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### Report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund on the work of its annual session of 2019

(11–13 June 2019)\*

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## **I. Organization of the session**

### **A. Opening statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF**

1. The President of the Executive Board and Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale, opened the annual session of the Executive Board noting that it was his first and that he looked forward to the spirit of collaboration within the Board.

2. He noted the significance of 2019 for UNICEF as it was the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a milestone that was also a priority for his Government. It was a unique opportunity to take stock of progress made hitherto and to consider how to move forward to reach those furthest behind.

3. He commented that 2019 was also a key moment in the repositioning of the United Nations development system. The Board had a responsibility to embrace the change necessary to implement this reform, to enhance system-wide coordination, to avoid duplication, to ensure effectiveness and efficiency and to ease the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

4. The President was heartened by the collaboration with other United Nations agencies and partners that he saw in the field during the joint field visit to Colombia and appreciated the opportunity to see the work of UNICEF where it counts most.

5. The President said UNICEF had a unique role due to its dual humanitarian and development mandate and should view this as a continuum: from humanitarian interventions come development actions.

6. He mentioned Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 which calls to end all forms of violence against children. He considered the protection of the girl child to be particularly pertinent. He recalled the recent conference in Oslo on Ending Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Humanitarian Crises [23–24 May 2019] where he had addressed the need to recognize a collective responsibility.

7. The President thanked the Executive Director, Ms. Henrietta H. Fore, for her zero-tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse. He noted that at the joint meeting of the Boards all the agencies committed to eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse. They also affirmed the right of all staff to work in an environment free from all forms of harassment and abuse, where values and ethical conduct are respected and there was zero tolerance for all forms of misconduct in the workplace.

8. He underlined the importance of leaving no child behind and reaching the most vulnerable, allowing all children to reach their potential. He believed that the future of childhood would guide efforts to achieve this. He considered that investing early in inclusive and equitable quality education, measuring outcomes and exploring innovation and new technologies was the way forward.

9. The President concluded by emphasizing the importance of partnerships and his hope that new and strengthened partnerships would be forged in the future.

10. The Executive Director commenced her address by noting that UNICEF could be proud of the results achieved and which would be presented in her annual report for 2018, the first since the start of the new UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021.

11. She thanked the Member States for their generous support and vision, which have permitted the progress and potential reached for children and young people.

12. She reminded members of the Executive Board that there is still work to be done and noted particularly the issues of child mortality, child obesity and anaemia, open defecation, child marriage and conflict.

13. On the question of humanitarian action, the Executive Director looked forward to hearing feedback from Board members on the work of UNICEF in complex and fast-moving environments.

14. She also looked forward to discussing the organization's progress in 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. She noted that UNICEF staff members were engaged across a range of areas to drive change, including a new Management and Accountability Framework at the country level. The organization was also striving to achieve coherence with its sister agencies on country strategies and to better align them with the Sustainable Development Goals. The revitalized resident coordinator system was a critical element of this drive.

15. The Executive Director recognized that there was a need for predictable and sustainable funding. The organization had doubled its global cost share for 2019 and was now operationalizing the 1 per cent levy. UNICEF was also actively seeking efficiencies and savings in its operations. Furthermore, through strategic procurement the organization was able to generate savings to put towards programming for children. She highlighted that this would not be possible without donor support, especially through stable, flexible, multi-year and unrestricted regular resources.

16. UNICEF had recommitted to its core values of care, respect, integrity, trust and accountability in 2018 and the organization was taking steps to strengthen the trust of its staff members. In particular, this included efforts to create and maintain a respectful and inclusive work environment free from sexual harassment and abuse, workplace discrimination and abuse of authority. The Executive Director had personally commissioned a report from an independent task force on workplace gender-discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment and abuse of authority.

17. The Executive Director noted that UNICEF would continue to rely on the Executive Board for its vision and stewardship moving forward.

18. She concluded that 2019 was an important year for the cause of UNICEF and marked the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an opportunity not only to look back at what had been achieved but also to look forward to what will be accomplished in the future.

