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Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its annual session of 2022

(14–17 June 2022)*

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I. Organization of the session

A. Adoption of the provisional annotated agenda, timetable and organization of work

1. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work ([E/ICEF/2022/9/Rev.1](#)) for the session.
2. The Secretary of the Executive Board announced that 55 observer delegations, including 1 intergovernmental organization, 3 international organizations, 8 non-governmental organizations and 4 National Committees for UNICEF, had submitted credentials, in accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure.

B. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF

3. The President opened the annual session of the Executive Board. He welcomed the members and observers of the Executive Board to the first in-person session in more than two years.
4. The President commented on the unprecedented circumstances and challenges due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and instabilities around the world. He thanked the Vice-Presidents of the Executive Board, noting their dedication and collegial manner in responding to the challenges UNICEF had faced.
5. The President highlighted the increasing risk of harm to children as a result of the pandemic and increasing humanitarian needs as a result of conflict and crises, leading to violations of children's rights. He said that half of the world's children were living, as of 2021, without access to essential services.
6. The President regretted the violation of fundamental human rights that was affecting a rising number of children due to high levels of poverty and hunger. He noted that interruptions to schooling continued to derail progress towards quality education throughout 2021. The President noted that at least 24 million children were estimated to have dropped out of school in 2021, on top of more than 260 million children who were already out of school prior to the pandemic. He expressed his concern that almost half of all refugee children did not have schools to attend. In addition, children who were internally displaced or in fragile settings often had even fewer educational opportunities. He affirmed that UNICEF was working across all sectors to support the safe reopening of schools and helping children to recover from learning losses by scaling up tailored digital learning solutions.
7. The President reported that throughout 2021, UNICEF had helped nearly 49 million out-of-school children to access education, including 6.4 million children on the move and 31.7 million children in humanitarian settings. He hailed the School-in-a-Box kits as emblematic of the organization's dedication.
8. The President called on delegations to put children at the centre of their efforts and renew their commitment to children's education ahead of the Transforming Education Summit in September 2022. He advocated for a united effort to give children the knowledge and skills they needed to thrive and called for a reinvigoration of global efforts to deliver on the education-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.
9. The President looked forward to a full agenda over the coming days. He thanked the United Nations Conference Services and technical teams for their support to the

session, stressing the importance of the availability of simultaneous interpretation as a fundamental component of the modalities of multilateralism.

10. In closing, he commended UNICEF staff worldwide for their dedicated work, in particular their commitment during the long months of the pandemic and in times of conflict, which had enabled UNICEF to deliver on its mission in the face of unprecedented challenges.

11. The Executive Director emphasized the scale of the crisis that had unfolded in Ukraine, reporting that two thirds of Ukrainian children had been displaced and hundreds more had been killed or injured in 100 days. The ripple effects of the war had spread quickly beyond Ukraine, she said, due to the large number of countries dependent on Russian and Ukrainian food exports.

12. The Executive Director voiced her concerns at rising food prices and supply disruptions that were exacerbating the global nutrition crisis and intensifying risks for the most vulnerable children. She highlighted the fragility of today's interconnected world but also its capacity for resilience, solidarity and progress.

13. The Executive Director commended the ability of UNICEF to respond rapidly to changing circumstances and build resilience for the future. She described the work of UNICEF that she had witnessed in recent months, including in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and at the border of Romania and Ukraine.

14. The Executive Director said that until there was a political solution to the war in Ukraine, UNICEF would continue to do everything possible to meet the humanitarian needs of children and families affected by the war. In the context of her visits to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, the Executive Director commended the power of the UNICEF dual mandate to provide both humanitarian assistance and development support.

15. The Executive Director reported that, across the Horn of Africa, more than 1.7 million children were suffering from severe wasting and required urgent therapeutic care to save their lives. The war in Ukraine was exacerbating that crisis due to the rising prices of staples and life-saving therapeutic food. Acknowledging that the challenges for children continued to grow, the Executive Director galvanized participants to respond to the many obstacles to secure a more peaceful, prosperous and sustainable future for everyone.

16. The Executive Director noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had reversed progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and that the world's recovery had been inequitable. She reiterated the Secretary-General's call to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals and stated that the only way of doing that was by making children the top priority.

17. The Executive Director outlined how Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 13 all required urgent action to improve the lives of children. The new UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 was a blueprint for driving progress towards all of the child-focused Goals, and although she was encouraged by its early implementation, she said that UNICEF needed to “future-proof” its ability to reach all children, wherever they were, by securing the funding that made its work possible. She noted that while total income to UNICEF was a record-breaking \$8.1 billion in 2021, that income was primarily made up of earmarked contributions; unrestricted funds – regular resources – had declined by 4 per cent.

18. The Executive Director noted that regular resources allowed UNICEF to innovate and respond rapidly at any given moment, and supported the organization's ability to respond to underfunded emergencies. In 2021, 68 per cent of the earmarked funding that UNICEF had received had gone to only 10 emergency appeals. In

addition, the 10 least-funded emergencies accounted for only 2 per cent of total funding, a trend that the Executive Director stressed must be reversed in order to future-proof the ability of UNICEF to reach the most disadvantaged children and reignite progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. She urged Member States to dedicate 30 per cent of their contributions to regular resources.

19. Expressing her concern at the decline in official development assistance contributions, the Executive Director said that she hoped that such reductions did not become a trend, particularly because needs were still increasing. She said that the war in Ukraine had generated unprecedented levels of private support, with 70 per cent of those donors being new to UNICEF, which presented an opportunity for their support in other emergencies and longer-term support for core resources.

20. The Executive Director said that the successful fundraising efforts of UNICEF in 2021 reflected the urgency of the moment, but were also a testament to the expertise of UNICEF staff, to the power of the organization's advocacy, and to the trust that donors placed in UNICEF. She highlighted that in her time at UNICEF, she had already seen how the ability of UNICEF to deliver on its mission was closely tied to the organization's reputation for transparency, accountability and integrity. UNICEF had a well-functioning internal control and risk management system and strong safeguards for whistle-blowers. Such efforts were part of a continuous process of working to strengthen the effectiveness of governance, risk management and controls, and to build an inclusive, safe and welcoming workplace for all.

21. The Executive Director expressed zero tolerance for any conduct that undermined the ability of UNICEF to deliver on its mission, including mismanagement and fraud, and called on UNICEF to unite around its core values, while adapting to the challenges of today's changing times.

22. The Executive Director said that she was proud to be part of the remarkable United Nations system. She said that UNICEF had always been strongly committed to United Nations reform as a way to increase results, and it was her honour as Executive Director to build on the efforts of her predecessors. She added that it was necessary to work more closely and efficiently than ever with all United Nations partners, especially during today's challenging times.

