



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
4 June 2021

Original: English
English, French and Spanish only

United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Board

Compendium of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session of 2021

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2021/6

Annual report for 2020 of the Executive Director of UNICEF

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report for 2020 of the Executive Director of UNICEF as well as the report on the implementation of the Integrated Results and Resources Framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021; the report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system; the joint annex on the implementation of the common chapter of the strategic plans, 2018–2021 of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children’s Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); and the data companion and scorecard;

2. *Commends* UNICEF for achieving important targets and milestones in many areas of its work outlined in the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 and the annual report, and encourages UNICEF to continue to improve the outcome-level effects of its programmes in all sectors relevant to the UNICEF mandate and to address factors that constrain development breakthroughs to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in its next Strategic Plan, 2022–2025;

3. *Decides* to transmit the above-mentioned reports to the Economic and Social Council, along with a summary of the comments and guidance of the Executive Board;

4. *Takes note* of the UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit, including the management responses to the 14 recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit intended for consideration by the Executive Board.

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2021/7

Annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action ([E/ICEF/2021/13](#));

2. *Commends* the efforts of UNICEF to undertake a review of its humanitarian operations in the context of new global challenges and looks forward to the subsequent publication of the report “Strengthening UNICEF’s humanitarian action, The Humanitarian Review: findings and recommendations”;

3. *Calls* on UNICEF to implement the review’s recommendations as soon as possible and to provide regular updates to the Executive Board on its progress in this regard.

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2021/8 Country programme documents

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* that the country programme document, including the aggregate indicative budget, for Argentina ([E/ICEF/2021/P/L.15](#)), was made available to Member States for their comments and input from 10 to 30 March 2021;

2. *Approves* on a no-objection basis, and in accordance with decision 2014/1, the country programme document, including the aggregate indicative budget, for Argentina ([E/ICEF/2021/P/L.15](#)).

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2021/9 Extensions of ongoing country programmes

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the three-month extension of the country programme for Armenia, following a two-month extension and a four-month extension; and the six-month extension of the country programme for Malaysia, following a two-month extension and a four-month extension, both of which were approved by the Executive Director and are presented in table 1 of document [E/ICEF/2021/P/L.14](#);

2. *Approves* the three-month extension of the country programme for Madagascar, following a one-year extension and a six-month extension; and the eight-month extension of the country programme for the Syrian Arab Republic, following two consecutive one-year extensions, a nine-month extension, a three-month extension, a two-month extension and a four-month extension, as presented in table 2 of document [E/ICEF/2021/P/L.14](#).

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2021/10 Evaluation reports and management responses

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the annual report for 2020 on the evaluation function in UNICEF ([E/ICEF/2021/18](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2021/19](#));

2. *Takes note with appreciation* of the global evaluation of UNICEF water, sanitation and hygiene programming in protracted crises, 2014–2019, its summary ([E/ICEF/2021/20](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2021/21](#));

3. *Also takes note with appreciation* of the significant increase in the number of evaluative products and of the increase in evaluation coverage;

4. *Welcomes* the recruitment of 16 multi-country evaluation specialists in order to increase evaluation capacities at the country and regional levels;

5. *Recalls* the funding target of 1 per cent of programme expenditure for evaluation and notes with concern the expenditure of only 0.64 per cent of total programme expenditure on evaluation in 2020, acknowledging the special circumstances of conducting evaluations during the current pandemic;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to take adequate measures to facilitate a significant increase in the share of spending on evaluation relative to total programme expenditure, especially by country offices that spend significantly less than 1 per cent of programme expenditure on evaluation;

7. *Notes with concern* the lower availability of resources from the Evaluation Pooled Fund and requests UNICEF to ensure the continuously adequate funding of the evaluation function;

8. *Welcomes* the decision by UNICEF to establish a quality-assurance procedure for the evaluation function;