## **B. Adoption of the provisional annotated agenda, timetable and organization of work**

19. The Executive Board adopted the provisional annotated agenda, timetable and organization of work ([E/ICEF/2019/9](#)) for the session.

20. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 27 observer delegations, including one intergovernmental organization, five non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and five UNICEF National Committees.

## **C. Working methods**

21. The President introduced agenda item 3, working methods, and opened the floor for discussion.

22. There were no comments from the delegations.
23. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/9 (see annex).

## **II. Deliberations of the Executive Board**

### **A. Annual report for 2018 of the Executive Director of UNICEF**

#### **UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit**

24. The President introduced the annual report for 2018 of the Executive Director of UNICEF (E/ICEF/2019/10) and the UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (E/ICEF/2019/11).

25. After introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director (Partnerships), the Director of the Division of Data, Research and Policy presented details on results achieved in 2018.

26. Delegations thanked the Executive Director of UNICEF for her vision and leadership and expressed appreciation for UNICEF staff members, branded by some delegations as ‘superheroes’, and their work promoting and protecting the rights of children. Delegations commended UNICEF on the achievements described in the annual report and for its ongoing commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They noted that the report was the first since the implementation of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 and showed remarkable progress. The report and its indicators also demonstrated that there are still challenges ahead. A delegation saw the midterm review as an opportunity for thorough review and asked for further elaboration on the added value of working together when reporting on the common chapter. The Executive Director confirmed that the organization would focus on those areas that had proved challenging.

27. Delegations commented on financing issues and the importance of predictable funding. Some delegations were concerned about financing gaps and looked towards innovative financing. Several delegations mentioned that they had entered multi-year partnerships with UNICEF and encouraged other Member States to do the same. A delegation encouraged UNICEF to explore joint financing programming and systematically joining efforts with international financial institutions. The Executive Director thought these ideas interesting and appreciated the call for more creative solutions on financing.

28. Delegations welcomed the commitment of UNICEF to the Secretary-General’s reform process, in particular the lead role the organization was taking and the Executive Director’s personal investment. They appreciated the alignment of UNICEF with the principles set out in 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. They encouraged UNICEF to further develop coherence with its sister agencies and to continue building stronger, more effective country teams including through the new Management and Accountability Framework. A delegation recalled that there was shared responsibility for success of the reform and that the Member States had a role to play. The Executive Director pledged that UNICEF would contribute to the system-wide coherence at the country level. UNICEF would continue to focus efforts on the reform of the United Nations development system and to do so in cooperation with its sister agencies.

29. Delegations took note of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, commenting that this milestone should be used both as an

opportunity to renew support for its implementation and as a reminder to reach the most vulnerable. Within this context a delegation asked UNICEF to support the strengthening of normative work, a human rights-based approach and increased attention to gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, children with disabilities, minority children and violence against children in all its forms.

30. Delegations commended the actions of UNICEF, and in particular the leadership of the Executive Director, for the multiple measures taken to strengthen the organization's response to sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, workplace gender discrimination and abuse of authority. They urged the organization to continue setting an example and looked forward to future discussions.

31. Several delegations highlighted the critical importance of integrating gender equality in programming and analysis. Equal access to education was of particular concern. The Executive Director concurred that there are indeed gender stereotypes and UNICEF is working against them.

32. Delegations noted the work of UNICEF in the field in programme sectors while highlighting the importance of a multisystem approach, working horizontally and vertically across sectors and regions, citing South-South cooperation in particular. Several delegations singled out access to and quality of education as a priority. In a rapidly changing world, education systems need to keep up and use the new technologies available to find innovative solutions to prepare children for the changing world and job market. Generation Unlimited was highlighted as a good example.

33. Delegations supported the work of UNICEF in humanitarian crises and a holistic approach to this work, including the link between humanitarian and development action. The Executive Director agreed that it was both important to address an immediate emergency while at the same time to focus on development in the longer term.

34. Several delegations noted that protecting the world's children must include tackling climate change and suggested mainstreaming climate-resilient programming and strengthening communities' resilience to extreme weather events and their consequences.

