in Somalia had demonstrated the incredible commitment of UNICEF staff who worked in difficult environments. Staff looked to the Executive Board to do everything possible, including engaging at the highest levels of the United Nations, to assure protection of staff. No expense should be spared in protecting staff working in fragile contexts.

242. A related issue was the absence of a rotation policy for staff in emergency or conflict non-family duty stations. A policy had been drafted and hopefully would be implemented within this calendar year. While the current policy covered international Professional staff members, it should also cover national staff, in the name of equity.

243. The issue of job security was important to UNICEF staff, many of whom continued to face the problem of short contracts. The Global Staff Association would like to see the organization's healthy financial outlook translated into minimum contract terms of two years for all staff without permanent or continuing appointments.

244. Many UNICEF staff members working in the field did not have access to adequate health services. The Global Staff Association was working with management to identify suitable solutions and would report on progress made at next year's annual session of the Executive Board.

245. Staff working in middle- and high-income countries were worried about losing their jobs as the role of UNICEF in such countries shifted. The Global Staff Association would welcome a clear position from management on support to be given to such staff through training and other measures.

## **H. Reports of Executive Board field visits (item 10)**

### **Field visit of the Bureau to the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, Bangkok, and to Malaysia, from 27 March to 3 April 2015**

246. The report ([E/ICEF/2015/EB/3](#)) was introduced by H.E. Ms. Laura Elena Flores Herrera, Permanent Representative of Panama to the United Nations and Vice-President of the Executive Board. She said that the special focus session on equity had been a reminder that in a country such as Malaysia, UNICEF should focus not only on bridging the access gap but also on providing quality and on extending access to services for all children.

247. The visit to the regional office had helped the Bureau to contextualize the field visit in a region that included some of the fastest growing economies in the world, where one in four people were children and where UNICEF had 14 country offices covering 28 countries. The regional office supported resource mobilization, programme development and increasingly backstopped surge capacity for humanitarian crises.

248. In Malaysia, a country transitioning from middle- to high-income status, UNICEF had clearly evolved with and adapted well to Malaysia's rapid development and fast-changing environment, becoming more focused on its advocacy and convener roles. The Bureau saw examples of these new engagement strategies and approaches which included: policy advocacy based on disaggregated data; policy work for the development of a national policy on alternative education for all children; and promoting new funding models and innovative partnerships with the private sector. The Malaysia country programme was essentially self-funded, and funds raised from the Malaysian private sector also benefited children in other countries in the region and globally.

249. A video presentation followed.

250. The representative of Papua New Guinea said that his country enjoyed a very strong bilateral relationship with Malaysia. Some of the private sector partners were also investors in Papua New Guinea, and he would suggest this to his Government as a potential area of cooperation.

#### **Visit of the Executive Board to Madagascar, from 13 to 17 April 2015**

251. The report ([E/ICEF/2015/EB/4](#)) was presented by H.E. Mr. Stephan Tafrov, Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations. The programme included high-level meetings and other activities in the capital Antananarivo and visits to the districts of Fenerive Est and Tamatave. The delegation was received by the Prime Minister, who showed a great deal of interest in the problems affecting children in his country.

252. The delegation learned that UNICEF played a key role in the areas of health, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and nutrition, particularly in combating chronic and acute malnutrition affecting children in the south, where there was a serious drought. The delegation noted with satisfaction the positive collaboration between UNICEF and the Government. The delegation wished to raise awareness of the precarious situation of women and children in Madagascar, which was one of the poorest countries in the world and was emerging from five years of international isolation, and encouraged donors to participate in an upcoming donor conference for Madagascar to be held in November in Paris.

253. A video presentation followed.

### **I. Other matters (item 11)**

#### **Provisional list of agenda items**

254. The Secretary of the Executive Board introduced the provisional list of agenda items for the 2015 second regular session of the Executive Board, scheduled to take place from 8 to 10 September.

## **J. Adoption of draft decisions (item 12)**

255. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2015/7 through 2015/11 (see annex II).

256. Regarding decision 2015/7, a delegation said that in addition to the Integrated Results and Resources Framework, the Strategic Plan should also be taken into account in preparing future annual reports of the Executive Director.

## **K. UNICEF Staff Awards and closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board (item 13)**

257. The Executive Director announced the winners of the 2015 UNICEF Staff Team Awards, as follows:

(a) The UNICEF Ebola response team, including the staff members in the country offices in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the regional office and staff deployed from headquarters. Thanks to the work they did, thousands of lives had been saved while community primary health-care systems were also strengthened for the future, with humanitarian response and long-term development going hand in hand. UNICEF recognized and appreciated the exceptional service and personal sacrifices made by each of the team's members in the name of battling this deadly virus;

(b) The colleagues in the Gaza field office, who had worked bravely and tirelessly throughout the 51-day war in Gaza in July and August 2014. From getting children back to school to repairing water pipelines and sanitation systems to providing children with the psychosocial support they needed to cope with all that they had experienced and witnessed, UNICEF staff members had delivered and were delivering, not only for children but for communities shattered by conflict. The team's efforts were a clear example of the UNICEF mission to serve children in every situation, including in the midst of conflict and danger. He thanked the team members for their commitment, their perseverance and their bravery;

(c) A collaborative effort between the Payroll Unit, in the Division of Human Resources and the Cashier's Office, in the Division of Financial and Administrative Management, which were responsible for making sure that all 12,000 staff members were paid on time. The team had designed a new innovative override mechanism to help pay staff members on time, even in the few cases where budget processes had not yet been finalized. The dedicated employees of UNICEF deserved the very best services and support for the service they provided for the world's children.

258. In his closing remarks, the Executive Director said that the Special Focus Session on Equity had been useful and very encouraging. The question now was to move forward in a world that was increasingly brutal and fractured. UNICEF would do its best to meet the needs of children facing deprivation and disadvantage, with the support and guidance of the Executive Board.

259. The President said that the Board had covered considerable ground in a short period. The focus on equity had invigorated the work of UNICEF in all aspects and infused every agenda item for the session. Although global understanding of

equality and inequities had grown, significant challenges remained for children in countries in all regions and across all income categories. In particular, the disaggregation of data was critically important and could shine a spotlight on the hidden disparities that robbed billions of children of their rights.

260. The Executive Board appeared to have all reached a consensus — that equity, prioritizing the most vulnerable children — was an engine of sustainable development and as such must be deeply embedded in the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda.

261. The decisions adopted at the session would strengthen the ability of UNICEF to learn from and improve its own work and the work of its partners, and further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its programmes and initiatives.

262. The Chairperson of the Global Staff Association had highlighted areas of particular importance to staff, including staff safety and security. The tragic deaths of four dedicated staff members in Somalia and the deaths and injuries of several others were deeply felt by all the Executive Board members. The Board commended UNICEF staff for their work, including in highly volatile situations, at a time of increasing danger for children, families and humanitarian workers alike.

**Part three**  
**Second regular session 2015**

**Held at United Nations Headquarters from**  
**8 to 10 September 2015**

## **I. Organization of the session**

### **A. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF (item 1)**

263. The President opened the second regular session of the Executive Board, thanking the Bureau, Executive Board members, UNICEF secretariat and participants for their support, including all those who had helped make the Board sessions and meetings successful in 2015.

264. The adoption of the ground-breaking and visionary post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals during the United Nations summit in late September would be an historic occasion. She acknowledged the hard work done by many Executive Board members and other Member States during the process leading up to the summit and also to the third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa, and the upcoming twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. As a result, children's issues were placed firmly at the centre of the post-2015 development agenda. In a first for children, participants at the International Conference on Financing for Development stated in no uncertain terms that investment in children was a precursor to development. It was now up to every sector of society to make sure the agenda and all goals promoting the rights and well-being of children were implemented fully and on schedule. For UNICEF, this would entail being fit for purpose, especially in terms of operations and the funding base, and further embracing innovative ways to reach every child, especially the most disadvantaged.

265. In order to make this happen, it was crucial to address humanitarian situations such as escalating brutality against children and women, and the global refugee crisis. No real progress on behalf of children could be made without addressing humanitarian emergencies.

266. The Executive Director hailed as a great moment in history the expected adoption by the General Assembly of the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals. He focused much of his statement on the importance of the "sustainable" aspect, which could be achieved only through improving the capabilities of today's children to carry out needed development in the future. Investment in children is an investment in tomorrow. This entailed investing specifically in children who are the most disadvantaged, hardest to reach and hardest to serve. Sustainable economic progress and political and social stability is realized in more equitable societies. The best way to end inequality was to help every child get a fair chance to survive, to grow up healthy and protected, to attend school, and to participate fully in society. In this regard, he praised the work of the Group of Friends for Children and the Sustainable Development Goals in emphasizing the importance of investment in children.

267. The Executive Director said that sustainability required a great many things — primary among them securing peace in the world and reaching children affected by humanitarian crises — conflicts, health emergencies or natural disasters. Some 246 million children lived in countries or areas affected by armed conflict. The cost of a civil war could be equivalent to 30 years of growth in gross domestic product. Sustainability also required assisting the vast number of forcibly displaced people,

migrants and refugees, more than half of them children. It required confronting climate change and the attendant natural disasters and food insecurity. It required breaking down the artificial divide between humanitarian and development work, and “building back better” in times of crisis, all the while supporting national capacity to improve children’s lives. This was illustrated, for example, in the way the No Lost Generation campaign supported children in the Syrian Arab Republic and the way, in Nepal, the Government’s social assistance programmes were used as a platform to disburse cash transfers. It was illustrated in UNICEF support for creating community care centres in countries affected by Ebola and revitalizing primary health-care centres.

