

Item 13 / Address by Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association

Joint Statement on behalf of the UNICEF Bureau delivered by Denmark's DPR Marie-Louise Koch Wegter

I would like to thank the chairperson of the Global Staff Association for his statement.

I have the honor of delivering this statement on behalf of a joint UNICEF Bureau.

The world and the world's children face an unprecedented number of challenges; with a record number of humanitarian crises and protracted crises. At the same time the world is still coming to terms with the full extent of the damage wrought by Covid-19, with dwindling incomes of families, rising food insecurity and a global economy which has suffered a deep recession and now faces increasing inflation.

Despite the many challenges, the committed women and men of UNICEF have delivered impressive results the past year. Every day you demonstrate that we can overcome barriers to serve and support children and communities alike. That we can work together, draw partners to our cause and step by step make the world a better place for every child.

During the gravest global crisis in generations, UNICEF staff members made sure that children did not face Covid-19 alone.

Together you rose to the challenge. You stayed and delivered, helping communities contain the virus – while protecting health workers and children alike.

We recognize everything that you and your great organization has achieved for children and young people over the decades. And we also recognize that it comes with a price.

Covid-19 and working in challenging contexts has directly affected you and your families. UNICEF staff in the field often work under the risk of attacks or contracting the virus.

COVID-19 also put an additional burden on UNICEF staff with regard to an increased workload, to work-life balance and to mental well-being. We commend all UNICEF staff for coping with the stress from working at home and during lock-down and at the same time striving to deliver results for children and their families.

We would also like to commend the UNICEF Global Staff Association leadership team for their important work the past year, particularly in representing all UNICEF staff, in communicating staff needs to management, in ensuring that work environment for all staff is conducive and in advocating for flexible working possibilities and organisational change in response to COVID-19.

With the current initiatives on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, on the improvement of UNICEF's working culture and on the fight against discrimination and racism, we see UNICEF heading in the right direction. We value UNICEF staff's active involvement in driving these processes and we value the dialogue with staff, including through this dialogue.

We as the UNICEF bureau and member states stand ready to continue supporting you and the Global Staff Association.

Thank you.