35. Several delegations supported the "leaving no one behind" agenda. Other delegations emphasized the importance of including persons with disabilities, one of which encouraged efforts to improve the availability of disaggregated data to enhance policy development.

36. Several delegations commended the leading work of UNICEF on engagement with the private and business sectors on creating new partnerships that are truly collaborative and on innovative financing. A delegation urged the organization to share this expertise with other agencies. The Executive Director said that cooperation with the private sector and shared partnerships were indeed important and that UNICEF would explore how to impart its experiences.

37. The acting chair of the Standing Group of National Committees joined Member States in applauding the results reported in the Executive Director's annual report. It also noted that progress has been uneven and there is still much to be done. National Committees had had a fruitful relationship with the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division working on transparency, efficiency and optimizing financial results.

38. The representative of the NGO Committee on UNICEF recognized the efforts of UNICEF but was concerned that there is still much progress to be made on reaching the most vulnerable. The representative urged both UNICEF and Member States to

work more closely with civil society. Similarly, the representative of the ChildFund Alliance recognized that more can be done by acting together than alone and encouraged UNICEF to capitalize on its commitment to ending violence against children.

39. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/10 (see annex).

## **B. Annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action**

40. The Vice-President introduced the annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action (E/ICEF/2019/12).

41. After introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director (Programmes), the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes provided a summary of the report and the Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations made a presentation.

42. Delegations acknowledged the achievements of UNICEF in humanitarian action as outlined in the report and saluted the bravery and commitment of UNICEF staff.

43. A group of delegations noted that humanitarian access must extend to partners, including their security, and that adherence to humanitarian principles was important. The Director agreed that it was necessary to transfer capacities, management and security to partners and not just risk. The Permanent Observer said that humanitarian access remained a problem and security risks were still a daunting challenge for humanitarian action.

44. The group highlighted the challenge of acquiring data and evidence and encouraged UNICEF to use innovative approaches, make the necessary long-term investments and work with national and international partners to address data challenges. The Director concurred that data evidence is essential and mentioned a new section in the Office of Emergency Programmes on humanitarian evidence and learning.

45. The group of delegations would welcome a greater focus on the organization's collaborative work in humanitarian action. The Director said that the cluster system was an important element in coordination but that it faced challenges of funding, limiting the ability to attract the right calibre of personnel. The Permanent Observer agreed that partnerships were important and noted that the Red Cross looked to UNICEF to learn how to establish effective partnerships.

46. The delegations called upon UNICEF to address the dilemmas and shortfalls linked to the balancing of coverage, quality and equity.

47. Finally, while the group welcomed improvements to the report it noted that it was not yet fully aligned with the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action. The Director responded that the alignment did not appear clearly yet in this report but would in next year's annual report.

48. A delegation welcomed the role of UNICEF in the prevention and treatment of malnutrition and asked for tangible examples of improvements in effectiveness and efficiencies. Another delegation echoed this request. The Director mentioned a common protocol with the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization that would simplify processes and make reaching children in crises more efficient and less costly. The Deputy Executive Director added that innovation teams across UNICEF are also looking at ways to enhance work in humanitarian situations.

49. A delegation asked how UNICEF deals with earmarking of humanitarian funding and how the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse is addressed in

humanitarian settings. The Director said that earmarked funding was difficult and limiting because some crises and countries get more attention than others and a lack of flexible funding meant that a whole sector could be overlooked. Flexible funding would allow UNICEF to react quickly to humanitarian situations and to be more equitable. He noted that Executive Director Fore held the role of Inter-Agency Standing Committee Principals' Champion on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and abuse and that the organization had had a positive impact on support to child victims across the system.

50. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/11 (see annex).

### **C. Annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021**

51. The President introduced the annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021 ([E/ICEF/2019/13](#)).

52. After introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director (Programmes), the Principal Adviser, Gender and Development, presented the report.