23. In closing, the Executive Director called the present day a time of urgency and opportunity; the world had made enormous progress for children in recent decades and must now do so again, with children and young people as partners and a gathering force for positive change. She thanked participants and said that she looked forward to the conversations in the coming days.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Annual report for 2021 of the Executive Director of UNICEF

24. The President introduced the annual report for 2021 of the Executive Director of UNICEF ([E/ICEF/2022/10](#)) and the UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit ([E/ICEF/2022/12](#)).

25. After introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, the Director, Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, presented details on results achieved in 2021. The presentation also included a brief update of the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 ([E/ICEF/2022/11](#)).

26. Numerous delegations welcomed the results of the annual report, congratulated UNICEF on its progress and thanked staff and implementing partners for their commitment to children's rights and well-being.

27. Several delegations commended the work of the President and the Executive Director. They praised the Executive Director for the first 100 days of her tenure, noting her skilled leadership and pledging their full support to her work.

28. In the context of the ongoing negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reprioritization of resources, a group of delegations underlined the risks posed to the Sustainable Development Goals and urged that this was no time for complacency – a sentiment with which the Executive Director agreed. In her response, the Executive Director noted that UNICEF played an active role in United Nations country teams and that in many situations UNICEF took on a leadership role of specific functions.

29. Multiple delegations expressed concern that immunization progress was off track. The delegations called for increased investment in routine immunization and drew attention to setbacks that had led to an increase in the number of unvaccinated children and to a persistent vaccine divide. In response, the Executive Director underscored the importance of routine immunizations for children's health and development. She acknowledged that COVID-19 vaccine delivery remained challenging and reaffirmed the commitment of UNICEF to all children everywhere.

30. Numerous delegations looked ahead to the upcoming Transforming Education Summit as an opportunity to develop a road map to regain lost ground in children's education. The Executive Director emphasized the need for concrete plans and concrete information to emerge from the Summit – children were falling behind so quickly, she said, there was simply no time to get together and talk. She described UNICEF teams as ready to plan for how countries could recover from the dramatic challenges they faced.

31. A group of delegations welcomed the increase in private sector revenue but expressed concern at the declining proportion of regular resources. The group called on UNICEF to ensure that appropriate systems were in place to manage funding effectively, including for the prevention of, and response to, fraud and other forms of mismanagement. A delegation expressed concern at recent allegations of fraud and misconduct at the United Nations Office for Project Services. In response, the Executive Director emphasized the value that UNICEF placed on oversight, ethics and evaluation, including the importance of well-resourced and independent evaluation, audit and ethics offices, and assured delegates of her complete confidence in those functions.

32. Numerous delegations drew attention to climate change and its consequences, with one group encouraging UNICEF to continue to reduce its carbon footprint. The group noted that the implementation of measures to promote environmental sustainability was inconsistent across UNICEF country programmes and often focused on water, sanitation and hygiene programmes. The group called on UNICEF to include assessments of environmental sustainability in future evaluations.

33. In the context of numerous protracted crises, inflation, rising food prices and the effects of climate change, numerous delegations called for increased collaboration, multilateral responses and innovative thinking by UNICEF and a more integrated, coherent, efficient and results-driven United Nations presence. Delegations called on Governments, international partners and civil society organizations to come together to tackle the many challenges. The Executive Director reaffirmed that UNICEF was working hard to improve collaboration and agreed that support for United Nations country teams, led by resident coordinators, would play an important role in countries' recovery from the pandemic.

34. A delegation noted that the crisis in Ukraine had caused food prices on global markets to rise to a three-decade high, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable people in developing countries. The delegation called for collective action to tackle hunger. In response, the Executive Director expressed the view that inflation and rising food prices posed a serious challenge to UNICEF in terms of affordability; for example, the cost of ready-to-use therapeutic foods had risen significantly.

35. A group of delegations drew attention to mental health as an emerging challenge for children. The group expressed its support for UNICEF in trying to break the silence surrounding mental health and in catalysing and galvanizing support for the issue. The Executive Director agreed, emphasizing the need to include mental health in UNICEF programming in a thoughtful manner.

36. In the context of digital security, a group of delegations highlighted the danger of fake news and the “infodemic” on children, who were being exposed to more misinformation than ever before. The delegations called for efforts to counter those threats to focus on children as well as adults. The Executive Director affirmed the vulnerability of children online and her awareness of the issue.

37. A group of delegations expressed concern at the situation in the Horn of Africa, which had experienced rain shortfalls for four consecutive years. The group noted that the loss of cattle to serious drought deprived children of important sources of nutrition, forced them to drop out of school to find food and water, and resulted in school closures.

38. A group of delegations recognized UNICEF efforts to prevent and respond to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. The group of delegations reiterated a zero tolerance for inaction and welcomed the progress, but acknowledged that significant challenges remained. Another delegation called on United Nations agencies and the United Nations system to strengthen governance, ethics, evaluation, audit and internal investigation functions, ensure that whistleblower protections met appropriate standards, and commit to building safer and more supportive workplaces, including strengthening accountability for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. In response, the Executive Director deplored the prevalence of violence against women in every society and in every part of the world and pledged her full commitment to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment within UNICEF, noting that the organization was committed to dealing with the issue aggressively.

39. Highlighting that 2021 was the last year of the reporting period for the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, a group of delegations expressed their recognition that it took time for system-level outcomes to affect children’s lives and livelihoods and urged UNICEF to keep the bigger picture in mind. The delegations noted that UNICEF could have used the 2021 annual report to report on and evaluate progress on systematic and composite changes, as well as to showcase where UNICEF saw its role as critical to making those changes come about over the past four years.

40. The group of delegations welcomed the opportunity to discuss the updated Integrated Results and Resources Framework, review disaggregated data and examine the operationalization of a human rights-based approach. The group urged UNICEF to specify the year on baseline values to allow for precise discussion and encouraged the organization to prepare for an analysis of results and progress over the entire period, 2022–2025. The delegations underlined the need for transparent and timely reporting to provide the necessary oversight of outcome-level results, as per the commitments in the funding compact, and noted that accountability was pivotal to maintaining support for flexible funding modalities. The group commended UNICEF for taking the lead on data collection and paving the way for more harmonized and integrated systems for reporting on country-level changes.

41. A delegation highlighted the importance of maintaining a special focus on least developed countries, especially in Africa. The delegation anticipated that, in the coming years, a decrease in the number of least developed countries coupled with an increase in middle-income countries would mean a decrease in contributions to the least developed countries in absolute terms. The delegation asked whether UNICEF intended to readjust those assessments and allocations to address the needs of the most vulnerable. In response, the Executive Director noted that the core resource allocation was guided by the Executive Board-approved formula, taking into consideration child mortality rates and other factors. She acknowledged that a majority of the world's extreme poor lived in middle-income countries, hence the importance of UNICEF in those countries.