268. This approach of breaking down “boxes” in emergency contexts could be championed, for example, through such initiatives as the World Humanitarian Summit and the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties process and by integrating appeals for humanitarian and longer-term development needs and by using cash transfers in humanitarian contexts as a means to strengthen social safety nets in the future. It was important to insist on closer coordination between humanitarian and development organizations, including in the United Nations.

269. Breaking down silos was equally important in other contexts, for example, by supporting communities and Governments at all levels. UNICEF had started to break down silos in its programming, aiming to transcend the “sector” approach.

270. The Executive Director made an impassioned plea for countries to work together to end conflict and the misery it inflicted especially on children. Every child had the right to a normal childhood.

271. Delegations enthusiastically welcomed the opening statements of the President and Executive Director. Several expressed support for their calls for urgent action to reduce the number of humanitarian emergencies, especially armed conflict. This, some of them said, was a precondition for sustainable development and improving the well-being of children.

272. To support successful implementation of the 2030 agenda and the sustainable development goals, delegations also expressed support for the following: further strengthen the linkage between the sustainable development goals and the Strategic Plan as well as humanitarian action; maintain synergies between emergencies and longer-term development, eliminating the artificial divide between the two; move away from a “silo” approach to development and streamline collective action; strengthen coordination among United Nations system organizations, including through Delivering as One, and continue to implement the quadrennial comprehensive policy review and standard operating procedures; pursue innovative approaches to programming and funding; increase the amount and proportion of core resources (regular resources) and flexible earmarked funding, with this to include support for thematic funding for the results areas of the Strategic Plan, particularly the as-yet-unfunded cross-cutting area of gender; pursue more strategic partnerships, especially with donors; and recognize children and youth as agents of change.

273. One delegation, commending UNICEF and its dedicated staff for their hard work in humanitarian situations and other difficult circumstances, recommended that UNICEF continue to strengthen its collective action with United Nations system organizations. In emergency situations, UNICEF was acknowledged for its



work in preventing gender-based violence in programming and promoting gender equality from the earliest days of an emergency onwards. The initiatives of the UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes and the Programme Division to build evidence and improve quality and accountability in emergencies were hailed as best practices, to be used as examples for others. Turning to other issues of violence, the delegation expressed concern about violence and bullying of vulnerable groups, including those expressing a certain gender identity. The delegation welcomed the attention paid by UNICEF to these issues in coordination with other United Nations agencies.

274. Under the new post-2015 agenda, it was essential to reach every child, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. This included children affected by armed conflict and other humanitarian crises, including mass migration, and children who were unaccompanied refugees, living with disabilities, or were born into poverty.

275. Another delegation expressed full support for the UNICEF campaign Children Not Soldiers, which aimed to stop the recruitment and use of children by armed groups during conflict.

## **B. Adoption of the agenda (item 2)**

276. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work for the session ([E/ICEF/2015/12/Rev.1](#)).

277. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex to the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 38 observer delegations, including 1 intergovernmental organization, 1 international organization, 3 NGOs and 3 National Committees for UNICEF.

## **II. Deliberations of the Executive Board**

### **A. Proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2016 (item 3)**

278. The proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2016 ([E/ICEF/2015/13/Rev.1](#)) was introduced by the Secretary of the Executive Board.

279. The Secretary said that the programme of work would serve as a flexible framework, subject to possible revision throughout the year following consultations between the Bureau and the UNICEF secretariat. He noted that the Executive Board decided to remove the Pledging Event from the agenda of the Executive Board starting in 2016.

280. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/15 (see annex II).

## **B. UNICEF programme cooperation (item 4)**

### **(a) Country programme documents**

281. The country programme documents under this agenda item were approved on a no-objection basis, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1.

#### **Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States**

282. The Regional Director presented the country programme documents for Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia and its addendum for Kosovo (under United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Uzbekistan ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.13](#) to [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.20](#)).

283. The representative of Belarus said that the country programme document fully reflected national priorities for the development of human capital, one of the most important factors for sustainable socioeconomic development. The country programme promoted support for the family to create a safe and inclusive environment for a child's development. In addition, it promoted protection of the rights of children with special needs and aimed to provide such children and their families with access to comprehensive, high-quality medical care, comprehensive education and psychological and social assistance. This supports the principle of "No child left behind". The new programme would be a unique testing ground for new methods of working with middle-income countries, including improved use of disaggregated data and a more diversified partnership base.

284. The representative of Georgia expressed gratitude to all involved in the elaboration of the new country programme, including the UNICEF offices in Tbilisi and New York. It was a collaborative process that included a wide range of partners and stakeholders. At the top of the countries priorities were the promotion and protection of the rights of children. The country achieved notable advances during the previous country programme, which involved significant institutional reforms; the new programme will implement even higher standards and results. One of its key aims was for inclusion of the most vulnerable groups, for example, children with disabilities, children of minority groups and particularly children affected by armed conflict and all forms of violence.

285. The representative of Kazakhstan said that the new country programme, developed in close collaboration with national authorities and all major stakeholders, lay the foundation for reaching the sustainable development goals. It aimed to realize the rights of all children, promoting the well-being of children in a comprehensive and holistic manner. Reflecting the strategy of Kazakhstan for 2050, the programme supported children's rights, social protection policy, equity, gender equality, ending violence against children, youth empowerment, and eliminating prejudice, especially towards children with disabilities. Particular effort would be made to reach out to children in marginalized, low-income and rural areas while enhancing community development and grass-roots service delivery. Key strategies would be to support innovative partnerships and creative alliances with a wide range of Government and civil society groups as well as the media.

286. The representative of Serbia noted that the new country programme was based on the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2016-2020 and

the United Nations Development Partnership Framework expected to be adopted. The programme envisioned a new partnership framework with UNICEF in which Serbia was a recipient of assistance but also a true partner, able to share its experience with other countries. Data would be key. The country programme document supported the analysis and use of disaggregated data on various groups of children, such as children with disabilities, children of minority groups, particularly Roma, children in urban areas and children of poor families. Serbia welcomed the Group of Friends for Children and the Sustainable Development Goals and thanked the Regional Director for extending an invitation to Serbia to join it. Priorities for Serbia included childcare reform, early childhood development, reducing child mortality, the deinstitutionalization of children with special needs, inclusive education and elevation of the status of Roma children. Since some 220,000 internally displaced persons lived in Serbia, many of them children, it was of paramount importance that substantial cooperation take place between UNICEF offices in Belgrade and Pristina.

287. The representative of Tajikistan thanked UNICEF, especially the office based in Dushanbe, for active cooperation with the Government, especially in promotion and protection of children's rights, to help meet children's basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. A special focus was on the most vulnerable children, including those with disabilities. UNICEF and Tajikistan had successfully implemented the aims of the major components of the current country programme, such as child survival and development, basic education and gender equality, and policy and planning. Remarkable progress was achieved in early childhood education through the development of a model, which had been adopted by the Government and was now being replicated, aiming to double enrolment and reach 25 per cent of children aged 3 to 6 years old by 2020. The Government welcomed the role of UNICEF in leveraging resources.

288. The representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia said that the new country programme for 2016-2020 had been developed in close consultation with all relevant stakeholders and reflected the development needs and priorities of the country. The main aim was to promote the realization of children's rights, focusing on children who are the most marginalized, Roma, living with disabilities or are victims of violence and abuse. Strategies would include reducing the inequality of access of such children to access and use quality social services, encouraging cross-sectoral cooperation, and promoting inclusion as well as tolerance and respect for multiculturalism and diversity across various segments of the population. Key priorities included child well-being, education involving real learning, prevention of and dealing with violence against children, social protection and monitoring of children's rights. The programme would contribute to improving children's health, early learning and education, justice for children and social inclusion.

289. The representative of Turkey said that the new country programme document was in line with the country's Tenth National Development Plan and supported the post-2015 development agenda. Turkey had already had a significant record in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. A major emphasis was on addressing the needs of people under temporary protection in Turkey as a result of the Syrian crisis. This involved some \$6 billion, out of which only \$417 million was met by the international community. Meeting the educational needs of these children was a top priority. UNICEF and UNHCR were among the most important partners in this

effort. Burden-sharing was key for implementation of the No Lost Generation initiative of the United Nations.

290. The representative of Uzbekistan said the country would actively cooperate on implementation of the sustainable development goals. Emphasizing progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, he noted that annual public expenditure on children's education in Uzbekistan, at 10 to 12 per cent, was among the highest in the world. This showed the significant attention Uzbekistan gave to having well-educated children, brought up in a harmonious environment. Another significant area of achievement had been in improving maternal and child health. Solid results had also been achieved through the previous country programme, 2010-2015, including through partnership with United Nations system organizations. He thanked the Regional Director for her support.

291. Following interventions made by the countries presenting country programme documents to the Executive Board, one delegation expressed support for the various country programme documents, noting the assistance the country had provided for a number of programmes, including in Belarus and Tajikistan. The delegation inquired how UNICEF viewed its role in assisting countries implementing the sustainable development goals. The Regional Director replied that UNICEF teams would work to assist these endeavours in a focused, efficient and efficacious manner within the context of the United Nations country teams.

