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Management response to the evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the UNICEF management response to the evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency, which was completed in 2022. It provides a summary of the recommendations made and the actions that the organization will take to address them.

Elements of a draft decision for consideration by the Executive Board are provided in section III.

* E/ICEF/2022/9.

Note: The present document was processed in its entirety by UNICEF.



I. Overview

1. This evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency in humanitarian action (CLARE II) was commissioned in 2020 to shed light on the challenges and opportunities that UNICEF faces in carrying out its cluster lead agency (CLA) responsibilities, to assess progress over the past seven years and to inform the future direction of the cluster lead agency role in UNICEF. The first evaluation of the UNICEF CLA was conducted in 2013, so the present evaluation serves as a follow-up exercise and covers the period 2013–2021. The present evaluation focuses on CLA performance rather than cluster coordination performance and is underpinned by the commitments outlined in the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs), in terms of both coordination and leadership of the humanitarian response.
2. The evaluation looked at the four UNICEF (co-)led clusters (namely, education; nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and the child protection area of responsibility) with equal emphasis. It investigated how UNICEF carries out its CLA role at the global, regional and country levels. At the global level, the evaluation assessed the organization's role in leading the global clusters in setting policy, standards and guidelines; building response capacity; providing operational support; and ensuring synergies with other (global) clusters and inter-cluster collaboration through the global cluster coordination group. At the country level, the evaluation considered how UNICEF has carried out its CLA responsibilities to support service delivery; inform the humanitarian coordinator/humanitarian country team strategic decision-making; plan and implement cluster strategies; monitor and evaluate performance; and undertake contingency planning and robust advocacy. The evaluation reviewed UNICEF experience as CLA since 2013, assessing progress and identifying remaining gaps since the CLARE I evaluation, and making recommendations geared towards helping UNICEF improve its performance as CLA going forward.
3. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach, gathering data from global, regional and country levels. Due to restrictions in movement linked to the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the evaluation team used virtual data-collection tools including remote semi-structured interviews with key informants, an online survey among UNICEF cluster partners and cluster coordinators, and a focus group discussion with members of the evaluation reference group to validate specific findings. Primary data collected through these methods were triangulated by the findings from a systematic document review and subsequent analysis.
4. The evaluation findings and recommendations are organized around 3 overarching recommendations and 12 sub-recommendations to address the underlying issues and challenges identified in the report. Since some of the CLARE II evaluation's findings point to "old" problems (raised more than seven years ago by the CLARE I evaluation), the following recommendations also represent a second opportunity for UNICEF to tackle some of the outstanding obstacles that have been hampering the organization from performing its CLA role to the fullest.
5. Overall, the evaluation found that UNICEF is fulfilling the main coordination responsibilities deriving from the CLA role, at both global and country levels. UNICEF has worked to ensure that cluster coordinators are in place globally and, with some exceptions, at country level. UNICEF has generally worked to ensure that the clusters have dedicated capacity and tools for information management; collectively produce and circulate policies and other guidance materials; provide technical support to cluster members; and provide the venue for inter-agency sectoral consultations and partnerships. However, these positions, both for coordinators and information management officers, are not always staffed in a timely and consistent manner. Global clusters are often called on to fill the staff gaps. The evaluation also found that

UNICEF could have performed its CLA responsibilities better, especially in building consensus among cluster partners around a shared vision and strategy; bringing clusters closer together by working towards intersectoral connections; and sharing experiences on the cluster approach in humanitarian country teams and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), where UNICEF has not made the most of its role to ensure that clusters remain fit for purpose.

6. Key challenges and opportunities identified include:

(a) UNICEF needs to change its approach to its CLA role, not taking this as a mere “add-on” but as an opportunity to be more effective through a collective of actors and contribute to making the sector it leads stronger.

(b) UNICEF should ensure that the key CLA functions, including cluster leadership positions such as cluster coordinators and information management officers, are covered from the UNICEF core budget.¹

(c) UNICEF should align its internal systems (that is, accountability framework and human resource systems) with its CLA responsibilities, ensuring that the systems sufficiently recognize the vital importance of the CLA role and reflect the agency-wide accountability for the fulfilment of these responsibilities.

(d) UNICEF human resource systems must better support the CLA role to ensure that the proper capacities are put in place accordingly.

