

Joint statement on Item 9 – SEAH

Thank you, Mr. President.

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the following cross-regional group of Member States: Australia, Austria, Argentina, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, the EU as a donor, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, the United States, Uruguay, and my own delegation, the United Kingdom.

We extend our gratitude to UNICEF for its leadership on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as preventing and tackling workplace gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority. We commend the efforts of UNICEF and welcome the updates provided. We recognise the progress made at all levels but acknowledge that there is still more to be done: there are collective challenges we need to address, risks we must manage and lessons we must all learn. This ongoing constructive dialogue on our joint ambition to create adequate prevention and response systems and procedures, in the spirit of zero tolerance for inaction, is much appreciated.

There are four critical elements we deem at the core of each agency's efforts in preventing SEAH.

The first area is leadership. We are encouraged to hear PSEA and organizational culture indicators have been included in the 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan, and we applaud UNICEF for the Pulse Check initiative.

We welcome UNICEF's commitment to ensure that SEA action plans are prepared at headquarter, regional *and* country levels, and ask that headquarter action plans are shared with the Board. We would like to hear how UNICEF ensures that *all* Country Offices give sufficient attention to PSEA and that there are no significant differences between offices. We stress the importance of ensuring sufficient resources are allocated for implementation.

We note that UNDP leadership reports on specific SEA indicators as part of their annual performance compact. How does UNICEF measure leadership performance on protection from SEAH, in terms of indicators? We encourage continued efforts to ensure all staff and leadership understand their PSEAH responsibilities. We also encourage UNICEF to implement the recommendations from the Task Team on Anti-Racism and Discrimination.

The second area regards inter-agency collaboration, including sharing and building on lessons learned. We note with appreciation UNICEF's commitment to inter-agency cooperation in this matter. We raise this point in the spirit of UNDS Reform and because we firmly believe UN organisations benefit from continued strengthening of inter-agency collaboration, particularly at country level.

We recognise the important role of PSEA Networks, Coordinators and Focal Points. We welcome UNICEF's support to over 50 PSEA Coordinators. How do these coordinators engage across the UN system at country level?

Third, we touch upon implementing partners. We are pleased to note almost all of UNICEF's civil society partners have been assessed. Are there any obstacles experienced by UNICEF and to what extent does UNICEF pool its knowledge and experiences to aid other agencies in this process? We encourage UNICEF to continue to strengthen its efforts to improve the capacities of partners.

Fourth and finally, a few remarks on reporting and support to survivors and victims. We welcome UNICEF's commitment to transparency and ensuring that support to survivors and victims remains a priority and reiterate the importance of prompt reporting of all allegations of SEA. We highlight the need for timely and thorough survivor and victim-centered investigations, with updates provided to Member States on the outcomes. We are pleased to see that UNICEF is taking forward work to support the roll out of the Victims Assistance Protocol and encourage the continuation of these efforts and for UNICEF and other agencies to focus on a system-wide coordinated approach.

Thank you.