#### **East Asia and the Pacific**

292. The Regional Director presented the country programme documents for Cambodia, China, Indonesia and Malaysia ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.21](#) to [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.24](#)).

293. The representative of Cambodia said that the country had made rapid progress in social and economic development over the past two decades and, more recently, had met most of the Millennium Development Goals. The country expected to graduate to lower-middle-income status in the following year, but continued to face a number of challenges, several of which could impede children's realization of their rights and their development. The country programme, which was built on analytical and evidence-based foundations that were fully aligned with the country's evolving context, aimed to bridge the gaps in education quality, health-care services, social safety nets, sanitation, nutrition and gender equality. Success in achieving the country's development goals would be dependent on the results and impact of joint development efforts, including with UNICEF. The representative made two requests: that the Executive Board endorse the new country programme, and that it make efforts to secure full support and resourcing for implementation of the programme.

294. The representative of China remarked that cooperation with UNICEF had always been high on the Government's agenda since official engagement between UNICEF and the Government began in 1979. China had achieved the Millennium Development Goals on child mortality and universal primary education ahead of schedule. Despite more than three decades of progress, about 200 million people still lived below the poverty line. The representative said that, to promote the health and sustainable development of the country's children, the Government and UNICEF would increase their cooperation in the areas of health, education, child development, child protection and social policy, in accordance with the

requirements of the thirteenth Five Year Plan for national economic and social development. China would, as always, continue to support the work of UNICEF and support a greater role for the organization in the international endeavour to promote the development of women and children.

295. The representative of Indonesia thanked UNICEF for the presentation of its twelfth country programme document. He said that UNICEF remained an important partner for Indonesia in the country's efforts to improve the quality of life and well-being of its children. Despite many positive achievements, significant challenges remained that required efforts which included continued strengthening of the decentralized Government structure, providing adequate budget allocations and increasing engagement with additional stakeholders. The Government welcomed and supported the draft country programme for 2016-2020, and noted with appreciation the inclusion of the country's national priorities relevant to children.

296. The representative of Malaysia put on record his appreciation to UNICEF for the development of the country programme, which was sufficiently comprehensive to address the needs of children in view of contemporary and emerging challenges, and in alignment with the eleventh Malaysia Plan towards the achievement of a high-income nation. The Government continued to emphasize the importance to child development of specific policies, such as providing access to basic social services, including health and education, and the importance of creating an enabling environment for children's growth. The continued partnership with UNICEF was welcomed by the Government, which looked forward to the role of UNICEF in helping children to fulfil their rights and maximize their potential in order to contribute to the nation's development.

#### **East and Southern Africa**

297. The Regional Director presented the country programme documents for Swaziland and Zambia ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.25](#) and [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.26](#)).

298. The representative of Swaziland said that although the country holds middle-income status, it continued to be confronted with inequalities, a high rate of poverty, a low economic growth rate, a high maternal mortality ratio and a high unemployment rate, especially among youth. The country programme would contribute to national efforts to enable children, adolescents and women to realize their rights by progressively reducing disparities and inequalities. The three components of the programme — young child survival and development; adolescent protection, learning and development; and programme effectiveness — would be complemented by a focus on equity across all interventions, by HIV programming, and by disaster risk reduction, including preparedness and response. The Government was fully committed to promoting child rights as an integral part of the post-2015 development agenda, and reiterated its co-ownership and strong support for the country programme document.

299. The representative of Zambia highlighted her Government's commitment to children, as evidenced by the establishment of two ministries that respond to policy issues related to children and to strategic implementation. The country programme had been well informed by the Government's Sixth National Development Plan and by other national development programmes and documents. The country programme focused on areas that had been identified by the Government as a priority, thereby complementing national efforts to promote and ensure the well-being of children by

attending to areas of profound need. The programme would be implemented within the context of the United Nations/Government of Zambia Sustainable Development Partnership Framework. The Government looked to the new country programme with great expectations, including for resource mobilization and partnerships, which would help to transform the country's post-2015 outlook for children's well-being, survival and sustainable growth.

### **Latin America and the Caribbean**

300. The Regional Director presented the country programme documents for Colombia, El Salvador and Panama. ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.27](#) to [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.29](#)).

301. The representative of Colombia commented that the country programme document was based on the National Development Plan 2014-2018, UNDAF, Convention on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017. The country programme had resulted from a conscientious effort of the Government and UNICEF to support the rights of children. It would contribute to implementing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in peacebuilding and sustainable development, emphasizing equity and social mobility, gender equality, inclusive well-being of rural children and environmental sustainability. Its four components included protection of children, education, child survival and development, and social monitoring and inclusion. Protection of children would aim to strengthen national capacity, especially in transitional justice and disarmament. In education, efforts would support expanding coverage and quality, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable girls and boys. Child survival and development would emphasize efforts to assist indigenous and Afro-descendant children, and social monitoring and inclusion would aim to reduce inequity. The representative commended the UNICEF office for its excellent monitoring and evaluation work.

302. The representative of El Salvador said that the cooperation with UNICEF had helped children to enjoy better opportunities for their survival, development and protection. This was notable, for example, in the reduction of under-five mortality and strengthening the area of child protection. However, serious challenges persisted, including violence caused by gangs, who forcibly recruit children. UNICEF had played an important role in helping El Salvador to overcome this challenge. The new programme was elaborated through a participatory and inclusive process, with UNICEF playing an active role in reaching out to the diplomatic community and Member States to obtain their advice and input. A principal aim of the country programme for 2016-2020 was to achieve more effective, transparent and flexible cooperation. Thanks largely to the support of UNICEF, in 2014, El Salvador became a self-starter country in Delivering as One, which would improve the efficiency and coherence of United Nations system organizations in the country.

303. The representative of Panama said that the country programme document was fully aligned with national plans and priorities and reflected a vision of social equity and sustainable economic growth for everyone. It was crucial to continue to support middle-income countries such as Panama, which was transitioning to high-income status. Panama faced several challenges common to such countries: inequality in wealth distribution and high levels of poverty in many cases, particularly for indigenous children, Afro-descendant children, children with disabilities, pregnant adolescents and other vulnerable sectors of society. The country needed technical

advice and support, particularly in preparing policies and generating evidence. With the help of UNICEF, Panama had made great progress in a number of areas, such as eradication of child labour and raising the legal age for marriage, and looked forward to further cooperation.

#### **Middle East and North Africa**

304. The Regional Director presented the country programme document for Algeria ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.30](#)).

305. The representative of Algeria commended the spirit of partnership that had infused the development of the country programme. The main focus of the new programme was the promotion and protection of children, in particular capacity-building. The process had involved many people who were involved in the cause of children, including from institutions, government ministries, public institutions and civil society. The programme was in alignment with government guidelines and had been prepared based on lessons learned during the previous programme cycle, 2012-2015. Given the country's similarities with other countries in the region, it had taken advantage of what had been done elsewhere, adapting these lessons to the local context.

306. The Government had in recent months submitted a framework law on children to the Parliament, which it had recently adopted. One of the main innovations of the new law was the setting up of a national authority responsible for children with broad prerogatives and a clear mandate.

#### **South Asia**

307. The Regional Director presented the country programme document for Maldives ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.31](#)).

308. The representative of Maldives said that although the country had graduated in 2011 from the United Nations List of Least Developed Countries, several challenges remained, including a high cost of uniform service delivery across a small, yet highly dispersed population; emerging issues such as an increasing youth population; and a rising incidence of gang violence, drug abuse, violence against children and challenges related to ensuring the protection of vulnerable groups.

309. The Government had decided to focus on children and youth as one of the four outcomes of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, on the basis of those challenges and on the comparative advantages of the United Nations system in Maldives in this area. In formulating the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the country programme document, there had been a concerted effort to align with the sustainable development goals, the lessons from the Millennium Development Goals and the priorities of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

#### **West and Central Africa**

310. The Regional Director presented the country programme document for Guinea-Bissau ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.32](#)).

311. The representative of Guinea-Bissau welcomed the presentation by the Regional Director. He said that the country programme of cooperation fully

corresponded with the priorities of his Government and had been jointly discussed by UNICEF, together with the country's authorities. The representative called for the adoption of the country programme document by the Executive Board.

312. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/12 (see annex II).

**(b) Extensions of ongoing country programmes**

313. The President stated that in accordance with Executive Board decision 2009/1, the Executive Board was informed of the two-month extensions of the country programmes for Azerbaijan and Uruguay. The Board was requested to approve the two-month extensions of the country programmes for Argentina and Iraq, following one-year extensions, and a two-month extension of the country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic, following four consecutive one-year extensions.

314. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/13 (see annex II).

**C. Structured dialogue on financing results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 (item 5)**

315. The item was introduced by Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, and presented by the Director of the Public Partnerships Division. The Executive Board had before it a strategic brief as a background paper ([E/ICEF/2015/EB/7](#)).

316. The Deputy Executive Director noted that UNICEF had been working with its sister agencies in the United Nations system on a harmonized approach to respond to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review mandates on the structured dialogue. UNICEF aimed to take the following measures, among others, to improve financing results of the Strategic Plan: increase regular resources and halt the downward trend as a share of total revenue; redouble efforts to increase flexible earmarked funding, in particular thematic funding; strengthen partnerships for humanitarian funding to address the huge needs; find innovative ways to help to bridge the humanitarian-development divide in funding, a priority the Executive Director had emphasized in his opening statement the previous day; and broaden the donor base, including through innovative partnerships and funding modalities.

