

UNICEF Executive Board - 2022 First Regular Session

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Statement by Alexandra Posada Samour

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Remarks

In response to the unprecedented social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, El Salvador is prioritizing the implementation of policies, strategies, and interventions to address the historical under investment gap in children and their families through informed economic projections and analysis.

A prime example of these increased investments and attention to children is the multisectoral national policy, “Grow up Together”, which the Government of El Salvador launched in 2020, investing more than US \$600,000,000 and positioning ECD as a top priority in the national agenda, led and propelled by the First Lady, Gabriela de Bukele.

Grow up Together is a historic opportunity to expand and scale ECD services designed to ensure their inclusiveness, equity and quality. It can be identified as the anti-poverty policy by definition and it is one of the main pillars of the social protection system in the country, evidencing how child-centered public policies in El Salvador are now prioritized. UNICEF is supporting the Government’s vision by cooperating with the Ministry of Education to bridge learning gaps, by the acquisition of information technology equipment, the provision of Internet connectivity, the creation of quality digital contents for flexible virtual/hybrid learning and the promotion of digital skills for students and teachers alike, including those with disabilities.

In 2021, the policy began its implementation stage in 96 municipalities with important milestones which include the institution of the new “Humanized Birth and Nurturing Care for Newborns Law”, which responds to a historical debt for mothers and their children, guaranteeing inclusive, quality maternal and infant health access nationwide.

Responding to the challenges of a full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is a monumental yet vital task – one that requires the involvement of multiple stakeholders including national and international organizations, States, the private sector, and civil society. El Salvador is vested in working in collaboration with these actors committed to developing shock-resistant social protection systems that consider economic, sanitary, emergency and climate-related threats affecting vulnerable children and their families, with the mission of ‘leaving no one behind’.

We are starting now from the beginning, what happens here will determine our future, because Early Childhood is where it all begins, so let’s Grow Up Together.