(e) The evaluation reveals the power dynamics stemming from the dual role of UNICEF as CLA and “donor”, which affects partners’ perceptions of UNICEF and its performance as CLA.

(f) UNICEF should prioritize investment and support to building national capacities for leadership and coordination in humanitarian situations.

(g) UNICEF should provide clear direction on how the clusters it leads should implement and prioritize the four policy commitments (centrality of protection, accountability to affected populations, humanitarian-development nexus, and localization) in addition to gender-based violence risk mitigation and disability.

(h) At IASC level, UNICEF should advocate for:

- i. Updating the cluster coordination guidance and cluster coordination processes to be streamlined and, where possible, rationalized.
- ii. Reviewing the concept of provider of last resort with a view to making it more transparent.
- iii. Clarifying co-leadership with a view to achieving a stronger definition of the arrangement and its implications.

7. Overall, UNICEF agrees with the proposed recommendations.

8. Key actions to be taken include:

(a) Ensure that UNICEF is investing its core funds on the key CLA functions that must cover the core coordination roles, especially in Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies, to cover, at the very minimum, information management and cluster coordinator positions based at the national level.

(b) Develop a succinct strategy that synthesizes CLA accountability and commitments based on the findings of the CLARE II and recommendations of the report “Strengthening UNICEF’s humanitarian action, The Humanitarian Review: findings and recommendations”, with the aim to clearly define the organization’s

¹ The evaluation recommendation refers to UNICEF regular resources. However, UNICEF will also consider other resources (other resources – emergency) for supporting key CLA functions.

vision and commitments as the lead/co-lead of four sectors in an ever-changing humanitarian landscape, including on “intersectorality”.

(c) Review country office accountability frameworks and define clear and measurable roles and responsibilities regarding CLA, including strengthening the oversight role of the regional offices with respect to CLA accountability, and ensuring that cluster coordination is systematically included in mandatory Level 2 and Level 3 evaluations.

(d) Develop and implement the human resources talent management strategy on cluster coordination by addressing the CLARE II recommendations and aligning UNICEF internal systems with its CLA responsibilities.

(e) Develop training modules for country-level senior management regarding the role of CLA on the mainstreaming of the four policy commitments (centrality of protection, accountability to affected populations, humanitarian-development nexus, and localization) in addition to other institutional commitments, such as gender-based violence risk mitigation and disability.

(f) Work with the global cluster coordination group and other relevant bodies within IASC to finalize an annex to the cluster coordination reference module on collective leadership, ensuring clarity of terminology and roles.

(g) Develop a position on the concepts of co-leadership and provider of last resort, and lead advocacy for IASC to review both concepts, in alignment with the independent evaluation of the cluster approach planned for 2022/23.

9. Through the actions taken in response to the evaluation recommendations, UNICEF aims to leverage its unique role as the CLA of three clusters (education, nutrition and WASH) and the child protection area of responsibility. The CLA role entails a critical responsibility not only for the success of its own programme and advocacy commitments, but also for the performance of the overall humanitarian response in any given context where clusters are activated. It can be confidently affirmed that if UNICEF does a good job in its four sectors/clusters, the contribution to the overall humanitarian response will certainly be stronger.

10. To further strengthen the cooperation, coherence, coordination and complementarity among humanitarian coordination and development programming, UNICEF responsibilities in the field of leadership and coordination are outlined as a first commitment under each sector in the revised CCCs. Moreover, there is also a dedicated section on coordination for reinforcing it as an institutional commitment, which will support the planned actions under this management response.

11. In its new Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, UNICEF notes that the organization’s focus will be shifted “beyond what the organization can do alone, towards using its mandate to mobilize other actors to maximize collective impact”. The response plan of this evaluation reaffirms the importance of this step.