317. The Director noted that a more detailed presentation on this subject had been made to the Executive Board during an informal briefing on 25 August 2015. He remarked on the convergence of results for children being achieved through the Strategic Plan and the new post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals and the financing for development outcomes.

318. Emphasizing that funding had real and serious impacts on the ground, he highlighted five core actions of the UNICEF resource mobilization strategy: one, broaden the range and depth of partnerships across the public and private sectors, proactively seeking opportunities under the new sustainable development agenda; two, expand flexible funding that is aligned with the Strategic Plan results areas and derived from a broad donor base, while building a more coherent and effective funding architecture for the United Nations system; three, accelerate work with partners to fund the humanitarian response; four, strengthen engagement in middle-income countries and newly emerged high-income countries; and five, take further steps to embrace a world of global connection and interdependence to reach every



child everywhere, especially vulnerable children, such as those affected by the migration crisis.

319. He said that flexible funding would be strengthened through (a) working with partners to increase regular resources funding, including through formal and informal dialogues; (b) increasing funding for thematic pools and drawing such funds from a wider range of partners; and (c) working with new and emerging partners to diversify funding.

320. Delegations welcomed the strategic dialogue and background brief. They thanked UNICEF for the information provided, saying it offered an overview of the organization's strategic forward thinking on longer-term outcomes linked to the sustainable development goals and post-2015 agenda. One speaker said the strategic brief could be improved through the addition of information on what action would be taken when, and by whom, and on costs and expected results.

321. Delegations commended UNICEF for its strong fundraising efforts and success in broadening the donor base in 2014. Further expanding the donor base and building new strategic partnerships to mobilize additional resources were key. They encouraged UNICEF to continue its efforts to diversify its donor base and increase core resources and lightly-earmarked contributions through innovations in its resources mobilization strategy. They looked forward to hearing more about such efforts, including the development of the 10 "cases for support", aimed at reinvigorating thematic funding pools and increasing core funding.

322. One speaker highlighted the importance of the private sector as a donor and encouraged the inclusion of this sector, as well as civil society, international organizations and other contributors, to the donor base. With around two thirds of UNICEF funding coming from 20 contributors, diversifying the donor base was vital. The speaker recommended that UNICEF have a clear strategy for taking alternative action to deal with possible decreases in available resources and exchange rate fluctuations.

323. UNICEF was also praised for launching its publicly accessible Transparency Portal, which will increase the quality, depth and accessibility of data.

324. Delegations noted with concern the decline in core resources, in total and as a proportion of all resources, as well as pooled thematic funding. They urged Member States and other donors to increase their contributions to these two kinds of funding. This would make funding more secure, predictable and flexible and help to ensure that strict earmarked funding would not drive the terms of development at the country level. It was also noted that thematic funding allows for greater alignment with the priorities and results areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017. In addition, it allows the organization and its partners to reach the most vulnerable children, promote innovation, increase effectiveness, improve coordination and long-term planning and reduce transaction costs.

325. Continuing the structured dialogues on financing would not only provide excellent opportunities for an exchange of views on these matters but also needed updates on budget allocations and gaps in funding. These exchanges could help to increase core and lightly earmarked funding and broaden the donor base. Delegations recommended that these dialogues be a standing item on the agenda of the Executive Board. UNICEF was requested to report annually on its funding and resource mobilization strategy and Integrated Results and Resources Framework.

326. It was important that future dialogues be inclusive of Member States, National Committees for UNICEF and other donors. They should be transparent and driven by the participation of Member States. Delegations welcomed assistance from the Executive Board and its Bureau and secretariat in terms of input and guidance in arranging informal sessions on this topic.

327. The work of UNICEF in humanitarian settings was strongly supported. One speaker said that the international community could not live up to the commitments made in the new development agenda unless children were protected from inhumane environments created by adults. Another emphasized the need for more holistic and flexible responses to complex and protracted crises, agreeing with the Executive Director on the need to build stronger partnerships and develop a new model for humanitarian development cooperation. The process leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 will allow further consultation on this issue.

328. It was also recommended that attention be paid to the report on the resource mobilization function of the United Nations system, which was issued by the Joint Inspection Unit in 2004. Cooperation among the funds and programmes is vital, as many issues are system-wide by nature. UNICEF was commended for the work it had already done in this area.

329. The ultimate goal of the dialogues is to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the work of UNICEF and make it further “fit for purpose” to deliver on commitments to children.

330. The Deputy Executive Director confirmed that UNICEF would share the cases for support as soon as they were developed, that the organization was making considerable efforts to increase its transparency and development effectiveness, in cooperation with sister agencies in the United Nations, and that the private sector was indeed an important partner.

331. Responding to questions, the Director of the Public Partnerships Division said that it was too early to gauge how the post-2015 development agenda would affect the funding of UNICEF, which would be influenced by the quadrennial comprehensive policy review for 2016-2019 and the structured dialogues. UNICEF would welcome the guidance from Member States on the implications of the new post-2015 agenda.

332. Turning to the issue of thematic funding, he said that this kind of funding was decreasing largely as a result of the new development finance landscape, which was shaped by growing competition for scarce development resources. In that context, donors were tending to choose earmarked channels of funding. The structured dialogues could be helpful in this respect. It was also important to make a greater effort to show the real results of the work UNICEF does for children. He welcomed the forthcoming, genuine conversations on all these issues.

333. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/14 (see annex II).

## **D. Evaluation report and management response (item 6)**

### **Synthesis report on evaluation findings on “Cash transfer as a social protection intervention: evidence from UNICEF evaluations, 2010-2014”**

334. Following a presentation of the synthesis report by the Director of the Evaluation Office, the management response was introduced by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, and was presented by the Director of the Programme Division.

335. The Director of the Evaluation Office expressed appreciation for the significant interest shown in the report and the management response at the informal briefing held for Executive Board members the previous month. He said that cash transfer programmes are a key component of the work of UNICEF in social protection, which is the main means of securing social inclusion. Cash transfers are an important vehicle for achieving the results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan and will contribute to meeting the goals of the post-2015 development agenda. He presented the highlights of the evaluation synthesis and emphasized that cash transfers have generated positive impacts in a number of outcomes for children, and have shown that recipients have increased perceptions of well-being, happiness and personal dignity. He also provided specific recommendations to improve the work of UNICEF in this area, and highlighted the potential of expanding “cash plus” modalities, which involve linking cash transfers to additional services and/or benefits.

336. The Deputy Executive Director emphasized the multiple positive impacts on children’s lives brought about by social protection interventions, especially cash transfers, in health, education, nutrition, protection and prevention and treatment of HIV. She drew attention to an article published in *The Guardian* the previous day that featured a family in Lesotho that was benefiting from one of the cash transfer programmes covered by an evaluation analysed in the synthesis report. The useful lessons and recommendations set forth in the synthesis report will be used to improve the quality of social protection programming and the way its positive impacts are communicated.

337. The Director of Programme Division emphasized that social protection had expanded dramatically over the years across all regions. He underlined that cash transfer programmes alone are currently reaching more than 146 million children worldwide. He also underscored that social protection is pivotal for children, as it helps to remove financial and social barriers to accessing social services and basic necessities — including food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education. He mentioned that the work of UNICEF in social protection is expanding in different country contexts, including fragile States. In this respect, he drew attention to the joint work between the Office of Emergency Programmes and Programme Division, which are actively engaged in social protection in humanitarian contexts.

338. On behalf of UNICEF management, the Director welcomed the recommendations made by the Evaluation Office. He emphasized that all suggestions are important for expanding and improving the work of UNICEF in social protection. Finally, he offered a specific set of actions and timelines to address the main recommendations.

339. Delegations welcomed the synthesis report and management response. They underlined the importance of having an independent evaluation function, which contributes to and enables informed decision-making for even better and more effective programming, and they encouraged UNICEF to allocate sufficient resources to these efforts. They also acknowledged the successful work of UNICEF in social protection, including the important role of the organization in various areas, including country support and technical assistance, as well as in research and advocacy. They expressed appreciation for the format of the report, synthesizing a range of evaluation findings, and the focus on results at the level of impact.

340. Some delegations commented that the report could have emphasized the challenges and risks encountered in cash transfer programmes. These include, for example, negative effects on communities, such as community and household tensions, and cash diversions by partners and staff. Risks are encountered in how recipients are targeted, the way beneficiaries access programmes and how programmes are followed up on, with sustainability being a key issue. UNICEF was encouraged to include challenges and risk monitoring in future evaluations, where feasible.

341. In response to this comment, the Director of the Evaluation Office agreed on the importance of acknowledging challenges. He noted that the well-executed evaluations of effective programmes had come up with mostly positive findings. However, the report did mention some challenges. For example, in some cases, the paperwork to be filled out by potential beneficiaries had deterred a number of households from registering for the benefits. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the methods of providing access to beneficiaries. Some cases showed that implementation had not been as sound as expected, and this had affected results achieved. More evidence is needed on the role of UNICEF, since the evaluations concentrated on impact rather than process. Evidence also needs to be strengthened regarding capacity-building, which is a part of most programmes, and on the implications of programmes for girls and women, children with disabilities and other groups.

342. Additional comments emphasized that the report also could have highlighted challenges in funding and cost-efficiency, since cash transfers are costly, and national ownership and commitment to budget allocation are important. It would also be interesting to hear more about overhead and operational costs: what percentage of the cash transfers actually end up in the hands of the end users? In addition, more research needs to be carried out on the effects of cash transfers combined with other interventions (“cash plus”), especially sectoral programmes.