53. A delegation noted that it is important to continue to stress positive socialization of gender to eradicate discriminatory practices. It stressed that the fight against violence should continue to be a priority for UNICEF and that involving boys is crucial. The delegation concluded by urging the organization to continue to align its work with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international instruments, and to contribute to the discussions around the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace [4–15 September 1995; Beijing]. The Executive Director commented that UNICEF also needs to consider the perpetuation of stereotypes in its advocacy work, both in terms of boys and girls. The Principal Adviser agreed on the importance of positive gender socialization and looked forward to providing support in the celebrations to mark Beijing +25.

54. A group of delegations recognized the efforts of UNICEF to pursue gender equality. They encouraged efforts of gender-mainstreaming and welcomed the focus on gender analysis in programme planning cycles and the expansion of gender capacity at headquarters and regional levels while encouraging the organization to focus on this issue in country offices. The group noted with appreciation the commitment of UNICEF to the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women as well as the fostering of a gender-responsive workplace culture. The group of delegations noted with concern that the gender-responsive monitoring system remained weak and encouraged UNICEF to continue to tackle data issues.

55. The group commented on targeted priorities to empower adolescent girls, underlining that girls with disabilities are often left furthest behind, girls continue to be marginalized in education and gender integration to improve HIV-prevention among girls is slow. A stronger emphasis on sexual and reproductive health and rights would be welcomed. Finally, the group encouraged UNICEF to elaborate more on institutional and system strengthening and the development of multisectoral and gender-responsive plans and underlined the importance of engaging men in caregiving and the redistribution of the care burden.

56. The Deputy Executive Director acknowledged that UNICEF needed to continue to strengthen gender capacity across the organization, including in the field, especially in data disaggregation. UNICEF would be working with its sister agencies to this end.



57. A delegation congratulated UNICEF for its institutional and strategic emphasis on gender equality. It reiterated shared priorities such as empowering women and girls, combating violence against women and children and promoting women's roles in decision-making. The delegation encouraged UNICEF to also focus these efforts in the field to achieve its mandate more effectively. Finally, the delegation applauded UNICEF for leading by example in terms of gender parity in the workplace. The Principal Adviser noted that UNICEF appreciated ongoing cooperation with Member States to improve partnerships to further these processes, as well as collaborations with the private sector.

58. The President asked about the implementation of gender parity beyond the level of senior management. The Principal Adviser responded that UNICEF still has much work to do to achieve gender parity across the organization and there is close cooperation with the Division of Human Resources and Regional Directors to achieve this.

## **D. UNICEF programme cooperation**

### **(a) Country programme documents**

59. The President informed the Executive Board that, in accordance with decision 2014/1, the country programme document would be considered and approved on a no-objection basis. Delegations had been invited to share their comments on the country and programme document for Congo ([E/ICEF/2019/P/L.3](#)). The draft document was posted on the Executive Board website for comment from 18 March to 5 April 2019. The final country programme document was made available on the Executive Board website in English six weeks in advance of the session and in the relevant languages four weeks in advance. Further discussion was to be held only if at least five members of the Board had informed the secretariat in writing that they wished to bring a country programme to the Board for further discussion. The secretariat had received no such requests.

#### **West and Central Africa**

60. The Regional Director presented the country programme for Congo. She noted significant progress for children in recent years while highlighting that there were still areas that needed improvement. The country programme responds to the country context and will mix strategies to accelerate results. UNICEF will promote learning and sharing of best practices within the subregion and beyond by collaborating with the Economic Community of Central African States and the African Union. UNICEF will coordinate with other United Nations agencies, in particular with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in the context of the common chapter of the respective strategic plans. She concluded by noting that the country programme will be implemented in concert with the Government, members of the United Nations country team, technical and financial partners, civil society, and children and adolescents.

61. The representative of the Congo thanked the Regional Director and the country team for their work during the preparatory process and drafting of the country programme document, which is the result of a participatory process in close cooperation with the Government of the Congo and including all national stakeholders, and is in line with the National Development Plan, 2018–2022. He assured Member States that every effort would be made for full national ownership of the programme with a view to its effective implementation for the well-being of children.