9. *Also welcomes* UNICEF initiatives to promote innovative evaluation technologies and approaches and encourages UNICEF to continue to develop and implement options with regard to remote evaluations and innovative digital approaches, without compromising the quality of evaluations, and requests UNICEF to provide, in the annual report for 2021 on the evaluation function, updates on the application of innovative technologies and approaches, including a discussion of associated risks and UNICEF management plans to address them;

10. *Encourages* UNICEF to devote appropriate resources to evaluations designed to proactively search for scalable solutions that address evidence and knowledge gaps in key programmatic areas for both UNICEF and the global development community;

11. *Also encourages* UNICEF to consider increasing the use of rigorous impact evaluations to further improve its programming approaches and asks UNICEF to ensure that the findings of such evaluations contribute to relevant applicable areas of UNICEF policy and programming of the Strategic Plan and to building the global evidence and knowledge base for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

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2021/11

Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2020, and management response

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2020 (E/ICEF/2021/16) and its management response (E/ICEF/2021/17);

2. *Requests* UNICEF to apply effective measures to improve the confidence of UNICEF staff in their protection against retaliation when reporting misconduct, and to further improve the organizational culture within UNICEF;

3. *Takes note with appreciation* of the Ethics Office membership in the Task Team on Anti-Racism and Discrimination and encourages the Office to play an active role, as an independent office, in the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Team;

4. *Also takes note with appreciation* of the continued strong collaboration of the Office with the cross-divisional sexual exploitation and abuse working group, the Child Safeguarding Unit and the Principal Adviser, Organizational Culture.

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2021/12

UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2020 annual report to the Executive Board, and management response

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2020 annual report to the Executive Board (E/ICEF/2021/AB/L.3), its addendum (E/ICEF/2021/AB/L.3/Add.1) and its management response (E/ICEF/2021/AB/L.4), as well as the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee 2020 annual report to the Executive Board, and welcomes the overall opinion of the adequacy and effectiveness of the organization's framework of governance, risk management and control;

2. *Also takes note* of the revised Charter of the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (E/ICEF/2021/AB/L.5);

3. *Requests* UNICEF to provide information on the additional resources needs for the Office to address coverage gaps, as part of the submissions for the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 and integrated budget, 2022–2025, recalls its decision 2020/20, paragraph 4, and requests UNICEF to ensure that adequate human, financial and technology resources are provided to the Office;

4. *Welcomes* the rapid adaptation of the Office's activities to address challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and encourages the Office to continue to evaluate and explore the further use of remote audits and investigations without compromising the quality of its work, and requests UNICEF to provide an update in the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2021 annual report to the Executive Board on both the benefits and the risks of the use of remote work and other innovative technologies and approaches to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Office's work;

5. *Recalls* its decision 2020/20, paragraph 5, and encourages UNICEF to continue working with the other United Nations funds and programmes to harmonize definitions and reporting for audit and investigation matters and, where applicable, to provide the Executive Board with a more coherent overview of findings and results, and requests the Office to include in its annual report for the year 2021 information on progress in this regard;

6. *Notes with concern* the increase in numbers of actions pending implementation for more than 18 months and encourages the Office and UNICEF management to work together to close these recommendations in a timely manner.

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2021/13

Update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR);

2. *Urges* UNICEF to continue to implement resolution [72/279](#) and the organization's funding compact commitments, and looks forward to seeing the guidance of both reflected in the upcoming Strategic Plan with the aim of improving and better capturing its programme delivery and impact on the ground;

3. *Encourages* UNICEF to design its Integrated Results and Resources Framework in line with applicable guidance of the 2020 QCPR and requests UNICEF to harmonize, where appropriate, its Integrated Results and Resources Framework with other United Nations entities, with a focus on all results levels, and maximize the use of common results indicators, all with the goal of advancing United Nations development system contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals and to further strengthen system-wide evaluation;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to provide in a timely manner, ahead of the second regular session of 2021, more-detailed information on the Integrated Results and Resources Framework, including on its relationship to the QCPR monitoring and reporting framework.

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