343. It is crucial that evaluations – and management – pay more attention to gender: whether the programmes have a design and methodology that take a gender perspective, and how they impact gender inequality and related issues. The synthesis shows that results in this area are inconsistent and difficult to predict.

344. More information and emphasis were needed in other areas as well, notably child protection and humanitarian settings, especially fragile contexts where government authority and national capacity are weak.

345. One delegation emphasized the importance of accounting for the context of each country and emphasizing Government ownership. It was important to continue to build capacity in the countries taking part in cash transfers so that they could

build sustainable programmes. The speaker inquired about which kinds of resources — “regular” or “other” — were used for the cash transfers and about the criteria used to select the beneficiaries.

346. Two delegations shared the experiences of their countries with cash transfers. One speaker said that the cash transfer programme in her country, coupled with Government policy, had made a major impact on income redistribution and had significantly reduced hunger. The incorporation of resilience-building policies was key for her country. It was important to reduce inequality and empower people to reduce their vulnerability. She urged UNICEF to follow the recommendation contained in the report regarding scaling up programmes involving cash transfer and social protection mechanisms to obtain equitable results in all sectors, including humanitarian action. For example, in the Sahel crisis, cash assistance programmes coupled with measures such as prioritizing local solutions and purchasing local food, had helped to avert a major food security crisis. It was crucial to promote a strong connection between humanitarian cooperation and sustainable development in order to increase resilience and reduce inequality.

347. The second speaker to talk about her country’s experience said that cash transfers, along with measures to support income production, had improved food security. This was especially helpful for vulnerable households that were incapacitated but still had some means to improve their socioeconomic status, as opposed to households that were completely incapacitated, such as child-headed households. In the former category, it was possible to see possible graduation from cash transfers over time, an important aspect of such social assistance.

348. In response to some of the comments from delegations, the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, said that during her travels to various countries providing cash assistance, she was impressed to see how well the process went of selecting beneficiaries, which in some cases was done by communities themselves. Throughout its work with various countries in different contexts, UNICEF has learned important lessons about how to further improve this process. Regarding gender, there is an important body of evidence that suggests that cash transfers have been very effective, for example, in helping to raise the age of marriage and keep girls in school.

349. The Director of Programme Division noted the strong multiplier effect within communities of cash transfers, especially when such measures help to generate economic activity. Cash transfers are affordable if they are properly targeted and accompanied by measures to empower people economically. It is important to note that social protection measures, including cash transfers, do not necessarily become phased out. Most societies have some kind of safety net.

350. Work on social protection, including cash transfers, in fragile contexts is increasingly being documented, and there is much innovation in this area. One important lesson: if cash is placed in the hands of families who know how to use it, programmes will be successful.

351. Responding to a question from a delegation regarding the role of the host Government in cash transfer programmes, he emphasized that such programmes are part of a given country’s strategy and aim to support a system of comprehensive responses that the Government puts in place. As correctly pointed out, cash transfers are part of a package of activities. The importance of supporting capacity

strengthening was also highlighted, including training and deployment of adequate human resources, including social workers, as a critical element of effective programme implementation.

352. Regarding comments made by the two delegations who shared experiences from their own countries, he said that cash transfer had been an important strategy in a number of contexts, including those that were fragile. The strategy supports systems such as service delivery but does not replace them. Rather, the modality highlights the continued need for system-strengthening.

353. The Director of the Evaluation Office expressed appreciation for the feedback from delegations, saying that their trenchant comments would help to map out a research agenda going forward.

#### **E. Private fundraising: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2014 (item 7)**

354. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, the report ([E/ICEF/2015/AB/L.5](#)) was presented by the Director of Private Fundraising and Partnerships.

355. A group of delegations commended UNICEF for the fact that the 2014 financial year had ended on a more positive footing than budgeted, despite the significant challenges posed by the negative impact of exchange rate fluctuations and the international aid environment. Yet the decline in regular resources from the private sector and from Governments was a cause for concern. As an increase in national budgets for official development assistance and in regular resources contributions did not appear likely, the group requested that UNICEF take these realities into consideration during the midterm review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, and present to the Executive Board realistic options of how these challenges would be addressed.

356. The expansion of fundraising activities to additional country offices was welcomed by the group, which requested that future financial documents provide transparent reporting with regard to these activities.

357. The refugee crisis in the Mediterranean and elsewhere was once again highlighting the fact that children in every country need protection. UNICEF had been able to achieve a global presence and contribute to global goals thanks to the National Committees for UNICEF. The organization was well placed to promote programmes that benefit children and to report on progress. The group was interested to learn of the anticipated role of the National Committees in this regard.

358. UNICEF was encouraged to engage with its National Committees and other key private sector donors in informal dialogues for strategic discussions on financing and the upcoming discussions on the midterm review of the Strategic Plan.

359. The representative of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF was pleased to report that the Committees had raised \$1.124 billion in 2014, which represented approximately 88 per cent of total private sector revenue and one quarter of total net income of UNICEF. National Committees also raised more than \$124 million in emergency resources. They played an increasingly important role

through the strength of their advocacy to actively promote and realize the rights of children and they fully shared the mission and vision of UNICEF.

360. National Committees were proud of their call to action in response to the earthquake in Nepal in 2014, where they raised more than \$80 million in a short space of time. However, they were acutely aware of the many equally tragic humanitarian crises that were underfunded. Committees were working with UNICEF to find ways of increasing humanitarian thematic funds, and were very active in supporting the UNICEF response to the refugee and migrant crisis in countries of origin, transit and destination.

361. The Executive Director commended the National Committees for their work and success in generating additional regular resources and in advocacy and private fundraising. He reported that UNICEF was urgently working on finding ways in which it could most efficiently respond to the refugee and migrant crisis, and was seeking innovative means of doing this while working through the various governance structures of UNICEF and the National Committees.

## **F. UNICEF Strategic Plan: updated financial estimates, 2015-2018 (item 8)**

362. Following introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Management, the report ([E/ICEF/2015/AB/L.4](#)) was introduced by the Comptroller and Director of the Division of Financial and Administrative Management.

363. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, noted that in 2015, the updated financial estimates reflect global economic uncertainties, including the potential impact of exchange rates. With an ongoing difficult economic climate, children's needs increase, and this makes it even more urgent to forecast prudently and implement programmes with greater efficiency.

364. Reviewing the salient aspects of the report, the Comptroller emphasized that UNICEF had risk mitigating measures in place to deal with adverse exchange rate impacts on income.

365. One delegation took the floor, emphasizing that, given the projected deficits for the coming years, it was important that UNICEF use cash balances from previous years to cover its needs. It was also important that the organization seek other means of financing to ensure the growth of regular resources and other flexible funds. The delegation recognized the achievements made by UNICEF in responsible financial management amid significant volatility in the global economy, and looked forward to receiving regular updates on how the organization was financing its reserves. The quality and innovative nature of UNICEF evaluations and operations were commended, as were the new financing mechanisms and innovative partnerships that ensure programme continuity, particularly in countries transitioning to higher income levels.

366. The delegation welcomed the collaboration with civil society, the private sector and Member States and expressed confidence that multisectoral alliances would continue to benefit the world's children if managed with transparency, efficiency and continual improvements. The Executive Board and UNICEF were encouraged to continue efforts to improve transparency and accountability.

367. The Deputy Executive Director reiterated that UNICEF would make every effort to manage resources prudently and that the level of expenditures had been maintained despite difficult conditions. UNICEF was very closely managing its foreign exchange exposures to mitigate the risk of currency fluctuations.

368. The Executive Director reported that in the current year, a decrease in regular resources to slightly below the 2013 level was anticipated, largely attributable to exchange rate fluctuations. He provided assurances that while UNICEF was drawing down its operating reserves, it would not go below the minimum prudent reserve. The organization remained determined to allocate the maximum amount of resources to its programmes for children and was examining new and innovative means of increasing its revenue, specifically its regular resources income.

369. The Executive Board adopted decision 2015/14 (see annex II).

#### **G. Report of the joint visit to Jordan by members of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP from 23 April to 2 May 2015 (item 9)**

370. The report ([DP/FPA/OPS-ICEF-UNW-WFP/2015/CRP.1](#)) was presented by Mr. Osama Abdelkhalek Mahmoud, Deputy Permanent Representative of Egypt. The delegation had a first-hand view of the contributions that the six agencies were making to address the regional crisis and to see how the agencies were cooperating to support the resilience of host communities in Jordan through ongoing development programmes across the country. The visit included meetings with senior government officials; high-level United Nations representatives; round-table discussions on various themes, with a focus on the role of the United Nations in Jordan; site visits; and a visit to the Za'atari refugee camp.

371. The visit had come at a critical time, as the country and the region faced significant humanitarian, environmental, security, political and developmental challenges. With the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic entering its fifth year in 2015, Jordan was hosting approximately 1.4 million Syrians, more than half of them children, of whom 18 per cent were under the age of five.

372. The delegation highlighted several observations from the field visit and made a number of recommendations for action by the United Nations country team. Some of these were the need for improved coordination among United Nations agencies; increasing the number of fluent Arabic speakers among international staff to improve the efficiency of deliveries to refugees; broadened access to financing; strengthened child protection; addressing education challenges and the high rate of youth unemployment; and enhancing market-driven job opportunities and income-generating opportunities for Jordanians and Syrian refugees.