II. Key evaluation recommendations and UNICEF management response

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
Evaluation overarching recommendation 1 Embrace, promote and operationalize the understanding that UNICEF work for children in humanitarian settings is even more effective when carried out on behalf of, and together with, the collective of actors. A change in approach is required for the organization to focus beyond what UNICEF can do alone, fostering a renewed recognition of the CLA role not as a mere “add-on” but as a core imperative of the UNICEF mandate and an international commitment.				
Management response: Agree UNICEF recognizes the need to leverage its unique role as the CLA of three clusters (education, nutrition and WASH) and the child protection area of responsibility. The CLA role entails a critical responsibility not only for the success of its own programme and advocacy commitments, but also for the performance of the overall humanitarian response in any given context where clusters are activated. UNICEF responsibilities in the field of leadership and coordination are now outlined as the first commitment under every sector, and the revised CCCs also include a dedicated chapter on coordination as an institutional commitment.				
Evaluation recommendation 1 (a) Ensure that key CLA functions, including cluster leadership positions such as cluster coordinators and information management officers, are covered from the agency’s core budget.				
Management response: Agree UNICEF will prioritize the allocation of adequate funding for key CLA functions, such as dedicated cluster coordinators and information management officers, through both the UNICEF core budget (that is, regular resources) and other non-core resources (other resources – emergency).				
Action 1 (a)1 UNICEF Level 2 and Level 3 country offices to prioritize funding for coordination roles, at minimum cluster coordinators and information management officers, for the sectors they lead, based on the “recommended good practices for the minimum structure of coordination teams at country level	Deputy Executive Director, Programmes Deputy Executive Director, Management Office of	First quarter 2023	Under way	Draft message to representatives/regional directors to remind them of CLA accountabilities Funding Propositions for Humanitarian Coordination as CLA (draft forthcoming) Well-Placed: Building a

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
for UNICEF as a cluster lead agency”. The global cluster coordination section (GCCS; previously called the global cluster coordination unit) will monitor cluster staffing biannually, in collaboration with the regional offices, and request justification when country offices do not cover core coordination roles.	Emergency Programmes (GCCS) Regional offices Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring			talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management (Strategic Priority 1 (b)) (forthcoming) Recommended Good Practices for the Minimum Structure of Coordination Teams at Country Level for UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency 2021 Strengthening UNICEF’s humanitarian action, The Humanitarian Review: findings and recommendations (specific recommendation on coordination)
Action 1 (a)2 UNICEF will develop a mechanism for predictable funding to be managed centrally to fill the cluster staffing gaps in Level 2 and Level 3 countries to cover, at the very minimum, cluster coordinator and information management positions, based on the “recommended good practices for the minimum structure of coordination teams at country level for UNICEF as a cluster lead agency 2021” when country offices do not have the resources to do so. Country offices’ use of these centrally managed	Deputy Executive Director, Programmes Deputy Executive Director, Management Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and	First quarter 2023	Under way	Funding Propositions for Humanitarian Coordination as CLA (draft forthcoming)

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
resources will be determined by a set of assessment criteria. (In cases where action 1 (a)1 has not been achieved due to lack of resources at country office levels)	Monitoring Office of Emergency Programmes Public Partnerships Division Programme Group			
Action 1 (a)3 Revise the UNICEF humanitarian response planning and budget guidance to ensure that coordination responsibilities are systematically planned, budgeted and reported against.	Office of Emergency Programmes (Humanitarian Evidence and Learning Section and Office of the Director of Emergency Programmes)	Fourth quarter 2022	Not started	Response plan template, guidance and training Cluster coordination checklist
Action 1 (a)4 Develop and disseminate central guidance to country office resource mobilization teams to ensure that cluster coordination staffing and implementation of functions are included in national funding proposals.	Office of Emergency Programmes Public Partnerships Division	Fourth quarter 2022	Under way	Funding Propositions for Humanitarian Coordination as CLA (draft forthcoming) Well-Placed: Building a talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage:</i> <i>Not started</i> <i>Under way</i> <i>Completed</i> <i>Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
				(Strategic Priority 1 (b)) (forthcoming)
Evaluation recommendation 1 (b) Clarify how UNICEF prioritizes its CLA role and responsibilities amid the myriad other priorities it has set, while further supporting the notion of “intersectorality” of the humanitarian response. The global cluster coordination unit (now called the global cluster coordination section) should continue to build on the role it has established over the years with a view to further promoting both the organization’s CLA role and the notion of “intersectorality” of the humanitarian response.				
Management response: Agree				
Action 1 (b)1 Develop a succinct strategy that synthesizes CLA accountability and commitments based on the findings of the CLARE II evaluation and recommendations of the Humanitarian Review, with the aim of clearly defining the organization’s vision and commitment as the leader of four sectors in an ever-changing humanitarian landscape, including on intersectorality.	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS)	Second quarter 2023	Not started	
Action 1 (b)2 In the existing trainings to the representative/country offices, incorporate new modules to promote dissemination and take up the accountability related to CLA responsibilities of four sectors.	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS)	Second quarter 2023	Not started	
Evaluation recommendation 1 (c) Provide full transparency to cluster partners about UNICEF efforts and intentions around fundraising and funding for the clusters when it has the dual role of being the CLA as well as providing financial resources as UNICEF to cluster partners, to avoid – or better manage – perceived conflicts of interest. Further, perceptions of uneven power dynamics should be addressed by reducing/limiting the frequency over time of double-hatted cluster coordinator positions as well as clarifying and managing expectations of UNICEF programme specialists with regard to the role of cluster coordinators in clusters.				