42. A delegation underlined the importance of addressing fragility and inequality, including by strengthening social protection systems, which required cooperation with the countries concerned as well as all relevant actors inside and outside the United Nations system. The delegation also raised the importance of bridging the gap between multifaceted, core-funded strategies, and targeted or earmarked projects. The delegation praised UNICEF efficiency in the field, but said that targeted, earmarked projects resulted in more visibility and more efficient reporting than projects that benefited from core funding and multifaceted strategies.

43. Highlighting the importance of innovation, a delegation noted that the multilateral system was under extreme pressure from multiple and interlinked crises. The delegation spoke of the need for innovative, solutions-focused thinking and underscored the importance of flexible, quality funding for UNICEF, reminding partners of their joint commitment to the funding compact. The delegation said that UNICEF had both the capacity and a responsibility to be one of the main driving forces in the reform of the United Nations.

44. Noting growing humanitarian needs, a delegation highlighted the importance of the dual humanitarian-development mandate of UNICEF. The delegation also welcomed the annual report's growing focus on adaptive social systems and the strengthening of social cohesion in UNICEF programmes. The Executive Director agreed that the dual humanitarian-development mandate was essential to responding to the cycle of crises.

45. Multiple delegations commended the presence of UNICEF in Ukraine and called for a continuing focus on education and for UNICEF to collect evidence of negative coping mechanisms in the war against Ukraine in order to advocate for the needs of women and children. In response, the Executive Director acknowledged that education for Ukrainian children remained a challenge in many places, despite the education system being mostly digitized, and said that UNICEF needed to redouble efforts to support continuity of education.

46. A delegation highlighted the issue of severe wasting, noting that malnutrition could have decades-long effects and intergenerational impacts on children's development. In response, the Executive Director expressed her commitment in the strongest terms to eradicating severe wasting.

47. Multiple delegations commended the work of UNICEF as a key partner in the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility. A delegation praised UNICEF in particular for integrating public health, emergency and socioeconomic responses into country-level plans and regional Humanitarian Action for Children appeals.

48. Several delegations welcomed the achievements of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021 in advancing gender responsiveness both in UNICEF programmes and organizational system and work culture. A delegation also highlighted the

important responsibilities of all to prioritize gender equality to empower children and youth.

49. Referencing the global food crisis, a delegation said that the United Nations had declared the risk of a crisis two years ago and cited multiple drivers of rising prices, including the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic approaches, and trade wars.

50. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/9 (see annex).

B. UNICEF humanitarian action

(a) Annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action

51. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, presented the annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action ([E/ICEF/2022/13](#)).

52. Multiple delegations welcomed efforts by UNICEF to deliver robust humanitarian assistance and respond to the multiple shocks that had pushed humanitarian needs to record levels. Numerous delegations commended UNICEF efforts to apply lessons learned from major evaluations to improve its humanitarian action throughout the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025. Delegations also praised efforts to partner at all levels to maximize the impact and scope of UNICEF work, with one delegation urging UNICEF to take the lead in strengthening collaboration and coordination between humanitarian and development work. In response to comments on collaboration and partnerships, the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, said that UNICEF continued to strengthen partnerships with other organizations in the United Nations system and highlighted the successful partnership between UNICEF and the World Health Organization around the COVID-19 response.

53. A delegation noted with appreciation that UNICEF was increasingly putting protection at the centre of its approach. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, underscored the importance of protection and said that UNICEF was actively supporting the Inter-Agency Standing Committee review on the centrality of protection policy. The delegation raised the issue of forcible deportation of children in conflict settings. In response, the Director noted the concern of the Office of Emergency Programmes regarding the issue, as well as his concerns regarding the risk of adoptions in conflict settings.

54. A delegation characterized the crisis in the Horn of Africa as an example of climate-induced drought, whose effects were compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and lost learning. The delegation called on development partners and countries to increase support to countries at risk of climate-related calamities and to honour commitments to sustainably address climate change, including through cutting carbon emissions to zero.

55. Numerous delegations commended UNICEF efforts to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic and called on the organization to support the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in low-income countries and to build preparedness and resilience for possible future pandemics.

56. Multiple delegations commended efforts to improve humanitarian access and urged UNICEF to strengthen its approach to identifying and targeting populations with the greatest need and allocating resources to the hard to reach and most vulnerable.

57. A delegation commended the investment by UNICEF in strengthening the capacities of local actors in humanitarian action, in line with the Grand Bargain and

the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, and said that it looked forward to consultations on the development of the UNICEF strategy on localization.

58. A delegation referenced a recommendation in the Humanitarian Review for UNICEF to define its “risk appetite” and requested further information on such action. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, pointed out that risk appetite was at the centre of the new UNICEF emergency procedures, following a global risk management consultation. He noted that humanitarian assistance was focused on the concept of no regrets, with the most significant potential regret being non-assistance.

59. Several delegations appreciated progress made in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, but noted that underreporting was still a challenge that needed to be addressed while prioritizing survivor-centred care. Delegations asked how UNICEF had prioritized such work to ensure its presence across the organization’s systems and operations, and called for more detailed reporting on gender equality and how a gender perspective was mainstreamed, beyond gender-based violence and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, drew attention to the fact that every allocation from the emergency programme fund and the global humanitarian thematic fund included an investment in the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, noting that the issue was central to efforts. He acknowledged that there was more work to be done but highlighted that in 2021, UNICEF had reached 61 million children and adults through the accessible reporting channels for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, up from 7 million in 2018.

60. A number of delegations appreciated the recent focus on accountability to affected populations. One delegation requested a clear explanation of what barriers had prevented progress on improving accountability for affected populations, while another suggested partnering to improve accountability, such as through joint complaint mechanisms. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, emphasized that all country offices, country representatives and senior management at the country level understood that when a crisis happened, setting up mechanisms of accountability, reporting and feedback loops, and incorporating those into UNICEF responses, was a core element of what the organization did. He noted that, in 2021, feedback mechanisms that informed planning processes existed in 42 countries and said that building systemic and integrated accountability for affected populations was a key area of focus.

61. A group of delegations expressed interest in understanding how UNICEF integrated children with disabilities into its overall activities and achievements. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, emphasized that UNICEF was consistently and meaningfully integrating disability into its programming and had made progress in that regard.

62. Several delegations commended UNICEF for its support of humanitarian cash transfers and support to social protection systems, acknowledging that cash coordination was key. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, also emphasized the importance of cash coordination, at the country level in particular, making space for partners to engage in cash programming in a coordinated and harmonized way.

63. A number of delegations raised the urgent need for support in the Sahel region. In his response, the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, strongly agreed.

64. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/10 (see annex).

65. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, and the UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia also provided a briefing on the situation in Ukraine. Numerous delegations underlined the importance of continuing to record,

monitor and report on violations against children in Ukraine. One delegation expressed concern that the briefing had not been announced in advance. In response, the Secretary of the Executive Board noted that the request to add the briefing to the agenda item on UNICEF humanitarian action had been endorsed by the Bureau during a previous Bureau meeting, and that the note for the record of that meeting had been circulated to all Member States. The Secretary added that in 2021, an update had been provided on Afghanistan by the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, which had not been explicitly included in the agenda for the session.

(b) Update on the progress achieved through the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership

66. The Global Lead Coordinator, COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership, presented an update on the progress achieved through the Partnership. He outlined the situation with COVID-19 vaccination among the 92 Advance Market Commitment entities and the contribution of the Partnership to the acceleration of COVID-19 vaccination, and highlighted key achievements as well as challenges.

67. Numerous delegations commended the Partnership's progress in increasing vaccine coverage and thanked vaccinators for their work, but expressed concern that progress continued to be uneven, with low rates of vaccination in humanitarian settings. Several delegations expressed their strong ongoing support for ending the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, thanked Governments and UNICEF for their role in efforts to end the pandemic, and committed themselves to helping countries to build back better.

68. Citing reported vaccination rates of 18 per cent in Africa, one delegation asked why there was such a discrepancy when there was ample supply, and questioned the economic impact of low coverage. In response, the Global Lead Coordinator outlined that a window of opportunity had been missed in early 2021 when vaccines were not readily available; that Omicron had changed risk perceptions so that vaccine demand was an issue in addition to hesitancy; and that health systems were stretched and addressing numerous health priorities. He explained how the Partnership was supporting countries to address those issues through political engagement, rapid disbursement of quick-impact funding and technical assistance. He said that the Partnership was also working to increase vaccine coverage in humanitarian settings, through country teams and partnerships, and recognized the importance of making the COVAX Humanitarian Buffer an accessible, user-friendly tool.

69. A delegation urged a continuing focus on critical gaps in vaccine delivery and expressed the hope that COVID-19 responses could help to strengthen routine immunization and health and nutrition services, and, vice versa, that existing global vaccination capacities could speed up COVID-19 vaccine administration. In response, the Global Lead Coordinator provided an example of where UNICEF was repurposing polio vaccination assets for use against COVID-19 and acknowledged that bundling or sequencing campaigns was an important strategy. The Partnership was focused on ensuring that countries met national targets, with a focus on high-priority groups, and was continually documenting lessons learned. He asked for continued political attention on COVID-19 vaccination, provision of flexible delivery funding and support for the integration of COVID-19 vaccination with humanitarian activities.

70. Delegations urged Member States and partners to maintain the momentum and promote global solidarity in overcoming challenges, with one delegation calling for more investment and sustained country leadership.

71. Looking ahead, a delegation welcomed lessons learned that would inform the response to the next pandemic, particularly regarding inequity and increasing coverage in humanitarian settings. The Global Lead Coordinator agreed that it was

vital to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic and stated that documenting lessons learned would be one of the outcomes of the Partnership. In terms of lessons learned thus far, he underscored the importance of investing in primary health care, including paying health workers at the community level, investing in local production of health commodities and having simple, user-friendly mechanisms for humanitarian actors to access vaccines as soon as they were needed.

C. Annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021

72. The Associate Director, Gender Equality Programme Group, presented the annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021 (E/ICEF/2022/14), which included a video about UNICEF work on gender equality.

73. Numerous delegations praised UNICEF for its formidable overall results. Delegations congratulated UNICEF on surpassing almost all Gender Action Plan targets and for exceeding United Nations benchmarks for gender equality, including increased investments in gender equality and achieving parity at senior levels. Many also welcomed the start of the new Gender Action Plan, 2022–2025. Particular recognition was given to caregiving work and the importance of mental health. Delegations welcomed UNICEF work on menstrual health and hygiene, child protection and gender-based violence, and called for an expansion of its work in menstrual health and hygiene, mental health and psychosocial support. The delegations emphasized the importance of taking differentiated approaches tailored to situations and welcomed the recognition of adolescents as agents of change. A delegation suggested that engaging boys in the cause of gender equality was essential to accelerating progress and asked how UNICEF was doing in that regard. In response, the Associate Director underscored the importance of partnerships with boys and men as a cross-cutting priority in the new Gender Action Plan, 2022–2025 and cited examples of how UNICEF was working with boys to prevent harms in the first place. She also noted that many boys were taking part in programmes on menstrual health and taking a stand in their schools to end the stigma and taboo.

74. A group of delegations expressed concern that core resources to the Gender Action Plan had decreased, noting that the thematic fund for gender was one of the least funded. In response, the Associate Director welcomed more governmental contributions to the gender thematic fund, which she said allowed UNICEF to work flexibly and do vital work on new and emerging issues.

75. Given that UNICEF was now half a year into the implementation of its new Strategic Plan and the Gender Action Plan, a group of delegations asked what the gender department considered to be the greatest challenges to achieving the desired goals set out in the new plans. In response, the Associate Director expressed her view that adolescent girls represented the greatest challenge because they were not only at risk due to concurrent crises – COVID-19, climate change and ongoing humanitarian conflicts and crises – but also faced a more pronounced risk of child marriage, violence and school dropout due to school closures. She described the reopening of schools as a golden opportunity for UNICEF to launch integrated services within school structures that addressed menstrual health and hygiene, mental health, gender-based violence and anaemia prevention.

76. A delegation asked how UNICEF was involving children from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in its programmes to eliminate structural barriers, urging a focus on comprehensive sex education and access to rights without discrimination. The Associate Director underlined the need for targeted strategies to

reach indigenous girls and girls from ethnic minorities through, for example, dedicated skills programmes.

77. Numerous delegations noted the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality and encouraged a strong focus on education and gender equality in efforts to support the 11 million girls at risk of not returning to school due to COVID-19 and related disruptions. In response, the Associate Director expressed her concern at rising levels of child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting and gender-based violence and reported that school closures had impacted other important services, such as iron-folate distribution.

78. A delegation noted that Goal Area 3 lacked specific references to protection against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in its indicators and called on UNICEF to consider adding specific measures of its work in that regard. The Associate Director said that efforts were under way to ensure greater awareness and accountability on addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, but acknowledged that gaps remained in gender staffing and expertise to support offices.

D. UNICEF programme cooperation

(a) Country programme documents

79. The country programme documents (CPDs) for Kenya ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.16](#)), the United Republic of Tanzania ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.17](#)) and the Syrian Arab Republic ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.18](#)) were considered by the Board.

80. In his introductory remarks, the Director, Programme Group, underscored that a lack of education casted a long shadow throughout the life of a child, affecting their ability to learn, earn and achieve their full potential. The Director, Education and Adolescent Development, Programmes, then provided an overview of the global context regarding education and the learning crisis, followed by a photo loop depicting some of the work of UNICEF across the world.

