

UNICEF EXECUTIVE BOARD ANNUAL SESSION**Joint UK statement - Item 7) Evaluation of the UNICEF role as Cluster Lead**

Madam President,

I deliver this statement on behalf of Austria, Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Iceland, Ireland, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Switzerland, the United States, and my own country, the United Kingdom.

The evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency – CLARE2 – is a comprehensive, insightful, and important iteration of the original evaluation on UNICEF's cluster work, building on CLARE1 which was conducted in 2013. It is a credit to UNICEF for continuing to undertake self-reflective system evaluations to improve its efficiency and ensure its structures and processes are suited to meet the demands of the evolving humanitarian landscape. Recognising that some recommendations from the original evaluation have not been achieved, we see three specific opportunities to strengthen the management response.

First, the recommendations from the CLARE2 are unlikely to be achieved based upon the current management response with reference to recommendations 1a, 2a, and 2b. These include how UNICEF will achieve organisational change, the empowerment and mainstreaming of Cluster leadership, and staffing. These recommendations are as important as those for which the management response has provided adequate actions as they enable strategic leadership, decision making, and the benefits of collective action, including through the coordination of partners that UNICEF does not fund. We call upon UNICEF to strengthen its management response in these areas.

Second, the recommendations from the CLARE2 mirror findings from the 2020 Humanitarian Review which notes the importance of having *people with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time*. Analysis of Cluster staffing consistently shows that this is yet to be achieved in some cases. Today, as we speak, there are gaps in Cluster Coordination and even wider gaps in Information Management across humanitarian crises. As humanitarian needs continue to outstrip available funding, we are forced to prioritise and therefore encourage UNICEF to staff Cluster positions with their own resources if feasible, to support the use of independent assessments, and to enhance the use of sectoral and intersectoral approaches to severity of need within humanitarian responses.

Third, the achievement of the recommendations is a shared issue spanning Programmes, Emergency Operations and other Directorates. To ensure UNICEF remains accountable for achieving the recommendations and its Cluster Lead Agency responsibilities, we request that progress reports are made on an annual basis to the Executive Board and to the IASC.

In closing, I wish to thank the UNICEF team and UNICEF's partners for their continued dedication to meeting the needs of children and their families around the world.

Thank you.