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
Management response: Agree				
Action 1 (c)1 UNICEF county offices and regional offices will ensure (provided with the available resources) that cluster roles are fully dedicated in all sectors they lead to effectively fulfil CLA responsibilities and avoid perceived conflicts of interest in Level 2 and Level 3 countries. Intersectoral efficiencies will be promoted at the country office level by combining dedicated cluster lead roles as suitable (e.g., information management officers to cover education and child protection). (Linked to action 1 (a)1, 1 (a)2, 1 (c)2 and 1 (c)4)	Deputy Executive Director, Programmes Deputy Executive Director, Management Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS)	Second quarter 2023	Not started	
Action 1 (c)2 Update and disseminate the “Cluster Coordination Guidance for Country Offices” document in line with the CCCs, the Humanitarian Review and emergency procedures to include clear guidance for country offices, regional offices and the global emergency coordinator.	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS)	Third quarter 2023	Not started	Cluster Coordination Guidance for Country Offices IASC cluster-related guidance
Action 1 (c)3 Develop and disseminate a one-page brief for UNICEF-led cluster partners and national/local authorities on the role, responsibilities and accountabilities of CLA, cluster members and partners. (Building on actions 1 (b)1 and 1 (c)1)	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS) Regional offices (Regional Emergency	Third quarter 2023	Not started	Cluster Coordination Guidance for Country Offices IASC cluster-related guidance

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
	Advisers) Human Resources in Emergency Cone			
Action 1 (c)4 Revise job descriptions of section chiefs and regional sector advisers to include CLA role and responsibilities.	Director of Human Resources Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS) Programme Group (Child Protection Section, Education Section, Nutrition Section and WASH Section)	First quarter 2023	Under way	Well-Placed: Building a talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management (Strategic Priority 2 (b)) (forthcoming) Recommended Good Practices for the Minimum Structure of Coordination Teams at Country Level for UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency
Action 1 (c)5 Review and revise generic job profiles/job descriptions and vacancy announcements of representatives to ensure that all national-level cluster coordinators report to the country representative/head of office, or a nominated deputy (as per Decision Tree Guidance and	Director of Human Resources Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS and	First quarter 2023	Under way	IASC cluster-related guidance Recommended Good Practices for the Minimum Structure of Coordination Teams at Country Level for UNICEF as a Cluster

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
“Well-Placed: Building a talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management”).	Humanitarian Policy Section)			Lead Agency (forthcoming) Well-Placed: Building a talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management (Strategic Priority 2 (b))
<p>Evaluation recommendation 1 (d)</p> <p>Promote strategic advisory groups as platforms of collective leadership, where issues such as cluster vision and objectives are openly discussed, defined and prioritized by cluster partners. The global cluster coordination unit (now called the global cluster coordination section) should regularly promote and disseminate the good practices that exist in relation to the effective functioning of strategic advisory groups.</p> <p>Management response: Partially agree</p> <p>The first part of the recommendation is accepted; however, the second part goes beyond the scope of GCCS (formerly called the global cluster coordination unit), as best practices related to strategic advisory groups are very context-specific. In addition, promoting and disseminating good practices on the effective functioning of strategic advisory groups would require additional functions and resources, which GCCS does not have and does not envisage establishing. We believe that addressing the first part of the recommendation will also indirectly facilitate progress for the second part of it.</p>				
<p>Action 1 (d)1</p> <p>Develop standard strategic advisory group terms of reference for all UNICEF-led clusters to ensure consistency regarding the role, responsibility and membership of the strategic advisory group in support of the cluster collective leadership.</p>	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS)	Fourth quarter 2022	Not started	