81. That was followed by a panel discussion in which the Director-General of Early Learning and Basic Education, Ministry of Education of Kenya; the former Country Director, Norwegian Refugee Council in the Syrian Arab Republic; and a youth advocate from the United Republic of Tanzania participated. The panellists thanked UNICEF for its continued support in ensuring the implementation of CPDs and underscored the importance of a unified commitment to removing barriers to safe, inclusive and quality education for all children, and of continuing to tackle the many challenges that had been exacerbated by COVID-19 and climate change.

82. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/11 on a no-objection basis (see annex).

83. Following the adoption of the decision, a group of delegations expressed concerns relating to aspects of the United Nations Strategic Framework 2022–2024 for the Syrian Arab Republic, and its potential to risk the effectiveness of country-level United Nations programmes designed to help alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people. The group urged the United Nations to work with the Syrian Arab Republic country team to find creative solutions to the issue.

84. Several delegations expressed concerns that the Strategic Framework for the Syrian Arab Republic and subsequent development frameworks and instruments were being politicized. The delegations underlined the importance of respect for the principle of sovereignty in CPDs and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and the importance of rejecting attempts to undermine it.

85. The Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, thanked the delegations for their approval of the CPDs and acknowledged that their comments had been noted.

(b) Extensions of ongoing country programmes

86. The Chair stated that, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2009/11, the Board would be informed of the extensions of ongoing country programmes as set out in document [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.19](#). Those included the first two-month extension of the country programme for Ecuador, the first two-month extension of the multi-country programme for the Pacific Islands, the first six-month extensions of the country programmes for Chile and Papua New Guinea, and the first one-year extension of the country programme for Myanmar, all of which had been approved by the Executive Director.

87. The Executive Board was asked to approve a one-year extension of the country programme for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, following a previous one-year extension.

88. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/12 (see annex).

E. Evaluation reports and management responses

Annual report for 2021 on the evaluation function in UNICEF, and management response

89. The Director of Evaluation presented the annual report for 2021 on the evaluation function in UNICEF ([E/ICEF/2022/17](#)), followed by the Director, Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, who presented the management response ([E/ICEF/2022/18](#)).

90. Numerous delegations commended the evaluation function on its excellent work in highly challenging circumstances, particularly its efforts to increase coverage on gender equality, disability and humanitarian action, strengthen the decentralized evaluation function, invest in a broader range of evaluative products and maximize the use of evaluation findings.

91. A delegation expressed an interest in UNICEF further exploring the potential of alliances. The delegation highlighted the potential for innovation and partnerships with other stakeholders, at a time when resources were scarce, to maximize the impact of UNICEF interventions. The Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, underscored the fact that partnerships were at the heart of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, which focused on outcomes and impact, and acknowledged that those results would not come from UNICEF work alone.

92. A delegation welcomed the increase in joint evaluations, particularly at the decentralized level, as an important way of improving joint programming and strengthening collective results. The Director of Evaluation agreed that joint evaluations were crucial and that joint management responses were always the intended outcome of such exercises. He raised some of the challenges inherent in joint evaluations before underlining the fact that the Evaluation Office aimed, above all, for evaluations and responses to lead to meaningful change.

93. On the challenge of building national capacities for evaluation, a delegation requested further information on how UNICEF was working to meet its objectives. In response, the Director of Evaluation explained that the report in some ways underestimated the amount of work that went into developing national evaluation capacities because the Evaluation Office did not qualitatively track everything undertaken at the decentralized level. Anecdotally, he said that his colleagues were

working on the issue at both regional and country levels and he acknowledged the need to take stock of such work.

94. A delegation welcomed the increase in evaluation expenditure, which appeared to be nearing the 1 per cent target. In response, the Director, Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, reaffirmed the commitment of management to achieving that target and thanked delegations for their advice and support on maintaining the robustness of the evaluation function.

Evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency, and management response

95. The Director of Evaluation presented the report on the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency ([E/ICEF/2022/19](#)), followed by the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, who presented the management response ([E/ICEF/2022/20](#)).

96. A number of delegations praised UNICEF for the way it was fulfilling the coordination responsibilities associated with its cluster lead agency role, but called on it to continue to improve the leadership responsibilities of the role. Delegations acknowledged the need for clusters to become more strategic, leaner and better integrated with the rest of the organization. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, welcomed the comments and guidance from delegations, underlining that the cluster lead agency role was central to UNICEF and its core commitments. He noted that the Humanitarian Review made a strong case for the role of UNICEF as a cluster lead and shared his belief that it would bring greater integration and ownership.

97. A group of delegations identified three opportunities to strengthen the management response to the evaluation: identifying the specific areas where recommendations were unlikely to be achieved, given the current actions developed as part of the management response; considering the existing gaps in cluster coordination and information management and how those might be addressed moving forward; and reporting annually on progress to the Executive Board and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

98. Several delegations appreciated the renewed efforts of UNICEF to evaluate its performance as cluster lead agency but noted that the role was not sufficiently prioritized within the organization, citing long-standing staffing issues and a lack of consensus around a shared strategic vision. The delegations supported the key recommendations of the evaluation and encouraged UNICEF to take action to address the outstanding obstacles that had been raised more than seven years ago by the original evaluation on the same topic. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, underlined the fact that progress was under way. He noted, among other things, the ongoing revision of the job description of senior managers for stronger accountability for the cluster lead agency role, better definition of the cluster lead agency's responsibilities for different entities of the organization, and the finalization of the talent management strategy on cluster coordination. He pledged to look carefully at the concerns expressed by delegations and said that his Office would provide regular updates to the Executive Board on progress.

99. Responding to comments, the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, expressed his commitment to addressing the gaps identified by the evaluation, agreed that there was a need to incentivize the role of cluster coordinators, and noted that securing additional funding would require a creative approach at a time when regular resources were declining. He stated his intention to incorporate progress updates on the status of the implementation of the cluster lead agency role in the annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action each year.

100. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/13 (see annex).

F. Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2021, and management response

101. The Director, Ethics Office, presented the report ([E/ICEF/2022/15](#)), followed by the Director, Division of Human Resources, who presented the management response ([E/ICEF/2022/16](#)).

102. A large group of delegations congratulated the Ethics Office on the record number of requests handled and expressed appreciation at the preventive and proactive strategy on ethical issues, specifically welcoming efforts to target personnel with greater and specific training needs and the launch of the Ethics and Culture Champions network. The delegations praised efforts to collaborate and coordinate with other UNICEF offices and to follow up on recommendations regarding workplace culture, but said they were very concerned by the continued inadequate resourcing and low number of Ethics staff positions. The delegations noted that funding seemed not to have improved since 2020, despite previous Executive Board decisions, and that the UNICEF Ethics Office was one of the least-resourced ethics offices in the United Nations system. The delegations urged UNICEF to expand financial and human resources to firmly establish the Ethics Office as an independent institution. In response, the Director, Ethics Office, agreed that there was a need for increased support and funding. He noted that constructive discussions had been held with management about an initial investment of one additional Ethics position. He also noted efforts to collaborate with colleagues internally to improve prevention and awareness, such as by leveraging the UNICEF network of Ethics and Culture Champions.