62. A delegation asked to what extent the country programme document was aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in the light of the current reform of the United Nations development system. The Regional Director responded that the UNICEF country office works very closely with the rest of the United Nations country team and the entire country programme is part of the United Nations Development Assistant Framework and all the outcome objectives contribute to the Framework. The reform will allow for further consolidation and integration of efforts.

63. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/12 (see annex).

**(b) Extensions of ongoing country programmes**

64. The President stated that, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2009/11, the Executive Board had been informed of the two-month extension of the country programme for Mali and the first one-year extension of the country programme for Tunisia, both approved by the Executive Director.

65. The Executive Board was requested to approve a one-year extension of the country programme for Yemen, following two previous one-year extensions and a previous two-year extension.

66. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/13 (see annex).

**E. Evaluation reports and management responses**

67. The Vice-President introduced two evaluation documents: the annual report for 2018 on the evaluation function in UNICEF ([E/ICEF/2019/14](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2019/15](#)), and the executive summary of the evaluation of the coverage and quality of the UNICEF humanitarian response in complex humanitarian emergencies ([E/ICEF/2019/16](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2019/17](#)).

**Annual report for 2018 on the evaluation function in UNICEF, and management response**

68. The Director, Evaluation Office, presented the report followed by a presentation of the management response by the Deputy Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management. The Executive Director drew the attention of the Executive Board to the pioneering of real-time evaluations by the Evaluation Office, which will be a useful management tool going forward.

69. A group of delegations welcomed the concrete steps taken by management to implement the revised evaluation policy throughout the organization and encouraged UNICEF to continue its efforts and report back to the Executive Board. The group noted with appreciation that the evaluation uptake is contributing to positive change and that UNICEF has taken concrete steps to improve the quality of evaluations. It welcomed the addition of regional evaluation advisers and the increase in financial resources and expected UNICEF to reach the 1 per cent target by the end of 2019.

70. The delegations were concerned by a downward trend in a couple of regions in relation to the geographical coverage of evaluations as well as the increase in management responses not yet commenced that could ultimately have a long-term impact on the overall quality of UNICEF programmes. The Director, Evaluation Office said that issues related to the humanitarian context had hampered evaluation coverage in certain regions but that the Office was working with regional directors to address the constraints. He informed the Executive Board that a mechanism had been introduced to provide more frequent feedback in terms of management response to evaluations, including a recently introduced new software that helps managers to

track their responses. The Deputy Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management concurred that better tracking tools would allow the monitoring of implementation and recommendations on a timelier basis. She added that for evaluations delivered at the end of 2018 the management actions were not yet apparent in the 2018 statistics but that the recommendations were in fact being implemented in 2019.

71. The group of delegations welcomed the strengthening of capacity in the Evaluation Office to incorporate a gender perspective in all evaluations and encouraged continued efforts for all evaluation staff to complete appropriate gender-based analysis training and to work with gender specialists to build their capacity. The delegations would welcome an update on progress in the next annual report on the evaluation function, including statistics on the extent to which evaluators had been trained and had incorporated a gender-based analysis into their evaluations and reports. The Director, Evaluation Office said the Office would continue to improve gender-based analysis and that training would be introduced in the near future. He noted that this improvement went hand in hand with gender-based analysis in programming.

72. The delegations appreciated the efforts of UNICEF to strengthen internal knowledge management and emphasized the importance of an effective system that uses evaluation results to inform programming decisions and improve organizational learning.

73. The group concluded by encouraging UNICEF to further support system-wide evaluation mechanisms in concert with its sister agencies.

74. A delegation requested an overview of both geographic and thematic coverage against programme funding. The Director, Evaluation Office, thanked the delegation for this idea and proposed to develop a table showing the two elements.

#### **Evaluation of the coverage and quality of the UNICEF humanitarian response in complex humanitarian emergencies, and management response**

75. The Director, Evaluation Office, presented the report followed by a presentation of the management response by the Director, Office of Emergency Programmes.