#### **H. Other matters (item 10)**

##### **Provisional list of agenda items for the first regular session of 2016**

373. The Secretary introduced the list to Executive Board members for their information.



## **I. Adoption of draft decisions (item 11)**

374. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2015/12 through 2015/16.

## **J. Closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board (item 12)**

375. In his closing remarks, the Executive Director said that the word “support” encapsulated much of the session’s proceedings. He thanked the Executive Board for its support, including for the country programme documents, which reflect UNICEF support to Governments and their priorities. The statements made during the session had been universally supportive of the organization’s efforts but had also frequently been challenging. They offered constructive suggestions on how UNICEF could improve, a goal towards which the organization continued to strive. The Executive Board was also thanked for its support for obtaining additional core resources and more flexible funding, as well as funding generally. The Executive Director appreciated the support from delegations for the future work planned in several areas, including the response to the burgeoning humanitarian crisis, efforts to be more integrative across silos, and the bringing together of the humanitarian and development aspects of the work of UNICEF.

376. In her closing remarks, the President recalled highlights of the Executive Board sessions held in 2015, in which a total of 16 decisions were adopted covering the range of the organization’s work — evaluation, audit and oversight, programmes and policy, and resources.

377. During the first regular session, the decisions adopted aimed to strengthen the organization’s procurement capacity and emergency response; to bolster private sector engagement and advocacy for child rights; and to articulate a policy framework for the development of country programmes in countries transitioning to high-income status. A highlight of the annual session was the Special Focus Session on Equity, during which several delegations expressed strong support for the organization’s focus on the most disadvantaged children. Important decisions were also adopted during the annual session, including three on annual reports: of the Executive Director; on the evaluation function; and on internal audit and investigations. The five decisions adopted at the current session, including one covering 20 new country programmes and the extensions of several others, would enable UNICEF to continue its constructive partnerships with Governments in seven regions.

378. As UNICEF looked to 2016 and the midterm review of its Strategic Plan, humanitarian emergencies loomed large on the agenda, threatening the current and future stakes for children. In 2015, UNICEF responded to the effects of the Ebola outbreak in 2014 and the deadly earthquake in Nepal, and continued to respond to widespread conflict and the consequent rising tide of refugees and migrants. Analysis of the challenges ahead must necessarily be viewed through the lens of the sustainable development goals, along with the recognition that development cannot be sustainable unless all children have the opportunity to survive and thrive.

## Annex I

### Special Focus Session on Equity

1. The Executive Board had before it a background note and a conference room paper, entitled “A fair chance for every child”.
2. The session was opened by Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of the Ibero-American Secretariat and former Associate Administrator of UNDP and Vice-President of Costa Rica. She said that the progress experienced in the past 20 years proved that change was possible and depended on political choices. However, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals initially had focused more on averages. The international community had since learned that in unequal societies, averages hid more than they revealed. Persistent disparities did not disappear with more economic growth. This was not only because of disparities caused by the unequal distribution of income — vertical inequalities — but because of horizontal inequalities that persisted between groups because of their race, gender, ethnicity or disabilities, and between their communities because of their location or the segregated nature of cities and territorial development. The interaction between the vertical and horizontal inequalities generated the hard core of exclusion, marginalization and unfairness, perpetuating the intergenerational transmission of poverty and inequality.
3. In the past two decades, Latin America had taken important steps to narrow gaps and invest in human capital for the long term. Access to health, water and sanitation and education had expanded dramatically to include rural communities and extremely poor and indigenous populations. Investments in early childhood education, with attention paid to cognitive development, and access to preschools for children had been a common strategy to combat inequity. Social spending had increased by four percentage points in the past decade. The quality of social investment had also improved, focusing on better social policy planning, design, monitoring and stronger and better social institutions. The most relevant example was conditional cash transfer schemes, which studies had shown increased the use of educational and health services and improved the nutritional status of children. In 2014, more than 100 million Latin Americans had benefited from conditional cash transfers. More robust and progressive social policies and government transfers had contributed to the decline in inequality, in addition to the positive international environment. The making of good policy choices, not economic growth has been the most important factor in reducing inequalities.
4. One example was her own country, Costa Rica, a poor country which had achieved high social development as a result of specific policy choices. Public policy choices, social commitment to equity, low tolerance for inequality, and partnerships between international, national and local actors, together with civil society and the private sector, could “do the trick”.
5. Mr. Kevin Jenkins, Chief Executive Officer, World Vision International, spoke also on behalf of Child Fund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children and SOS Children’s Villages. He acknowledged the Executive Director’s leadership in refocusing the UNICEF programmatic approach around the equity agenda. The agencies agreed that inequality was one of the biggest risks to child well-being and they were committed to tackling the issue.

6. The well-being of children might be the most important leading indicator for measuring social development and it was almost impossible to recover if it was not addressed in the early years. No single approach was enough to redress the balance; survival, good health and nutrition, quality education and protection from violence were all facets of one comprehensive package for children.

7. It was heartening that the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals had included a goal to reduce inequality and that children's issues were gaining traction in negotiations for the international conference on financing for development. Success would require close monitoring of the impact on children of the goals, targets and indicators, and making this vision a reality would require strong leadership and informed advocacy. The agencies were encouraged by the formation of the Group of Friends for Children and Sustainable Development Goals and suggested that its members consider making the group an ongoing champion for children in the years ahead.

8. Delegations expressed strong support for the equity refocus and commended the Executive Director for his leadership in this area. Several expressed appreciation for the background paper. Speakers agreed that increasing inequality resulted in poverty, hunger and malnutrition, greater disease burden, poor human development and exclusion from social justice and services for the poor. Investments in areas whose benefits could be broadly shared, such as education, health care and infrastructure, paid off in better opportunities for all. Inequalities hindered the development of communities and countries and if unaddressed, could condemn generations to poverty for years to come. The principle of equity must be applied not only within nations, but between nations and regions as well.

9. A group of delegations said that equity was clearly enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. All Governments were obligated to pay particular attention to the most disadvantaged children and do their utmost to reduce equity gaps between children. Governments should be requested to provide evidence of these efforts as part of their regular reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and UNICEF should bring this issue to the attention of the Committee. Another speaker added that a rights-based approach with a focus on equity was a powerful combination in support of all being able to exercise their rights, and thrive.

10. Because narrowing equity gaps among children was an obligation of all countries that had signed the Convention, the equity issue must not remain the sole concern of UNICEF and a few international non-governmental organizations. Governments and civil society organizations must take real steps towards narrowing equity gaps. UNICEF should eventually play more of an advocacy and supportive role.

11. Several delegations spoke of their Governments' efforts, in partnership with UNICEF, to address inequity, including, for example, through efforts to reduce child malnutrition in Guatemala, reach families in extreme poverty in Panama, follow child-sensitive strategies for social protection in Kazakhstan, support victims of armed conflict in Colombia, the use of MoRES to find and address bottlenecks in the integrated perinatal health and child nutrition programme in Egypt, and reach people in Bangladesh living in slums and other urban areas who lacked access to basic services.

12. The representative of the African group of States said that although Africa continued to register positive human development and economic growth, a large proportion of African people and their children continued to face poverty and exclusion. UNICEF should increase significantly the allocation of regular resources to country programmes in Africa, and also leverage partnerships with African institutions and organizations to boost Africa's capacity to respond through its own institutions. While recognizing the universality of the UNICEF mandate, the group urged that the guiding principles of UNICEF programming and resource allocation remain centred on the poorest and most marginalized children.

13. A speaker said that in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the two regions where the majority of the world's children lived, key challenges remained, including neonatal health and survival, stunting, education, open defecation and child illness, disproportionately affecting the poorest and most disadvantaged children and communities. Another delegation called upon UNICEF, partners and donors to ensure that resources were allocated with special focus on low-income countries, countries in conflict and post-conflict situations and areas of humanitarian crisis.

14. The representative of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States said that the equity approach reinforced the universality of children's rights. The region, comprising mainly middle-income countries, still faced important challenges including poverty, inequality and cultural and social factors such as racial discrimination or gender inequalities. These were compounded by the multidimensional challenges resulting from violence, organized crime and drug trafficking. The mass migration of accompanied and unaccompanied children, including adolescent girls and boys, was of particular concern, and it was important that efforts to address their situation be coordinated among countries and international organizations such as UNICEF.

15. The in-country presence of UNICEF was important in the region, especially because it helped to create synergies, including through South-South and triangular cooperation, to enhance national and local development initiatives. Significant populations of children in countries transitioning from middle- to high-income status were affected by multiple forms of deprivation UNICEF should continue to have a role in addressing the particular needs and goals of all developing countries, including middle-income countries. In those countries UNICEF should promote innovative models of engagement that took into account national context, and also review the formula for the allocation of resources beyond income criteria as part of the midterm review of the Strategic Plan.

16. Several delegations stressed the importance of better data and indicators to addressing inequalities, and of correct analysis and interpretation of the data. UNICEF was recognized for its pioneering role in improving the collection, analysis and use of data on children. A delegation described its support for building systems and mechanisms to monitor the situation of children, including comprehensive civil registration and vital statistics so that children's births were registered, which increased their access to services such as health and education and improved their chances of being traced if separated from their families.

17. The poorest and most vulnerable must be at the core of the post-2015 development agenda, which should address, for example, child, early and forced marriage. The collective challenge will be to translate this commitment into real action on the ground.

18. A number of delegations stressed the importance of partnerships to the equity approach, including the need to analyse existing partnerships and build innovative new partnerships.