103. The Director, Division of Human Resources, commended the Ethics Office on a successful year and expressed management support for strengthening the Office and providing additional resources. A group of delegations commended the recent introduction of the Pulse Check survey and expressed the view that the Global Staff Survey remained important, regretting the fact that those scheduled for 2021 had not been conducted and asking when the next survey was planned. The Director, Division of Human Resources, stated that the last Global Staff Survey had been conducted in 2021 and that another would hopefully be conducted during the last quarter of 2022.

104. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/14 (see annex).

G. UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2021 annual report to the Executive Board, and management response

UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee 2021 annual report to the Executive Board

105. The Director, Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, presented the report ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.5](#)), which was accompanied by an addendum ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.5/Add.1](#)) detailing the investigations cases closed in 2021. The Deputy Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management, then presented the management response ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.6](#)), followed by the Chair of the Audit Advisory Committee, who discussed the results of the Committee's 2021 annual report.

106. A group of delegations congratulated UNICEF on the Office's overall assurance opinion and commended the timely and thorough implementation of its agreed actions. The group agreed that remote working could not fully replace fieldwork and

appreciated the inclusion of the benefits and risks to remote work strategies in the report, supporting a hybrid approach.

107. The group of delegations invited UNICEF to provide further updates on how staff and beneficiaries were encouraged to report misconduct. The Director, Office of Internal Audit and Investigations, underlined that reporting mechanisms must always take account of local circumstances and customs and that they relied on all UNICEF staff to report and encouraged beneficiaries to do the same.

108. Multiple delegations expressed concerns that non-post financial resources remained low, despite the significant increase in workload. The Director explained that while a raft of cost-savings measures were being employed to address recent cuts in non-post resources, anticipated increases in travel and caseloads in 2023 and beyond might pose significant resource challenges in the future.

109. A delegation questioned how the Office intended to take a more active and direct role in investigating allegations of fraud and corruption. In response, the Director said that more resources would enable more direct responses to fraud and corruption cases and that the Office was working closely with the Supply Division as well as other UNICEF sections to improve internal processes, specifically regarding vendors and implementing partners.

110. Another delegation noted with grave concern the increase in cases of sexual exploitation and abuse involving staff of implementing partners, citing 75 cases in 2021. The Director outlined measures taken to ensure that allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were always adequately investigated.

111. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/15 (see annex).

H. Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

112. The Deputy Executive Director ad interim, Partnerships, introduced the update, followed by the Director, Public Partnerships Division, who presented an overview.

113. A group of delegations stressed that the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals was under threat and emphasized the importance of inter-agency collaboration and United Nations development system reform. The group drew attention to the importance of integrated responses to crises, including collaborative analysis and planning; critically assessing the presence of all United Nations agencies for the right skills and expertise; ensuring that CPDs aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks; strengthening the human-rights based approach within UNICEF; and the Management and Accountability Framework.

114. In response, the Director, Public Partnerships Division, emphasized that the overall aim of the reform was to have integrated support across the United Nations system, especially at country level, led by the common country analysis process. She highlighted the UNICEF lead role in many areas, including monitoring and evaluation. The Director reiterated the strong commitment of UNICEF to efficiencies and its ability to pivot to get the right skills where they were needed. She also affirmed that the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 explicitly embedded human- and child-rights standards into everything the organization did. She described the Management and Accountability Framework as a foundational piece of the reform that was yielding

results with a growing positive trend for reporting on management, and confirmed UNICEF compliance with the Framework, including on dual reporting lines and full alignment of CPDs with Cooperation Frameworks.

115. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, noted that UNICEF had reached or surpassed targets in many efficiency areas, including on common premises, business operations strategies and global shared services. She highlighted UNICEF investments in the greening of premises, such as through solar power. She also noted the potential of the mutual recognition framework that would allow for more joint work in operational areas such as finance and human resources, and encouraged delegations as well as all parts of the United Nations to support that.

116. On the Cooperation Frameworks, the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, reiterated their key role in defining integrated planning and collective outcomes at the United Nations country team level, from which agencies derived their country programmes and defined outputs contributing to the collective outcome.

117. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/16 (see annex).

I. Private Fundraising and Partnerships: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2021

118. The Deputy Executive Director ad interim, Partnerships, introduced the item, followed by the Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, who presented the report ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.4](#)).

119. A group of delegations commended the excellent results that had surpassed revenue targets but noted that the growth of regular resources had been modest, resulting in a declining share of regular resources in total private sector income. The group asked how UNICEF intended to use investment funds and innovative financing strategically, to increase generation of regular resources, and expressed their interest in the innovative financing and investment strategy of UNICEF. In response, the Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, highlighted the fact that investments needed to be continuous, as they did not yield immediate results. She outlined how ongoing investment in private sector fundraising operations had created a base for regular resources and offered huge potential by attracting new sources of funding.

120. The group of delegations announced that they would be interested to hear from National Committees and UNICEF country offices with structured private sector fundraising capacities on the potentials and challenges of raising regular resources in their country contexts.

121. The group of delegations affirmed its belief that the successful engagement of UNICEF with the private sector provided a blueprint for other United Nations agencies to partner with the private sector and advocate for their active involvement in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Director acknowledged that there was strong collaboration with other United Nations agencies and said that much work was under way with businesses, not just in terms of a transactional fundraising relationship but also in influencing them to include a child rights lens in their practices. She provided a pertinent example of how UNICEF nurtured one-off contributions into longer-term donor journeys for multi-year and flexible funding, describing a partnership with a foundation that had started as an emergency contribution and, after consultation and understanding their interests, turned into funding for other UNICEF programmes.

122. In response to concerns from delegations about declining regular resources, the Comptroller and Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management,

underlined the fact that grant funding alone would not allow UNICEF to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals for the world's children. He also noted that not all funding needed to come to UNICEF directly; with its leverage and convening power, UNICEF was able to secure multiple sources of funding for its programmes.

123. A delegation expressed a particular interest in endowment and trust funds. In responding, the Comptroller noted that ultimately those all pointed to traditional donors, Member States in the public sector, and that those donors were increasingly earmarking and reducing core resources.

124. The Executive Board adopted decision 2022/17 (see annex).

J. Update on the World Bank instrument to facilitate sustained investment in private sector fundraising

125. Following an introduction by the Deputy Executive Director ad interim, Partnerships, the Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships, presented the report.

