

UNICEF Executive Board

Item 14: Update on Implementation Efforts on the Repositioning of the United Nations Development System 14 June 2023

Madame President, Excellencies,

I deliver this statement on behalf of the following cross-regional group of member states: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Colombia, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the EU as a donor, and my own country Canada.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is becoming critical, but also increasingly challenging. The world is currently facing multiple crises, and we have no choice other than to remain ambitious, something that will take center stage during the upcoming SDG Summit. The UN Development System is a key asset in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Around the world, United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs), under the leadership of the Resident Coordinators (RCs), steer the efforts for sustainable, inclusive development in support of national Governments. The full commitment of all UNDS entities to continuing the reforms of the UNDS and the RC system is critical to ensure the necessary acceleration of delivering on the SDGs at country level.

We would particularly like to emphasize four points.

First. We welcome that great strides have been made in coherence, cooperation and collective action at country level. We want to emphasize that it is essential for UNICEF to **support RC leadership in-country**. Resident Coordinators need to be enabled and empowered – through the active support of all country team members – to utilize their convening power and bring the system together to do more than the sum of its parts.

In particular we would like to flag the pivotal role of the RC/HC in advancing UN shared values and norms in human rights, including gender equality, and in consolidating the UNDS' offer and coordinating interventions across the **Humanitarian – Development – Peace nexus**. Especially collaboration on peacebuilding seems to remain challenging. We therefore welcome the UN Secretary General's request to identify ways to strengthen support, and we encourage UNICEF to actively engage in this.

Second. As the UN Development System Reform enters its fifth year and moves beyond its start-up phase, it is important that we start seeing substantive **results and impact** on the ground. However, impact on the ground is not always evident. We look forward to discussing what can be done to ensure evidence is collected and reported on.

It is essential that we further **reduce duplication and generate synergies** at country level. We note with concern ongoing competition for resources between UN agencies. We call upon UNICEF to strengthen efforts to programme and deliver based on comparative advantage, rather than being driven by individual agency funding targets. We also call upon UNICEF to continue to fully integrate UN coordination in standard operating procedures, rather than view it as an additional task.

Third. Transparency and accountability remain critical drivers of an effective UN Development System. We welcome the progress made in implementing the renewed **Management and**

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Accountability Framework (MAF). We congratulate the UN system for the reported **system-wide efficiency gains** of USD \$ 405 million in 2022. Shared ownership of the MAF by UNDS entities and its continuing improvement and full implementation is a prerequisite to gain efficiency, capitalize on comparative advantages and provide full and mutual accountability for results. In particular we would like to make three requests:

1. We request UNICEF to continue to strive for **full alignment of Country Programme Documents (CPDs) with the UN Cooperation Frameworks** and to continue to ensure a participatory and inclusive consultation process when drafting a new CPD.
2. The **RC's role in providing input into the performance appraisals of Agency Heads** needs reinforcement. Currently, only 38 per cent of entities report that the RC is included in their performance appraisals. We would also appreciate more active 360 degree RC appraisals, and we encourage Heads of Agency's participation in these.
3. We request UNICEF to consult RCs **in the selection process of UN Country Team members**, to ensure the composition of the UNCT fosters joint leadership and that different skills match and complement each other to fully leverage the agencies' comparative advantages.

We would like to hear from UNICEF on which bottlenecks prevent the agency's efforts in these processes, and what can be done to ensure full compliance with the MAF.

And finally, we applaud the development of the **UNDS Reform checklist** as a tool for the Executive Board to facilitate our oversight role of the implementation of UNDS reform. We ask UNICEF to report annually on the complete UNDS Reform Checklist as an annex to existing reporting. This will enable easy comparison between UN entities and tracking progress over time.

I close, madam/mister president, by reiterating that only by having an effective and efficient UNDS that delivers in a coordinated manner at country level, we can accelerate progress to achieve the SDGs.