

Annual Session 2023
Joint Statement Executive Board of UNICEF
Agenda Item 10
Draft revised evaluation policy of UNICEF
14 June 2023

Madam/Mister President

I make this statement on behalf of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Montenegro, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and my own country, Germany.

We welcome the presentation of the draft evaluation policy at this annual session.

We commend the UNICEF evaluation function for the incremental and consultative approach which has been taken in the development of the policy as well as for having included the results of the recent independent peer review and other evaluations and studies in the present draft version. We acknowledge and concur with the finding that UNICEF's evaluation function is fundamentally fit for purpose. We ask UNICEF to consider the areas that have been highlighted for improvement in the just mentioned documents, such as a greater clarity in the definition, purpose and principles of evaluation, coverage standards, and the adequacy and predictability of human and financial resources. In this regard, we welcome that evaluation specialists decide which planned activities are evaluative exercises covered by the policy and that the evaluation office approves the evaluation plans. As UNICEF often explores new and innovative approaches in different areas of its work, we would welcome additional information in the policy on how these will be evaluated.

We urge UNICEF to meet the 1% target and to undertake steps to ensure that the evaluation function is equipped with sufficient human and financial resources. Currently the evaluation policy does not provide details on how this could be achieved. We therefore call on UNICEF to provide this information either in the final version of the policy or in the implementing guidelines.

We call upon UNICEF to ensure the independence of the evaluation function, including the independence of evaluation staff at decentralised level in making decisions about evaluation plans, in line with the UN guidelines for evaluations. The independence of the evaluation staff, including the staff at decentralised level, is essential for the integrity of the function and relevant and useful for their work. We welcome the provisions included in this draft that address this issue and look forward to future information on whether the measures taken prove to be successful or require further modifications.

In this regard, we would welcome further clarifications on decision making in terms of who has the final say in deciding on the conduct of an evaluation at country- and regional level. We would also welcome your reflections on whether the process, where approvers can require adjustments to a planned evaluation, provides sufficient independence to the regional evaluation adviser?

We welcome that the draft evaluation policy is based on international evaluation criteria (OECD-DAC) and UNEG standards. We ask UNICEF to draw up multi-annual evaluation plans that ensure that the most important issues are prioritised and delivered in a timely manner, but also that resourcing requirements are made clear in advance. UNICEF management should ensure that such evaluation plans are provided with adequate, predictable, and sustainable

funding. In the same vein we support the establishment of new positions in country and regional offices to best implement the changes initiated by the revised policy.

We commend UNICEF for integrating impact evaluations into the evaluation policy. We believe it is of importance that this method is firmly anchored in evaluation processes and practice and that its targeted use is ensured. We are concerned though that the evaluation policy currently does not provide clear guidance on how impact evaluations can be systematically integrated as a tool to support targeted learning on key issues for the organisation and the global community. We ask UNICEF to provide more detail in this regard.

We positively acknowledge UNICEF's commitment to seeking collaboration and coordination both within UNICEF and system-wide. The policy could further clarify and elaborate on collaboration with the system-wide evaluation office.

We welcome UNICEF's efforts to expand the range of evaluation products to improve usability through meta-syntheses, evidence and gap maps and the use of artificial intelligence. Even if these instruments can produce relevant results, it is important to consider their use and usability. New methodologies need to be applied with a focus to produce evaluative results that can feed directly into strategic decision making both in programming and in the work on the ground. Further clarifications are needed in the evaluation policy to outline how usability will be addressed.

Lastly, we would like to emphasize the complementarity between the evaluation function and areas such as audit, research, monitoring, data and analysis, knowledge management and organisational learning. Together they form an ecosystem of evidence whose close collaboration helps to achieve the best for children worldwide.

We thank UNICEF and the team of the evaluation function for the drafting of this revised evaluation policy despite the tight timeline. Evaluations at UNICEF serve the organisation and its partners to deliver the best possible outcomes for children through independent, credible, ethical, timely and accessible evaluation results. We look forward to receiving the final version of the evaluation policy and appreciate that the above-mentioned aspects will be taken into account.

Thank you