126. A delegation welcomed the ongoing performance review of the instrument and requested further comments on how UNICEF planned to communicate and share the results of the review with the Executive Board as well as other stakeholders. Responding to comments, the Comptroller outlined plans to conduct an independent review and assessment of the World Bank instrument after the first full year of operation in 2022.

127. Another delegation expressed its strong support for such an innovative financing tool and asked whether going forward, UNICEF would be seeking Executive Board approval for future debt instruments or financing of that type. The Comptroller indicated that actual approval rested with the General Assembly.

K. Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association

128. The Chairperson thanked Member States for their strong support, their appreciation of the work of UNICEF staff and their endless advocacy for global support to the UNICEF brand. He underlined the huge sacrifices that UNICEF staff had made in ensuring that programme delivery was not compromised by the COVID-19 pandemic. He called for more inclusive processes, vigilance and drive to ensure that the vision and values of UNICEF were represented wherever the organization was present.

129. The Chairperson praised the passion and tenacity of UNICEF leaders on behalf of staff, noting in particular the energy demonstrated in the pursuit of the UNICEF mandate and their support for staff well-being.

130. The Chairperson praised UNICEF staff for the quality and timeliness of their output, adaptiveness, creativity, enterprise, energy and drive. He acknowledged the commitment of UNICEF leadership to promoting cultural change and zero tolerance of all forms of harassment and abuse. He noted, however, that the Global Staff Association continued to encounter contrasts between data and the reality on the ground, with concerns about colleagues' fear of retaliation not abating.

131. The Chairperson reported that the Association had strengthened its advocacy for a comprehensive review of the national staff category. The Association had also ensured the formation of a working group on national staff issues in the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations system, where UNICEF was on the executive council for the first time, and ensured

that national staff issues were among the key recommendations of the most recent general assembly of the working group.

132. A delegation speaking on behalf of the Bureau of the Executive Board recognized the immense burden placed on UNICEF staff and their families by the COVID-19 pandemic and commended them for rising to the many challenges while demonstrating an unwavering commitment to delivering results for children and their families. The representative also congratulated the leadership of the UNICEF Global Staff Association for their important work in advocating for staff and organizational change in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She expressed appreciation of efforts to improve the UNICEF working culture on multiple fronts.

L. Other matters

Provisional list of agenda items for the second regular session of 2022

133. The provisional list was presented by the Secretary of the Executive Board.

M. Adoption of draft decisions

134. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2022/9 through 2022/17.

N. UNICEF Staff Team Awards and closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board

135. The Executive Director announced the winners of the 2021 UNICEF Staff Team Awards, paying tribute to 10 teams that exemplified the very best of UNICEF. The awards went to: (a) the Syrian Arab Republic Country Office, for their efforts to promote the right to education of children with disabilities in Aleppo; (b) the UNICEF Global Supply Community, for their COVID-19 vaccine roll-out efforts; (c) the Pakistan Country Office, for its measles and rubella vaccine campaign; (d) the India Country Office, for support to children during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic; (e) the Lao People's Democratic Republic Country Office, for its *My House* early childhood education television series amid school closures; (f) the Airtel Africa for Reimagine Education collaborative partnership between the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office and the West and Central Africa Regional Office; (g) the Botswana Country Office, for its subregional commemoration of World Children's Day; (h) the Kenya Country Office, for its COVID-19 vaccine campaign; (i) the country offices of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, for their collaboration with the West and Central Africa Regional Office, the UNICEF Child Protection section and the Division of Global Communication and Advocacy to engage communities around child marriage; and (j) the UNICEF Office in the State of Palestine, for its multifaceted response in the face of multiple crises.

136. The Executive Director thanked delegations for their active participation during the annual session and for making such good, productive use of their time together. She commended the support of the United Nations Conference Services and thanked the Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board for ensuring a successful meeting. The Executive Director thanked retiring staff members and acknowledged the leadership of the President of the Executive Board. She expressed appreciation to the members of the Board for their suggestions, support and solidarity, and said that she looked forward to working with the members as UNICEF implemented the Strategic Plan to help realize the vision of a better world for every child.

137. In his closing remarks, the President focused on the importance of multilateralism and reviving faltering cooperation among the global community. He summarized the many achievements of UNICEF – life-saving interventions, learning, access to safe water and sanitation, social protection, and equitable and accelerated access to COVID-19 vaccines – but noted growing challenges, including conflict, burgeoning crises and the impacts of climate change. The President thanked the members of the Board and called on everyone to continue to work together to ensure that the rights of children and young people were respected and translated into opportunities for the present and for the future.

Annex

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session of 2022

2022/9

Annual report for 2021 of the Executive Director of UNICEF

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report for 2021 of the Executive Director of UNICEF, as well as the report on the implementation of the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021; the report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system; the joint annex on the implementation of the common chapter of the strategic plans, 2018–2021 of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children’s Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); and the data companion and scorecard;

2. *Decides* to transmit the above-mentioned reports to the Economic and Social Council, along with a summary of the comments and guidance of the Executive Board;

3. *Recalls* its decisions 2021/13, paragraph 3, and 2021/14, paragraph 7, and requests UNICEF to continue to include in the annual reports of the Executive Director on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, including in its midterm review, information on results jointly achieved with United Nations development system entities identified through common and complementary indicators.

*Annual session
16 June 2022*

2022/10

Annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action ([E/ICEF/2022/13](#));

2. *Commends* the efforts of UNICEF and looks forward to the implementation of lessons learned from UNICEF humanitarian action, 2018–2021 to improve goals results throughout the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025;

3. *Requests* UNICEF to provide an update on the progress made towards the implementation of the recommendations of its Humanitarian Review during the first regular session of 2023.

*Annual session
16 June 2022*

2022/11

Country programme documents

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* that the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.16](#) and [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.17](#)) were made available to the Member States for their comments and input from 22 March to 11 April, and for the Syrian Arab Republic ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.18](#)) from 24 March to 13 April;
2. *Approves* on a no-objection basis, and in accordance with decision 2014/1, the country programme documents, including aggregate indicative budgets, for Kenya, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Republic of Tanzania ([E/ICEF/2022/P/L.16-E/ICEF/2022/P/L.18](#)).

*Annual session
16 June 2022*

2022/12

Extensions of ongoing country programmes

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note of* the first two-month extension of the country programme for Ecuador; the first two-month extension of the multi-country programme for the Pacific Islands; the first six-month extensions of the country programmes for Chile and Papua New Guinea; and the first one-year extension of the country programme for Myanmar, which were approved by the Executive Director and are presented in table 1 of document [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.19](#);
2. *Approves* the one-year extension of the country programme for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, following a previous one-year extension; these are presented in table 2 of document [E/ICEF/2022/P/L.19](#).

