

**U.S. Statement at the UNICEF Executive Board
Annual Session, June 1-4, 2021 (Virtual)**

Agenda Item 3 - Executive Director's Annual Report and Strategic Plan Results

for the record

Madam Executive Director, thank you for your annual report and opening remarks. The United States appreciates your continued leadership, and we are grateful for UNICEF's contributions to global efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

The United States appreciates UNICEF's continuing advocacy and efforts to focus the international community's attention on the unique plight and needs of children, women, and families in the most vulnerable and underserved communities as we address the health emergencies and socio-economic disruptions brought on by the pandemic.

UNICEF's work to address the indirect impacts of the pandemic, including ensuring the continuity of essential health, mental health, nutrition, education, protection and water sanitation and hygiene services, remains critical.

UNICEF's global reach, technical expertise, logistics capabilities, and relationship with local communities have proven vital to its COVID-19 response efforts. So too have its partnerships -- UNICEF's close collaboration with COVAX has been instrumental in the delivery of lifesaving vaccines, medical equipment, tests, and services around the world.

The Biden-Harris Administration recently committed to donating 80 million COVID-19 vaccine doses overseas by the end of June. The U.S. government will continue to work with all our partners, including UNICEF, to help countries around the world increase their vaccine supplies and strengthen health system capacities.

Recognizing much more remains to be done, in addition to our ongoing substantial investments in UNICEF's humanitarian assistance efforts, the United States recently renewed our five-year award to UNICEF for up to \$300 million for COVID-19 response and wide range of other development programs in collaboration with USAID. This demonstrates our long-standing commitment to partnering with UNICEF to save and improve lives through health, education, WASH, youth engagement, and child protection programming in countries worldwide.

The United States would like to offer some views on progress achieved and key issues and expectations for the 2022-25 strategic plan.

First, we commend UNICEF for making impressive progress in 22 out of 25 results areas across all five major goals of its 2018-22 strategic plan despite the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic and several major humanitarian crises caused by conflicts and natural disasters. While UNICEF has achieved many targets in terms of program delivery outputs, the annual report acknowledges that "outcome and impact-level changes continue to be less pronounced as social, political, and economic factors stymie the development breakthroughs and acceleration of progress that are necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals." This is a critical

challenge that UNICEF and host countries must work together to address, and we strongly encourage UNICEF to work closely with the Resident Coordinator and other UN country team agencies to tackle these issues.

Second, the United States believes the five major goals of the 2018 - 2022 strategic plan remain important for the 2022-25 strategic plan period and we expect UNICEF to continue to help countries address humanitarian emergencies, recovery and resilience, as well as related political, social, and economic factors that impede the achievement of long-lasting development. We emphasize that a focus on gender equality, the empowerment of girls, and renewed systematic efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, including protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, will be essential for the success of UNICEF's efforts.

The COVID-19 is one of the greatest global challenges of our time and has led to international actions and innovations that can significantly improve the delivery of future humanitarian and development programs. The United States looks forward to working with UNICEF and Member States to ensure that we harness these opportunities, including through UNICEF's 2022-25 strategic plan.