76. A group of delegations welcomed the evaluation, its findings and recommendations and expressed appreciation that UNICEF had been recognized for its organizational courage and tenacity in sustaining its work in complex humanitarian emergencies.

77. The group also raised some concerns. It noted that there were variable levels of understanding of humanitarian principles among staff and partners and that these principles were not routinely used as a framework for decision-making. Hence, there was a need to strengthen capacity on the practical use of humanitarian principles. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, concurred that the understanding of humanitarian principles was crucial and there was a need to mainstream neutrality, impartiality and training on how to conduct humanitarian assistance.

78. The group of delegations commented on the challenge of inadequate data collection and disaggregation of data and its effect on calculating coverage in relation to need. The evaluation had highlighted the inconsistency in how UNICEF determines vulnerabilities. As well as sex- and age-disaggregated data, delegations would like to see other vulnerability factors such as disability routinely included. The group would like to learn more on how targeting will be improved to reach those who are least accessible and most in need. The delegations were concerned that coverage was prioritized over equity and urged UNICEF to ensure a balanced approach.

79. The delegations asked to see a structured approach from the organization to accountability to affected populations that would mainstream beneficiary feedback into project planning and implementation. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes noted that the situation is changing thanks to attempts to lead a more systematic approach across the humanitarian system on accountability to affected populations.

80. The group encouraged UNICEF to actively support local and national partner organizations. The group concluded by recognizing that some issues raised in the evaluation had been addressed by the current Strategic Plan and that some required parallel action by partners, but it was essential that the challenges and dilemmas raised continue to be reported and discussed in a transparent manner.

81. A delegation asked for more clarity on the unmet needs not included in humanitarian targets. The delegation understood that there were constraints to the breadth of targets, including funding constraints. The Director, Office of Emergency Programmes, informed the Executive Board that the Office was mainstreaming a new needs assessment system that would provide numbers more systematically and including the actual needs and not only those that could be addressed given the capacity available. He noted that UNICEF should be able to find a better balance between the two, and that the issue is an inter-agency one that should be addressed with partners.

82. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/14 (see annex).

## **F. Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2018**

83. The Principal Adviser, Ethics presented the report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2018 ([E/ICEF/2019/18](#)). Following the presentation, the Deputy Executive Director, (Management) a.i. introduced the management response to the report ([E/ICEF/2019/19](#)), which was then presented by the Director, Division of Human Resources.

84. A group of delegations commended the work done by the Ethics Office in 2018 and noted that the more than doubling in requests for services reflected the success of its outreach initiatives that have increased its accessibility and visibility. The delegations welcomed the Office's focus on delivering training and raising awareness on ethical leadership issues, as well as the inclusion of ethical competency as a separate criterion in the organization's overall competency framework by 2020.

85. While the group was happy to learn that relevant stakeholders within UNICEF consult the Office regularly on questions of protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, it asked for more information on how and on which topics the Ethics Office was consulted, and how the Office actively participated in the processes. The Principal Adviser noted that the Ethics Office was working closely with the Senior Coordinator, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Workplace Abuse and establishing a division of labour based on function with regard to these processes. In particular, the Ethics Office promoted standards and raised awareness. The Deputy Executive Director a.i. noted that a Senior Coordinator, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Workplace Abuse had been recruited. The organization would work to ensuring that the coordination and advisory functions supported the implementation side of the organization.

86. The group of delegations referred to a request from the Executive Board in 2018 to establish a policy articulating standards for consultation with the Ethics Office in matters of policy support. It wondered whether the Office considered this request to be adequately covered. The Principal Adviser said that there was a mechanism in

place for this process and it had been working better in practice in 2018 and she considered that the request had been met.

87. The Deputy Executive Director a.i. emphasized that various policies were interrelated and there was a need for complementarity.

88. The group considered the revision to the UNICEF whistleblower protection policy to be an important milestone. The delegations would like UNICEF to monitor closely whether there are other factors accounting for the increase in reported cases.

