

Joint Nordic statement

First Regular Session 2024 of the UNICEF Executive Board

Agenda item 6: Update on UNICEF humanitarian action

Mr/Madam President, dear colleagues,

I make this statement on behalf of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and my own country, Sweden.

Let me start by thanking UNICEF for the organisation's work to continuously save lives and alleviate suffering in a globally challenging context with multiple and simultaneous crises. We would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for UNICEF staff who work under very difficult circumstances to reach out to children, in Ukraine, in Gaza – and worldwide.

Our condolences to those who have lost their loved ones, including UN staff who have served in areas of conflict and crises.

[Short pause.]

We welcome the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations from the Humanitarian review. It is encouraging to see that UNICEF is working in partnership with other agencies and actors to tackle major humanitarian challenges. This underlines the importance of coordination and partnership for effective implementation.

We especially appreciate the significant progress in recommendations with regards to preparedness and anticipatory action, as well as the work on “data readiness”. We also note and welcome the fact that UNICEF has exceeded Grand Bargain targets within the localization agenda and encourage you to continue and work even more with local structures, not just through funding but also with capacity development through a bottom-up approach, while maintaining a main focus on critical life-saving assistance.

We also encourage UNICEF to maintain equitable and meaningful cooperation with its local partners. More specifically, to ensure visibility of local partners to UNICEF and inclusion into decision-making structures, which will strengthen the humanitarian response in the long run.

We take note of the efforts to integrate supply needs into programme planning and response and the challenges presented by UNICEF, including securing financial and human resources.

We would like to ask UNICEF how you assess the prospect for implementing all recommendations, including the issue of the financing of this work. Please elaborate on how UNICEF plans to secure a budget for the full estimated cost of the implementation, given that the resource allocation so far is of 7 million USD, which only represents 22 percent of the estimated 32 million USD.

The Nordics will continue to stress the importance not only of access in hard-to-reach-areas, but also to integrate centrality of protection in all UNICEF-clusters of the humanitarian response. In the light of reduced global humanitarian funding and increased humanitarian needs, the need to prioritize those with most severe humanitarian needs has become even more important.

We also underline the importance of UNICEF's work in the area of environment and climate to respond to emergencies due to climate change globally. We encourage UNICEF to continue to influence policy development in the area, to prioritize work on climate adaptation and prevention with the aim of saving lives in a timely and effective way including contributing to increased resilience.

We look forward to a mid-term assessment of the Review which we expect to receive promptly. We will continue to follow up on UNICEF's effectiveness, risk management and transparency, even under difficult circumstances. This is something we expect from the organisation, not only because we are substantive donors, but particularly because it maximizes results for children.

Let me end by again emphasizing the support from us, the Nordic countries, to the crucial work that UNICEF is doing every day, for every child.

Thank you.