19. A group of delegations said that they would have welcomed a clear link between the conference room paper and the evaluation of the formative evaluation of MoRES. That evaluation provided an excellent analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. They recommended that MoRES be converted into a more flexible approach; that UNICEF pay more attention to capacity-building in relevant Government departments and civil society organizations; that UNICEF expand its support to children's engagement; and that UNICEF accelerate efforts in conflict-affected and fragile contexts by strengthening resilience in disadvantaged communities and reinforcing coping mechanisms.

20. The Special Focus Session concluded with the Executive Director thanking Ms. Gynspan for her valuable insights and all the delegations for their informative and constructive interventions. He noted that to break the vicious cycle of inequity of opportunity and unequal outcomes, it is critical to invest in children, especially the most disadvantaged.

## Annex II

### Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2015

#### First regular session

##### 2015/1

#### Country programme documents

*The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* that the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Madagascar and Mali ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.1-E/ICEF/2015/P/L.2](#)) were made available to Member States for their comments and input from 10 to 28 November 2014, in accordance with its 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 Madagascar and Mali ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.1-E/ICEF/2015/P/L.2](#)).

*First regular session  
5 February 2015*

##### 2015/2

#### Extensions of ongoing country programmes

*The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the one-year extensions of the country programmes for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the six-month extension of the country programme for Ethiopia, all of which were approved by the Executive Director, as presented in table 1 of document [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.3](#);

2. *Approves* the two-year extensions of the country programmes for Myanmar and Papua New Guinea, as presented in table 2 of document [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.3](#).

*First regular session  
5 February 2015*

##### 2015/3

#### UNICEF work with countries transitioning from middle- to high-income status

*The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the growing experience of UNICEF in working in countries that have recently transitioned from middle-income to high-income status, as approved by the Executive Board through the approval of country programme documents and multi-country programme documents;

2. *Notes* that countries transitioning to high-income status often have significant populations of children that are still affected by multiple deprivations, and that some of these countries welcome ongoing partnerships with UNICEF at country level to support the realization of child rights;

3. *Further notes* that countries transitioning to high-income status also contribute significantly to developing innovative approaches to the realization of child rights for their own populations, and may be sources of learning, expertise and horizontal cooperation for other countries, and further notes that some of them have been successful in mobilizing support to UNICEF regular and/or other resources from private and/or public sources;

4. *Acknowledges* the work of UNICEF to date in countries transitioning from middle-income to high-income status and invites UNICEF to work with relevant countries to prepare country programme documents or multi-country programme documents for consideration and decision by the Executive Board, taking into account national contexts of countries for which these documents are developed and other relevant issues, including financial sustainability;

5. *Reiterates* the UNICEF formula for allocation of resources,<sup>1</sup> which directs the majority of regular resources to sub-Saharan Africa and least developed countries;

6. *Decides* to revisit this decision in the context of the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, and invites UNICEF to present an analysis for the consideration of the Executive Board on existing experience in high-income countries and middle-income countries transitioning to high-income status as part of the preparation of the midterm review of the Strategic Plan.

*First regular session  
5 February 2015*

## **2015/4 Strengthening predictability of the UNICEF response to humanitarian crises: Proposal to increase the Emergency Programme Fund ceiling**

### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the proposal to increase the ceiling of the UNICEF Emergency Programme Fund ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.4](#));

2. *Encourages* UNICEF to continue to strengthen its internal capacities and its coordination with national Governments, relevant parts of the United Nations system and civil society to ensure an effective, predictable and timely response to natural disasters as well as to ongoing complex emergencies;

3. *Takes note* of steps taken by UNICEF to build stronger links between humanitarian and development programming, including a greater focus on resilience-building leading to sustainable development, and encourages UNICEF to continue to do so in order to address the challenges of protracted crises and increasing humanitarian needs;

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<sup>1</sup> As contained in Executive Board decisions 1996/34, 1997/18 and 2012/15.

4. *Encourages* UNICEF to mobilize sufficient resources through its work with partners to meet the needs of all children in both development and humanitarian contexts;

5. *Approves* an increase in the ceiling of the Emergency Programme Fund to \$75 million per annum, effective in 2015, to be met through allocation of regular resources, to increase the ability of UNICEF to provide an immediate, effective and predictable response to the needs of children and women affected by humanitarian emergencies;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to continue to report on the status of the Emergency Programme Fund in its report on the use of regular resources.

*First regular session  
5 February 2015*

## **2015/5**

### **Extension and expansion of the Vaccine Independence Initiative and its revolving fund**

#### *The Executive Board*

1. *Approves* a five-year extension of the Vaccine Independence Initiative for the period 2016 to 2020, in accordance with the terms of the original document approved by the Executive Board in 1991 ([E/ICEF/1991/P/L.41](#)), and amends the authorized capitalization of the underlying revolving fund to \$100 million, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions;

2. *Approves* the utilization of the expanded underlying revolving fund to support the timely procurement of non-vaccine commodities (including health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, and education supplies) and to support contracting arrangements that result in a secure supply or reduced prices of vaccines and other commodities.

*First regular session  
5 February 2015*

## **2015/6**

### **Private Fundraising and Partnerships: 2015 workplan and proposed budget**

#### **A. Private Fundraising and Partnerships budgeted expenses for 2015 fiscal year**

#### *The Executive Board*

1. *Approves* for the fiscal year 2015 (1 January to 31 December) budgeted expenses of \$111.3 million, as detailed in the table below.



(in millions of United States dollars)

Investment funds	60.0
Other private sector fundraising costs	51.3
<b>Total special-purpose expenses</b>	<b>111.3</b>

2. *Notes* that \$20.8 million in Private Fundraising and Partnerships development effectiveness costs and management costs were previously approved in the UNICEF integrated budget, 2014-2017 ([E/ICEF/2013/AB/L.4](#));

3. *Authorizes* UNICEF

(a) To incur expenses, as summarized in column II of table 2 of document [E/ICEF/2015/AB/L.1](#), and to decrease or increase expenses, up to the levels indicated in columns I and III of the same table, should the apparent revenue from fundraising or cards and products sales decrease or increase to the levels indicated in columns I and III;

(b) To redeploy resources between the various budget lines (as detailed in paragraph 1 above), up to a maximum of 10 per cent of the amounts approved;

(c) To spend an additional amount between Executive Board sessions, when necessary, up to the amount caused by currency fluctuations, to implement the 2015 approved workplan.

## B. Budgeted revenue for the year 2015

### *The Executive Board*

1. *Notes* that for the period 1 January to 31 December 2015, Private Fundraising and Partnerships revenue is budgeted at \$1,252.5 million, as shown in column II of table 2 in document [E/ICEF/2015/AB/L.1](#).

## C. Policy issues

### *The Executive Board*

1. *Approves* allocation of investment funds, amounting to \$60 million for 2015, and requests the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division to provide annually, at the second regular session of the Executive Board, information on the allocation of these funds among National Committees for UNICEF and the country offices, as well as an analysis of the performance of income-generation activities three years after the investment funds are allocated;

2. *Approves* an interim one-month allocation for January 2016 of \$13.21 million, to be absorbed in the annual Private Fundraising and Partnerships budget for 2016.

*First regular session  
5 February 2015*

## Annual session

2015/7

### **Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: performance and results for 2014, including a report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review**

#### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF: performance and results for 2014, including a report on implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review ([E/ICEF/2015/5](#) and [E/ICEF/2015/5/Add.1](#));
2. *Decides* to transmit the above-mentioned report to the Economic and Social Council, along with the summary of the comments and guidance provided by delegations at the present session;
3. *Requests* UNICEF to link the future annual reports of the Executive Director to the Integrated Results and Resources Framework, and asks UNICEF to introduce a scorecard, in consultation with members of the Executive Board, on development and organizational performance;
4. *Also requests* UNICEF to provide, in the Data Companion, disaggregated data by various groups of countries.

*Annual session  
18 June 2015*

2015/8

### **Country programme documents**

#### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* that the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Armenia, Turkmenistan, Uganda and Zimbabwe ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.7-E/ICEF/2015/P/L.10](#)), were made available to Member States for their comments and input from 23 March to 10 April 2015, in accordance with its 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 Armenia, Turkmenistan, Uganda and Zimbabwe ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.7-E/ICEF/2015/P/L.10](#)).

*Annual session  
17 June 2015*

## 2015/9 Extensions of ongoing country programmes

### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the first one-year extensions of the country programmes for Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Somalia and Yemen, which were approved by the Executive Director, as presented in table 1 to document [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.11](#);

2. *Approves* the one-year extension of the country programme for Côte d'Ivoire, following a two-year extension, and the second one-year extensions of the country programmes for Lebanon and Libya, as presented in table 2 to document [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.11](#).

