

## **Agenda Item 4**

### **Annual Report on UNICEF Humanitarian Action**

Chair, Madam Executive Director,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union as a donor.

We would like to express our appreciation to the staff of UNICEF and its partners, delivering humanitarian assistance in an increasingly complex environment. We appreciate the response to humanitarian needs in more than 150 countries in 2021. As the increase in funding and growing share of humanitarian action show, UNICEF is a key actor during emergencies, while also making an important contribution to upholding children's rights to protection, education, healthcare and access to a clean environment, including for children on the move. We also reiterate our appreciation for UNICEF's continued role in the response to the pandemic, to ensure the continuity of key services, including education and health, particularly through the COVAX Facility and its Humanitarian Buffer.

Given the increasing humanitarian needs, we commend your continued efforts to strengthen partnerships. We would welcome regular updates on partnerships with UN agencies, including on the implementation of the Common Cash Statement, as well as other organisations, such as the IFRC. At the same time, we would appreciate information on progress made in the cooperation with WFP, FAO and WHO in the fight against malnutrition, following the Food and Nutrition for Growth Summits, and of course in view of rising food and nutrition insecurity resulting from the war in Ukraine.

We welcome UNICEF's efforts to strengthen protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, including the scale-up of reporting channels. In this context we encourage joint-up approaches with other UN agencies, including joint awareness raising and capacity building of staff, and the setting up joint, easily accessible instances adapted to the local context, to whom allegations can be reported, ensuring a victim/survivor-centered approach and follow-up. We also appreciate the focus on accountability to affected populations and suggest partnering with others in this area, for example through joint complaint mechanisms.

We welcome the start of the implementation of the recommendations of the Humanitarian Review and appreciate periodic updates, linked also to the implementation of the new Strategic Plan. We would also appreciate regular updates on the Nexus agenda.

The report notes that UNICEF humanitarian funding to local or national partners reached 29.3 per cent. We commend UNICEF's investment in strengthening the capacities of local actors in humanitarian action, in line with the Grand Bargain and the Core Commitments on Children. We look forward to consultations on the draft corporate strategy on localization. We further welcome your efforts to ensure youth participation through different methodologies, including the U-Report, in the humanitarian and development efforts. Meaningful participation is key, especially among the most vulnerable groups.

We commend the increase in UNICEF-supported humanitarian cash transfers and in its related support to social protection systems in 2021. We encourage UNICEF to pursue this approach whenever possible. Cash coordination is key, and we appreciate the participation of UNICEF

and many other humanitarian organisations in the caucus on cash coordination. We strongly promote this caucus and welcome aid organisations' efforts to achieve a new model for predictable, accountable and interoperable cash system. We look forward to the next phases of the new system and to regular related updates by UNICEF. We also appreciate UNICEF's continued engagement in joint needs assessments.

Thank you.