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage:</i> <i>Not started</i> <i>Under way</i> <i>Completed</i> <i>Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
<p>Evaluation recommendation 1 (e)</p> <p>Provide clear direction on how the clusters it leads should implement and prioritize the four policy commitments (centrality of protection, accountability to affected populations, humanitarian-development nexus and localization), in addition to other institutional commitments such as gender-based violence risk mitigation and disability. UNICEF should ensure systematic dissemination of relevant guidance to all staff.</p> <p>Management response: Agree</p>				
<p>Action 1 (e)1</p> <p>Based on the available guidance on the four policy commitments, adapt guidance for the UNICEF-led cluster. The four guidance documents will specifically define the role of the clusters to advance progress in the corresponding policy commitments, as well as disability inclusion and gender-based violence risk mitigation (based on the approach used by the global education cluster related to cash and voucher, or nutrition for localization, etc.) These guidance pieces will be linked as annexes to the UNICEF CLA guidance.</p> <p>(see action 1 (c)2)</p>	<p>Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS, Accountability to Affected Populations Section and Humanitarian Policy Section)</p> <p>Programme Group (Child Protection Section on centrality of protection and WASH Section on humanitarian-development nexus)</p> <p>Programme Group – Disability Section, Child Protection</p>	Fourth quarter 2023	Not started	

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
	Programme Team (Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies Team)			
Action 1 (e)2 Review and update the training modules regarding the role of cluster/CLA on the mainstreaming of these core policy commitments, gender-based violence risk mitigation and disability inclusion, and include those modules into the emergency training for country-level senior management.	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS)	First quarter 2023	Not started	
Evaluation overarching recommendation 2 In prioritizing its role for the collective of humanitarian actors, UNICEF should align its internal systems with its CLA responsibilities, ensuring that these systems sufficiently recognize the central importance of the CLA role, and reflect the agency-wide accountability for the fulfilment of these responsibilities. Management response: Agree UNICEF agrees with the recommendation, and certain actions are already been undertaken by incorporating those institutional commitments in the revised CCCs. Moreover, under the implementation of the recommendations in the Humanitarian Review, a revision of the job descriptions of the regional directors and country representatives is under way to establish a stronger accountability for the CLA role.				
Evaluation recommendation 2 (a) In reviewing the accountability framework for humanitarian coordination, including information management, UNICEF should ensure that CLA accountability is systematically addressed as mandated by the CCCs, starting with a compact between UNICEF senior management, regional offices and country offices that includes clear accountabilities for humanitarian coordination and established metrics for performance management for CLA staff at all levels (as part of key performance indicators and performance management systems). (i) To ensure that the CLA responsibilities are part of line management and supervisory responsibilities, UNICEF country representatives				

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage:</i> <i>Not started</i> <i>Under way</i> <i>Completed</i> <i>Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
<p>must be held accountable by their supervisors (regional directors) for confirming that the key CLA positions are created and filled; supporting and supervising cluster coordinators; empowering them to provide leadership; and bringing cluster priorities to the humanitarian country team and other relevant inter-agency forums. Likewise, regional directors should also report on how they have worked with representatives in humanitarian countries and supported them to fulfil the CLA role.</p> <p>(ii) UNICEF should mainstream CLA responsibilities in annual workplans and budgets, country programme documents (and other relevant documents related to developing a new country programme), programme strategy notes and country office performance management using the key performance indicators, monitoring and audit frameworks, job descriptions, etc.</p> <p>(iii) UNICEF should also further invest systematically in global-level analyses of cluster performance.</p> <p>Management response: Agree</p>				
<p>Action 2 (a)1</p> <p>Review and revise the job descriptions of regional directors and country representatives to establish a stronger accountability for the CLA role.</p> <p>(Reference to action point 1 (c)5)</p>	<p>Division of Human Resources</p> <p>Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS and Humanitarian Policy Section)</p>	<p>First quarter 2023</p>	<p>Under way</p>	<p>Global Cluster Competency Frameworks for Cluster Coordination</p> <p>Well-Placed: Building a talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management (Strategic Priority 1 (d)) (forthcoming)</p>
<p>Action 2 (a)2</p> <p>Review the UNICEF accountability system and define clear and measurable roles and responsibilities regarding CLA, including to strengthen the oversight role of the regional offices with regard to CLA accountability, and ensure that cluster coordination is systematically included in mandatory Level 2 and Level 3 evaluations.</p>	<p>Office of the Executive Director</p> <p>Office of Emergency Programmes</p>	<p>Fourth quarter 2022</p>	<p>Under way</p>	
<p>Action 2 (a)3</p> <p>Develop key performance indicators reflective of</p>	<p>Division of Data, Analytics,</p>	<p>Third quarter 2022</p>	<p>Under way</p>	<p>Cluster coordination indicators included in set of indicators (replacing</p>