*Annual session
16 June 2022*

2022/13

Evaluation reports and management responses

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report for 2021 on the evaluation function in UNICEF ([E/ICEF/2022/17](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2022/18](#));
2. *Also takes note* of the evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency, its summary ([E/ICEF/2022/19](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2022/20](#));
3. *Encourages* UNICEF to take the necessary steps to further strengthen the evaluation function, including by timely implementation of those elements as included in the management response;
4. *Requests* UNICEF to brief the Executive Board at the annual session of 2023 on the progress UNICEF has made towards the timely implementation of the actions outlined in the management response to the evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency;

5. *Looks forward* to the updated UNICEF evaluation policy and the process leading towards the adoption of this updated policy, including the results of the independent peer review;
6. *Takes note with appreciation* of the increase in overall evaluation expenditure to 0.91 per cent of total programme expenditure in 2021, which brings the 1 per cent goal within reach;
7. *Welcomes* the evaluation function's continuous focus on outcome- and impact-level evaluations and organizational follow-through on evaluations and encourages UNICEF to increase the number of impact-level evaluations;
8. *Recalls* its decision 2021/10, paragraph 9, and requests UNICEF to provide, in the annual report for 2022 on the evaluation function, updates on the application of innovative technologies and approaches, including a discussion of associated risks and UNICEF management plans to address them;
9. *Encourages* UNICEF to increase the number of joint evaluations conducted at global and decentralized levels and to strengthen the organizational follow-up, including through joint management responses;
10. *Takes note with concern* of the modest progress made in strengthening national capacities for evaluation and requests UNICEF to accelerate progress.

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16 June 2022

2022/14

Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2021, and management response

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2021 (E/ICEF/2022/15) and the management response (E/ICEF/2022/16);
2. *Takes note with appreciation* of the successful outreach activities of the Ethics Office of UNICEF and its timely responses to the doubled number of requests without additional personnel;
3. *Takes note* of the launch of the Ethics and Culture Champions aimed at raising awareness about ethics and integrity organization-wide through volunteers and within the Office's existing resources, and requests the Ethics Office to provide an update on this initiative, within existing reporting;
4. *Also takes note* of the continuously growing caseload of the Ethics Office and, concerned about its limited capacities, requests UNICEF to ensure that the Ethics Office can adequately execute its mandate and, in this context, recalls its decision 2020/19 and urgently requests UNICEF to provide sufficient financial and staff resources to the Ethics Office, including for field personnel, based on the needs assessment;
5. *Requests* the Ethics Office to maintain and strengthen its independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 60/248 and 60/254 on the establishment of the Ethics Office, and encourages direct and independent communication with the Executive Board, as needed, through reports or briefings, in particular on concerns related to whistle-blower protection against retaliation issues;
6. *Also requests* UNICEF and the Ethics Office to continue to report on the adequacy of resources made available.

Annual session
16 June 2022

2022/15

UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2021 annual report to the Executive Board, and management response

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2021 annual report to the Executive Board ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.5](#)), its addendum ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.5/Add.1](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.6](#)), as well as the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee 2021 annual report to the Executive Board, and welcomes the overall opinion of the adequacy and effectiveness of the organization's framework of governance, risk management and controls;

2. *Welcomes* the progress of UNICEF in addressing audit-related management issues in 2021 and notes with appreciation efforts to implement outstanding audit recommendations;

3. *Recalls* decision 2020/20 and reiterates the importance of the provision of sufficient resources for audit and investigation functions;

4. *Requests* that the Executive Board receive more regular closed briefings from the Office, in a timely manner and throughout the year, as needed, on potential red flags, audit findings and the status of investigations;

5. *Also requests* the Director of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations to provide at the second regular session of 2022 an assessment on the independence of the Office, containing reflections on (but not limited to) the degree to which the Office can determine freely: (a) how and when to report to and brief the Executive Board; (b) the scope of audits and investigations; (c) what and who to audit or investigate; (d) what assessments to make; (e) how to utilize available funds; and (f) its relationship with the Office of Internal Oversight Services; and requests the Director to also provide suggestions and pathways on how to further strengthen the independence of the Office, as well as the budget estimate required for the execution of the full mandate, and requests a closed preparatory meeting between the management of the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations and Executive Board members and observers on this topic in advance of the second regular session of 2022;

6. *Decides* to have the update on evaluation, audit and oversight matters for decision at the second regular session of 2022.

*Annual session
16 June 2022*

2022/16

Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;

2. *Encourages* UNICEF to continue to implement resolutions [72/279](#), [75/233](#) and [76/4](#), and to support the efforts of the Secretary-General in implementing related mandates;

3. *Welcomes* UNICEF progress in aligning country programme documents with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, and encourages UNICEF to continue to seek confirmation from the resident coordinators of the alignment of the country programmes with the Cooperation Frameworks;

4. *Also welcomes* the partnerships with international financial institutions, and requests an update, as a stand-alone item on the agenda at the first regular session of 2023, on UNICEF engagement with international financial institutions;

5. *Stresses* the importance of integrated solutions, including enhanced collaboration across humanitarian, development and peace operations of the United Nations system, as appropriate, to address complex, multifaceted challenges impacting achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and requests UNICEF to update the Board, within existing reporting, on how it collaborates in joint analysis, needs assessments, planning, including collective outcomes, and programme delivery;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to provide the Executive Board with an update on the implementation of the Management and Accountability Framework, including the contributions of representatives at country level and regional directors to the implementation of United Nations development system reform, within existing reporting;

7. *Also requests* UNICEF to provide the Executive Board, within existing reporting, with information and data on its efficiency gains achieved and its efforts to realize efficiency gains through its contributions to system-wide coherence, collaboration and harmonization, and stresses the need to continue to realize efficiency gains, as stated in operational paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#).

*Annual session
16 June 2022*

2022/17

Private Fundraising and Partnerships: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2021

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the Private Fundraising and Partnerships: financial report for the year ended 31 December 2021 ([E/ICEF/2022/AB/L.4](#));

2. *Also takes note* that the revenue figures presented in this report are subject to external audit and the non-financial results are indicative;

3. *Takes note with appreciation* of the total revenue sourced from the private sector, but notes with concern the ongoing trend of decreasing regular resources as a share of total private sector income and encourages UNICEF to increase its efforts in the fundraising of regular resources from private sector sources beyond individual donors, including from philanthropists, foundations and businesses;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to present to the Executive Board an update, in the form of an informal briefing ahead of the first regular session of 2023, on its innovative and alternative financing strategy, with a focus on the generation of flexible resources, including on its ambition to use alternative sources of funding to invest in private sector fundraising activities; and to organize, on the margins of the first regular session of 2023, a special focus session on innovative financing that includes country office and National Committee perspectives.

*Annual session
16 June 2022*