

Canada's National Statement
Annual Session 2023 of the UNICEF Executive Board

Monsieur le Président, Madame la Directrice exécutive, Distingué(e)s collègues,

Le Canada félicite UNICEF pour ses résultats probants en 2022 et les progrès réalisés dans les cinq groupes d'objectifs, le tout dans un contexte mondial toujours aussi marqué par des profondes crises multidimensionnelles, de plus en plus complexes.

Malgré l'ensemble de ces avancées, nous demeurons préoccupés par les nombreuses entraves mettant en péril la concrétisation de l'agenda 2030. Le Canada est particulièrement alarmé par l'augmentation de la pauvreté infantile en 2022. Une accélération significative est nécessaire pour atteindre les ODD relatifs à la protection de l'enfance.

Against this stark context, we commend UNICEF's efforts to step-up partnership across development and humanitarian assistance. We welcome also the update on collaboration and coherence with other UN entities, and efforts towards implementing UN development system reform, working with Resident Coordinators. Supporting the needs of children and their families requires unlocking more transformative partnerships within the entirety of the UN system and with national, international, non-governmental organizations and communities.

Madame Executive Director: How are these critical partnerships working at the country level, and what steps is UNICEF taking to expand and speed up such partnerships?

Mr. President, Canada expects UNICEF to continue to advance gender equality and sexual and reproductive health rights. We welcome UNICEF's enhanced support for women's rights organizations, which are a tremendous source of capacity and know-how. We note with concern, however, UNICEF's continued challenges in advancing gender equality capacity, as well as the absence of reporting on gender equality specialists for 2022. ***Madame Executive Director: What concrete measures is UNICEF taking to strengthen gender equality capacity to implement ambitious and important programming and disaggregated reporting?***

Canada appreciates the agency's work to strengthen internal oversight. Here, independent, well-resourced and effective evaluation is important for healthy organizational performance. To this end, we expect UNICEF to continue to take steps to better align expenditures and improve the integration of gender equality and the empowerment of women in evaluations. We look forward to hearing more on the update of the evaluation policy.

With regard to the Secretary General's Our Common Agenda, how is UNICEF feeding into the work for the Summit of the Future, including in relation to the Youth office?

Finally, we express our deep gratitude to UNICEF staff. We value their dedication in delivering life-saving assistance amidst the enormous challenges we collectively face today.

Thank you.