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
CLA accountability. Translate both Strategic Plan and CCC commitments into result assessment module, set of indicators and humanitarian performance monitoring indicators.	Planning and Monitoring Office of Emergency Programmes (Humanitarian Evidence and Learning Section)			strategic monitoring questions) and result assessment module indicators, mapped to CCC commitments and benchmarks Updated CCC indicator guidance prepared (draft) Revised cluster coordination tool (“cluster checklist”) in the Humanitarian Performance Monitoring toolkit
Action 2 (a)4 Based on the annual cluster coordination performance monitoring analysis conducted by the UNICEF-led clusters, GCCS undertakes an overall analysis of cluster performance to address bottlenecks in cluster performance.	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS)	First quarter 2023	Under way	Strategic Monitoring Questions (i.e., H8) on cluster coordination performance monitoring
Action 2 (a)5 Implement the key recommendations of the “Well-Placed: Building a talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management” report to ensure proper career paths for cluster coordinators and information management officers (final draft forthcoming).	Director of Human Resources Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS)	Second quarter 2023	Under way	Well-Placed: Building a talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management (Strategic Priorities 3 and 4) (forthcoming)
Evaluation recommendation 2 (b) UNICEF human resource systems must better support the CLA role to ensure that the proper capacities are put in place accordingly. (i) In recognizing that the cluster coordinator is a key leadership position, UNICEF should ensure that a proper career path is established for				

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage:</i> <i>Not started</i> <i>Under way</i> <i>Completed</i> <i>Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
<p>the coordination function, to attract and retain talent. Conversely, those in (other) leadership positions, such as programme section chiefs, should fulfil a cluster coordination position as part of their career trajectories.</p> <p>(ii) UNICEF should prioritize the calibre of staff in cluster coordination positions, rather than over relying on standby partners for filling cluster (leadership) positions. To support this, UNICEF should ensure that staff with CLA responsibilities are prioritized in humanitarian learning and knowledge management trainings to ensure that they have adequate knowledge, skills and capacities to address the challenges that UNICEF experiences in CLA responsibilities and to support the creation of viable career pathways in coordination with UNICEF.</p> <p>(iii) UNICEF should prioritize emergency recruitment, establishing an internal talent pool/deployment roster of properly trained professionals in cluster coordination, who are available to quickly deploy on surge to fill gaps.</p> <p>(iv) To help take a significant step forward in effective recruitment of cluster coordination and information management positions, UNICEF should also further promote the competency frameworks for cluster coordination and information management developed by the global clusters.</p> <p>(v) UNICEF should prioritize investment and support to building national capacities for leadership and coordination in humanitarian situations, as relevant.</p> <p>(vi) UNICEF should strengthen its capacities to more systematically track and monitor resources, including human resources/staffing and funding provided to cluster coordination work.</p> <p>Management response: Agree</p>				
<p>Action 2 (b)1</p> <p>Include cluster leadership posts in the pool of posts to be considered for senior leaders in UNICEF.</p>	Division of Human Resources	Third quarter 2023	Not started	
<p>Action 2 (b)2</p> <p>Finalize and classify draft generic job profiles for cluster coordinators (to be done by the Programme Group) and information management officers (to be done by the Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring), with a focus on removing any barriers to transferability of skills for career mobility across similar functional areas.</p>	<p>Programme Group (for coordinator roles)</p> <p>Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring</p>	Third quarter 2023	Not started	

