

U.S. Remarks
UNICEF Executive Board Annual Session
June 14-17, 2022

Item 5 – Gender Action Plan

- The United States welcomes UNICEF’s accomplishments through the 2018-2021 Gender Action Plan to improve the situation of children; prevent, mitigate, and respond to gender-based violence, and advance gender equality worldwide.
- We note UNICEF’s achievements toward gender equality across all facets of its work from 2018 to 2021, and welcome the bold approach used in the 2022–2025 Gender Action Plan.
- Specifically, we welcome UNICEF’s work on menstrual health and hygiene (MHH), child protection and gender-based violence in emergencies, and UNICEF’s efforts to raise awareness around the importance of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS),. We hope to see these efforts redoubled in the 2022-2025 Gender Action Plan.
- We see MHH and MHPSS activities as linked closely to many issues like sexual and reproductive health and rights, addressing gender-based violence , and WASH efforts in humanitarian and development contexts and ask UNICEF to expand its MHH and MHPSS work beyond in-school adolescents and emergency settings.
- The United States recommends that UNICEF leverage its role as a leading partner in UN Water to highlight the importance of gender equality and female empowerment in WASH interventions, including in the lead-up to the 2023 UN Water Conference.
- We also appreciate UNICEF's approach of integrating MHPSS as an essential part of a continuum of quality care for caregivers, and we encourage UNICEF to prioritize MHPSS among children and adolescents as well as women and caregivers.
- We also encourage UNICEF’s strong focus on education and gender equality to address the needs of the 11 million girls at risk of not returning to school due to COVID-19’s unprecedented disruption. We ask that UNICEF help us break down gender-related barriers to education so that children and youth in all their diversity have access to quality learning opportunities given the serious risks posed to the progress made.
- We noted that Goal Area 3 lacks specific references to Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH) in its indicators. We ask UNICEF to consider specific and meaningful measures of its work in PSEAH to expand child protection and GBV programming; build a cadre of PSEAH advisors; expand its SEAH risk analysis and mitigation work; commit to survivor-centered accountability activities; ensure survivors access to safe and timely support; and implement PSEAH-specific action plans in line with UN system wide policies on SEAH.