*Annual session  
18 June 2015*

## 2015/10 Evaluation reports, and management perspective and response

### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the annual report for 2014 on the evaluation function in UNICEF ([E/ICEF/2015/10](#)), and the management perspective ([E/ICEF/2015/EB/1](#));

2. *Welcomes* continued progress in strengthening the evaluation function in line with the Revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF ([E/ICEF/2013/14](#));

3. *Notes with concern* that implementation of the plan for global thematic evaluations, 2014-2017 ([E/ICEF/2014/3](#)), managed by the Evaluation Office, is behind schedule, while appreciating that the Evaluation Office has undertaken a number of evaluations not included in the plan, including several urgent evaluations of UNICEF humanitarian action;

4. In this regard, *requests* UNICEF to revise the plan for global thematic evaluations, taking into account emerging priorities, and to present it for information to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2016;

5. *Notes* the declining trend of stakeholders' engagement in evaluations in 2013, and requests UNICEF to analyse this trend in a future annual report on the evaluation function;

6. *Urges* UNICEF to accelerate progress towards achieving the target of allocating a minimum of 1 per cent of its overall programme expenditures to evaluation, in accordance with the Revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF, while taking note of the progress made towards the target;

7. *Requests* UNICEF, in preparing the midterm review of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, to make full use of the evidence and lessons as presented in recent evaluation reports;

8. *Notes with appreciation* progress made in recent years in preparing management responses for evaluations, and encourages UNICEF to expedite implementation of agreed actions, to strengthen its system for monitoring

implementation of these actions, and to report on progress made through the annual report on the evaluation function;

9. *Also notes with appreciation* the high quality of the report, *Formative evaluation of UNICEF's Monitoring Results for Equity System*, and encourages management to make full and timely use of the lessons and recommendations presented in the report;

10. *Calls upon* UNICEF to invite the United Nations Evaluation Group to arrange for a peer review of the UNICEF evaluation function as proposed in the Revised Evaluation Policy, to be initiated in 2016.

*Annual session  
18 June 2015*

## **2015/11 Internal Audit and Investigations**

### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2014 annual report to the Executive Board (E/ICEF/2015/AB/L.2), the UNICEF management response to the annual report of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations for 2014 (E/ICEF/2015/AB/L.3) and the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee 2014 annual report;

2. *Requests* the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations to include in future annual reports:

(a) An opinion, based on the scope of work undertaken, on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organization's framework of governance, risk management and control;

(b) A concise summary of work and the criteria that support the opinion;

(c) A statement of conformance with the internal audit standards to which UNICEF adheres;

(d) A view on whether the resourcing of the function is appropriate, sufficient and effectively deployed to achieve the desired internal audit coverage.

*Annual session  
18 June 2015*

## **Second regular session**

### **2015/12 Country programme documents**

#### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* that the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Algeria, Belarus, Cambodia, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Panama,

Serbia (and Kosovo [under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)]), Swaziland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Zambia ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.13-E/ICEF/2015/P/L.32](#)), were made available to Member States for their comments and input from 15 June to 3 July 2015, 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 Algeria, Belarus, Cambodia, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Panama, Serbia (and Kosovo [under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)]), Swaziland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Zambia ([E/ICEF/2015/P/L.13-E/ICEF/2015/P/L.32](#)).

*Second regular session  
9 September 2015*

## **2015/13 Extensions of ongoing country programmes**

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the two-month extensions of the country programmes for Azerbaijan and Uruguay, which were approved by the Executive Director of UNICEF, as presented in table 1 to document [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.33/Rev.1](#);

2. Approves the two-month extensions of the country programmes for Argentina and Iraq, following one-year extensions; and the two-month extension of the country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic, following four consecutive one-year extensions, as presented in table 2 to document [E/ICEF/2015/P/L.33/Rev.1](#). This approval will allow programme continuity until the expected consideration of the new country programmes at the 2016 first regular session of the Executive Board.

*Second regular session  
10 September 2015*

## **2015/14 Funding issues**

### **Structured dialogue on financing results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017**

#### **UNICEF Strategic Plan: updated financial estimates, 2015-2018**

*The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the UNICEF strategic brief on the structured dialogue on financing results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, which aims at increasing and securing core funding and soft earmarked funding from various sources, including increasing the number of Member States that contribute to core resources on a voluntary basis, and in that context:

2. *Also takes note of:*

(a) The proposed funding mechanisms and incentives for attracting and optimizing flexible and predictable financing;

(b) The planned financial estimates for 2015-2018, as contained in document [E/ICEF/2015/AB/L.4](#), as a flexible framework for supporting UNICEF programmes;

(c) The efforts made by UNICEF to broaden the funding base and to mobilize additional resources and other forms of support from diversified sources;

3. *Notes* that currency fluctuations can affect the resource levels of UNICEF and requests UNICEF to continue to report to the Executive Board on its work to address the impact of currency fluctuations and to continue to monitor the work of other international organizations in this regard to ensure that its currency management remains optimal;

4. *Requests* UNICEF, in the context of the structured dialogue on financing, to:

(a) Present a resource mobilization strategy, based on the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, and Integrated Results and Resources Framework, at the first regular session of 2016;

(b) Engage in informal dialogues with Member States, National Committees for UNICEF and other donors, throughout the year, including in specially arranged interactive discussions on the margins of the annual session each year, to ensure an ongoing discussion, exchange of information and analysis of funding issues and options, taking into consideration the midterm review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, the Economic and Social Council Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system, and the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and this includes exploring incentives, mechanisms and funding windows, along with their impact, to broaden the donor base and to encourage donors to increase and prioritize regular resources contributions as well as to shift to less restricted other resources funding, aligned to the Strategic Plan;

(c) Submit, within the context of the annual reporting on funding and resource mobilization, an analysis of the predictability, flexibility and alignment of resources provided for the implementation of the approved Strategic Plan, including the funding gaps and their implications according to the Integrated Results and Resources Framework;

(d) Continue to widen its partnerships with the private sector, civil society organizations, philanthropic organizations, the general public, multilateral organizations, international financial institutions, and global public-private alliances in a transparent and coordinated manner, and provide efficiency, cost-savings and assessments that are based on increasing and continuing partnership coordination while reducing duplication of efforts;

5. *Approves* the integrated resources framework of the planned financial estimates for 2015-2018, and approves the preparation of programme expenditure submissions to the Executive Board of up to \$725 million from regular resources in 2016, subject to the availability of resources and the continued validity of these planned financial estimates;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to provide annual updates to the Executive Board on the progress of funding its reserves for staff liabilities.

*Second regular session  
10 September 2015*

## 2015/15 Proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2016

*The Executive Board*

*Adopts* the programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2016 as a flexible framework subject to revisions as appropriate in the course of the year.

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Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP  
(Date to be confirmed)

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*First regular session  
2-5 February 2016*

*Annual session  
14-17 June 2016*

*Second regular session  
14-16 September 2016*

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### **Organizational and procedural matters**

Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the Executive Board (*D*)

(7 January 2016)<sup>2</sup>

### **Programme and policy matters**

UNICEF programme cooperation:  
Country programme documents (*D*)

Extensions of ongoing country programmes (*D*)

Oral report on UNICEF follow-up to recommendations and decisions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Programme Coordinating Board meetings (*I*)

### **Organizational and procedural matters**

### **Programme and policy matters**

Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF (*D*)

UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit<sup>3</sup> (*I*)

Midterm review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, including the UNICEF Integrated Budget (*D*)

Annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2014-2017 (*I*)

UNICEF programme cooperation:  
Country programme documents (*D*)

Extensions of ongoing country programmes (*D*)

### **Organizational and procedural matters**

Proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2017 (*D*)

### **Programme and policy matters**

UNICEF programme cooperation:  
Country programme documents (*D*)

Extensions of ongoing country programmes (*D*)

Structured dialogue on financing results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 (*I*)

<sup>2</sup> This date is tentative.

<sup>3</sup> The report is considered under the agenda item, "Annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF".

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*First regular session*  
2-5 February 2016

*Annual session*  
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*Second regular session*  
14-16 September 2016

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**Evaluation, audit and oversight matters**

Evaluation reports and management responses (*I*)  
– Revised plan for global thematic evaluations (*I*)

**Evaluation, audit and oversight matters**

Annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations in UNICEF, and management perspective (*D*)

Evaluation reports and management responses (*I*)

Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF (*I*)

Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2015 annual report to the Executive Board, and management response (*D*)

UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee annual report for 2015 (*I*)

**Evaluation, audit and oversight matters**

Evaluation reports and management responses (*I*)

**Resources, financial and budgetary matters**

UNICEF annual financial report and audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2014 and report of the Board of Auditors (*I*)

Private fundraising: 2016 workplan and proposed budget (*D*)

**Resources, financial and budgetary matters**

**Resources, financial and budgetary matters**

Private fundraising: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2015 (*I*)

UNICEF Strategic Plan: updated financial estimates, 2016-2019 (*D*)

**Other matters**

Provisional list of agenda items for the annual session of 2016

**Other matters**

Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association

Reports of the field visits of the Executive Board (*I*)

Provisional list of agenda items for the second regular session of 2016

**Other matters**

Provisional list of agenda items for the first regular session of 2017

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*Note:*

(*D*) — *For decision:* The Secretariat prepares documentation on the agenda item. The Executive Board is expected to discuss and adopt a decision under the agenda item.

(*I*) — *For information:* The secretariat prepares documentation for information. The Executive Board may opt to take a decision under the agenda item.

*Second regular session*  
10 September 2015



**2015/16**  
**UNICEF Pledging Event held annually at the first regular session**  
**of the UNICEF Executive Board**

*The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* that, in addition to the annual UNICEF Pledging Event, there is a United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities of the United Nations funds and programmes, held in November every year, that more closely aligns with United Nations system-wide coherence;
2. *Recalls* its decision 2014/17, which established the annual structured dialogue on financing results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, through which substantive discussions on regular resources, and on other, complementary funding, will take place;
3. *Decides* to discontinue the annual UNICEF Pledging Event, from 2016 onwards.

*Second regular session*  
*10 September 2015*

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