

Item 11 : Update on the implementation of the recommendations made in the independent panel review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and the report of the Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority

June 4, 2021

I thank you Mr President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement of behalf of the African Group of the Executive Board.

Mr President,

The African Group takes note of the report submitted pursuant to the Executive board Decision 2020/21 requesting UNICEF to update the board on the work on the task team against racism and racial discrimination.

In June 2020, the Executive Director established an internal Task-team to combat racism and racial discrimination within UNICEF as part of the improvement of the organizational culture. This decision was a result of the echo that the 2020 global movement for racial justice also had on UNICEF staff.

The Group would like to express its appreciation for the activities undertaken by the internal Task-Team to combat Racism and racial discrimination. The African Group particularly welcomes the adoption of a plan of action on racism and racial discrimination by the internal task-team. For our Group, it is a crucial tool to ensure racial inclusivity and promote racial equity throughout the organization and especially for Africans and people of African descent personnel.

Could UNICEF please elaborate on this action plan? was the staff consulted for its design? what is its scope and its time lines? what recommendations are already implemented?

We also welcome that going forward, UNICEF will focus on implementing the remaining recommendations from the action plan prepared by the Task-Team on Anti-Racism and racial Discrimination. It is therefore important that sufficient resources be allocated for that purpose and that the action plan be made available to the members states for proper oversight by the Executive board.

Mr President,

The African Group appreciates this session's report highlights of UNICEF actions on abuse of authority. With respect to progress in strengthening the organizational culture, we are happy that the Global Staff Survey completed in 2020 showed progress in some areas. Nevertheless, as UNICEF Staff, we remain concerned that racial bias and an insufficiently robust "speak-up and listen-up" culture don't allow for reporting of possible cases of racism.

While implementing the recommendations, UNICEF management is encouraged to consider that abuse of authority when combined to racial discrimination constitute a

form of multiple discriminations that needs to be properly addressed. In doing so we will ensure that nobody in UNICEF is left behind, and that Africans and people of African descent, the furthest left behind, are the first reached.

I thank you for you kind attention.