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
	(for information management specialist roles)			
Action 2 (b)3 UNICEF-led global clusters to provide technical clearance for recruitment for professional positions prior to approval.	Division of Human Resources	Fourth quarter 2022	Not started	
Action 2 (b)4 Based on the regular monitoring of country clusters (see action 2 (a)4), GCCS follows up with regional offices to address bottlenecks related to country office cluster staffing.	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS) Regional offices Country offices	Fourth quarter 2022 (continue onward)	Under way	Well-Placed: Building a talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management (forthcoming) Recommended Good Practices for the Minimum Structure of Coordination Teams at Country Level for UNICEF as a Cluster Lead Agency
Action 2 (b)5 Implement the key recommendations of the “Well-Placed: Building a talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management” report to facilitate proper career paths for cluster coordinators and information management officers. (Align with action point 2 (a)5)	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS) Programme Group and Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring,	First quarter 2023 (continue onward)	Under way	Well-Placed: Building a talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management (Strategic Priorities 3 and 4) (forthcoming)

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage:</i> <i>Not started</i> <i>Under way</i> <i>Completed</i> <i>Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
	with technical input from the Division of Human Resources			
Action 2 (b)6 Recruit a dedicated human resources business partner for cluster coordination under the Human Resources in Emergency Cone in the Division of Human Resources for a two-year period (funded by GCCS) to support the implementation of the cluster talent management strategy (this is a talent management strategy recommendation).	Division of Human Resources Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS)	First quarter 2023	Not started	
Action 2 (b)7 UNICEF-led clusters to develop guidance and training to support national actors to take up leadership roles and meaningfully contribute to cluster work.	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS and Humanitarian Policy Section)	Fourth quarter 2023	Under way	Localization guidance being finalized by child protection area of responsibility (draft)
Action 2 (b)8 GCCS to review staffing for all UNICEF-led clusters on an annual basis and address double-hatting of cluster coordinators with country offices, regional offices and, where relevant, with the global emergency coordinator.	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS) Division of Human Resources Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and	Second quarter 2023 (continue onward)	Under way	Well-Placed: Building a talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management, report on current state analysis, and Well-Placed: Building a talent management strategy for cluster coordination and information management (Strategic Priority 1 (c)) (forthcoming)

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
	Monitoring, with the Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS)			
<p>Evaluation overarching recommendation 3</p> <p>To strengthen accountability and learning, UNICEF should use the knowledge and experience it has gained as CLA, and from evaluations such as this one, to push for a reflection on how clusters can be adapted to the changing context in which humanitarian response takes place, and lead changes in IASC to clarify the underlying tenets of the cluster approach.</p> <p>Management response: Agree</p> <p>UNICEF recognizes that IASC cluster guidance needs to be updated, and that the processes also need to be streamlined/rationalized, with a view to ensure a balance between the coordination activities and leadership. UNICEF agrees to play a sufficiently proactive role in encouraging IASC and the wider humanitarian community to review global policy and guidance on the cluster approach.</p>				
<p>Evaluation recommendation 3 (a)</p> <p>UNICEF should advocate for cluster guidance to be updated and cluster coordination processes to be streamlined and, where possible, rationalized, as part of an IASC reflection on the clusters and their future. This recalibration, which is critical to better serve affected populations, includes ensuring a balance between coordination activities and leadership, while moving away from time-consuming processes that have ultimately detracted from leading the cluster strategically and realizing collective leadership. UNICEF should play a leadership role in any updating efforts undertaken by IASC, given its (co-)CLA experience.</p> <p>Management response: Agree</p>				
<p>Action 3 (a)1</p> <p>Through the Humanitarian Programme Cycle Steering Group led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the operational policy and advocacy group, UNICEF to lead advocacy to update key IASC governing guidance on clusters, starting with the 2015 IASC reference module for cluster coordination at the country level. In updating</p>	<p>Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Programmes (Geneva)</p> <p>Office of Emergency Programmes</p>	Fourth quarter 2023	Not started	

