

**United States Remarks for the
UNICEF Executive Board Annual Session
June 1-4, 2021**

Item 5: Annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action

The United States notes and welcomes the annual report on humanitarian action. We commend the efforts to deliver robust humanitarian assistance while adapting and responding to the needs of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The United States is committed to supporting the global COVID-19 response, including through the U.S. government's contribution to the Gavi COVAX Advance Market Commitment.

- We appreciate the critical role UNICEF plays as the lead vaccine procurement and supply-chain partner for COVAX and note UNICEF's opportunity to strengthen countries' routine immunization systems as the backbone of primary health care in its COVID-19 response.
- We would like to better understand why UNICEF's work addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on children due to the loss of parents and other caregivers was not addressed in this report.

We commend UNICEF's review of its humanitarian action and welcome the recommendations to strengthen its capacity to deliver principled and high-quality humanitarian responses. We ask UNICEF to make the results report public to all partners and donors and to submit a status update of the implementation of the recommendations to the next Executive Board session.

We encourage UNICEF to continue improving the quality of its humanitarian response by ensuring that adequate human resources and capacity building are in place in every response; improving cluster coordination and cooperation with international stakeholders in every response; collecting and analyzing data to incorporate into response efforts, developing metrics to recognize appropriate transition from humanitarian to development assistance is appropriate; and establishing feedback mechanisms in all operations from the outset. In this vein, we recognize the critical importance of UNICEF scaling up its humanitarian response with the necessary staffing and resources in Ethiopia's Tigray region to address urgent needs.

The United States applauds UNICEF's commitment as the first United Nations entity to adhere to the OECD/DAC recommendation on ending sexual exploitation in development and humanitarian assistance, and we note the important steps UNICEF has taken in 2020 to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian settings.

We further welcome information on the lessons learned from the recent allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in DRC. What systems-level changes identified in this context can inform efforts across all contexts and responses to ensure stronger beneficiary protection?