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
this document, mainstream and consolidate related guidance.	(GCCS)			
Action 3 (a)2 Through the Humanitarian Programme Cycle Steering Committee and global cluster coordination group, UNICEF to lead the advocacy on areas of simplification of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle.	Deputy Director, Office of Emergency Programmes Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS)	Third quarter 2023	Under way	Ongoing discussions at IASC Humanitarian Programme Cycle Steering Group level
Evaluation recommendation 3 (b) To ensure that clusters can adequately respond to the growth and complexity of humanitarian needs, UNICEF should continue to systematically advocate within IASC for multi-year planning/funding for humanitarian needs overviews/humanitarian response plans, strengthening monitoring of needs and programme interventions, including of both coverage and quality; and addressing issues of deactivation and transition of clusters (for example, developing guidelines and/or notes on transitions). Management response: Agree				

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
Action 3 (b)1 GCCS to facilitate and disseminate the development of a position paper to support advocacy for multi-year humanitarian needs overview/humanitarian response plans for protracted crises and simplification of related processes. This advocacy initiative will be consulted with key partners and stakeholders within IASC and global clusters partners (building on ongoing discussions at IASC global cluster coordination group level).	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS and Humanitarian Evidence and Learning Section) Public Partnership Division	Fourth quarter 2023	Not started	Grand Bargain commitments 2021 Humanitarian Review Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework guidance (1.1) Humanitarian Programme Cycle facilitation package IASC guidance on cross-cutting issues as related to clusters
Action 3 (b)2 UNICEF, in consultation with the global cluster coordination group and other IASC partners/members, to develop a note on the transition/deactivation of clusters.	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS)	Second quarter 2023	Not started	
Evaluation recommendation 3 (c) The Executive Director of UNICEF should report at least once a year on the way that UNICEF is delivering on its CLA responsibilities, including accountability for senior leaders for supporting the clusters, at the IASC principals meeting and to the UNICEF Executive Board. When relevant, the Executive Director/Deputy Executive Director/Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes should also propose adjustments or new ideas related to the CLA role based on UNICEF experiences. Through this engagement, UNICEF will also be setting an example, which principals of other agencies that hold CLA roles might follow. Management response: Agree				
Action 3 (c)1 An update on CLA accountabilities is included in the annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action to be presented to the UNICEF Executive Board. Similarly, at IASC level, an update on	Office of the Executive Director Director, Office of	2023 and onward	Not started	

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage: Not started Under way Completed Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
CLA responsibilities is presented annually at a meeting of IASC principals.	Emergency Programmes			
Evaluation recommendation 3 (d) UNICEF should advocate for the clarification of co-leadership by IASC, with a view to achieving a stronger definition of the function and its implications, especially in terms of accountabilities (for example, staffing, provider of last resort). Management response: Agree				
Action 3 (d)1 UNICEF, in consultation with Save the Children and other partners, to develop a UNICEF position on the concept of co-leadership.	Office of Emergency Programmes Programme Group	Third quarter 2023	Not started	Global Education cluster co-leadership review (draft)
Action 3 (d)2 UNICEF will continue to work with the global cluster coordination group and other relevant bodies within IASC to finalize an annex to the cluster coordination reference module, specifically on “collective leadership”, ensuring clarity of terminology and roles to promote more effective, meaningful and inclusive leadership of cluster partners, with special attention to national and local actors (building on the UNICEF position to be developed).	Office of Emergency Programmes Global cluster coordinators, in collaboration with other clusters (global cluster coordination group)	First quarter 2024	Not started	
Evaluation recommendation 3 (e) UNICEF should advocate for IASC to review the concept of provider of last resort with a view to making the concept more transparent and ensuring that it is more consistently applied (or rejected); currently, the concept obscures, rather than strengthens, accountability. Management response: Agree				

<i>Actions planned</i>	<i>Responsible office</i>	<i>Expected completion date</i>	<i>Action taken and implementation stage:</i> <i>Not started</i> <i>Under way</i> <i>Completed</i> <i>Cancelled</i>	<i>Supporting documents</i>
Action 3 (e)1 UNICEF to develop and propose a common vision of provider of last resort with input from Programme Group teams (outline issues and bring evidence) and lead advocacy for IASC to review the concept, aligned with the independent evaluation of the cluster approach planned for 2022 that will be conducted by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.	Office of Emergency Programmes (GCCS) Programme Group (Child Protection Section, Education Section, Nutrition Section and WASH Section)	Second quarter 2024	Not started	

III. Draft decision

The Executive Board

Takes note of the evaluation of the UNICEF role as cluster lead/co-lead agency, its summary ([E/ICEF/2022/19](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2022/20](#)).