89. The delegations asked the Ethics Office to conduct an assessment of resources and report whether the financial and staff resources were adequate to fulfil its mandate. The Principal Adviser reported that such an assessment was ongoing.

90. The group concluded by thanking UNICEF for providing a management response and encouraging the Ethics Office to provide actionable and concrete recommendations in its annual report.

91. A group of delegations asked whether the Ethics Office deemed the Child Safeguarding Unit to be adequately resourced. The Principal Adviser commented that child safeguarding standards needed to be coordinated and that some strengthening of the unit would be helpful.

92. A delegation requested the Ethics Office to elaborate on how it viewed its independence in the light of a review by the Joint Inspection Unit requesting that executive heads ensure the independence of the head of ethics within their organizations. The Principal Adviser considered that the main elements affording functional independence for the head of the UNICEF Ethics Office were in place and that UNICEF senior management supported the Ethics Office in UNICEF having a strong and independent function. The Principal Adviser also advocated for consistency in the terms of reference and appointment among all of the heads of independent offices, both within UNICEF and system-wide, to further enhance functional independence.

93. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/15 (see annex).

## **G. Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2018 annual report to the Executive Board, and management response**

### **UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee 2018 annual report**

94. The Vice-President introduced the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2018 annual report to the Executive Board ([E/ICEF/2019/AB/L.3](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2019/AB/L.4](#)). Also before the Board for its information was the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee 2018 annual report.

95. The Director, Office of Internal Audit and Investigations a.i. presented the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2018 annual report to the Executive Board. This was followed by the presentation of the management response by the Deputy Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management. The Chair of the UNICEF Audit Advisory Committee provided comments from the Committee's perspective.

96. A group of delegations and another delegation voiced concern over the vacancies in the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations during 2018. They urged UNICEF to ensure that the Office is adequately resourced in relation to its mandate and the increase in the number of investigations. The Director, Office of Internal Audit and Investigations a.i. responded that significant progress had been made in

filling the vacancies. He added that the Office would need more resources given the exponential increase in the number of cases.

97. The group of delegations was concerned about the continuously low number of allegations related to fraud. The Director, Office of Internal Audit and Investigations a.i. said that the Office had focused primarily on cases related to sexual exploitation and abuse, gender-based harassment and abuse of authority, which may have accounted for the low number. The Deputy Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management said that UNICEF was addressing the low number through the anti-fraud training and the promotion of a speak up culture.

98. The group urged UNICEF to keep sensitive information related to cases on a need-to-know basis. The Director, Office of Internal Audit and Investigations a.i. stated that he shared this opinion and that the organization made efforts to do so. The Deputy Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management mentioned that it is a dilemma to be as transparent as possible while also being mindful of oversharing details that could compromise a case.

99. The delegations welcomed progress regarding recovery of funds lost due to fraud on account to staff but noted the lack of progress regarding recovery of funds for implementing partners. They urged UNICEF management to take appropriate action in this regard. They would also like UNICEF to give priority to addressing the most recurrent audit issues in the country offices. The Deputy Director, Division of Financial and Administrative Management, noted that the largest number of fraud cases are generally committed through implementing partners and it was important to identify the lessons learned from these cases.

100. A delegation was concerned about the number of cases carried over from the previous year and noted the importance of key performance indicators in measuring achievements.

101. A delegation commended the use of risk-based methodology in audits and stated that this could also be better reflected in the reporting to the Board to convey more clearly the weaknesses identified during the audits that were considered more serious and whether they were systemic or localized. The Director, Office of Internal Audit and Investigations a.i. stated that this would be considered.

102. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/16 (see annex).

## **H. Update on policies and processes of UNICEF on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment**

103. After introductory remarks by the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director (Management) a.i., two members of the independent panel that undertook a review of the UNICEF response to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and the Assistant Secretary-General and Victims' Rights Advocate for the United Nations made presentations, followed by an update by the UNICEF Senior Coordinator, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Workplace Abuse.

104. A group of delegations thanked the Executive Director for championing action to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and also thanked the guest speakers. The group welcomed the whole-of-organization strategy and requested an update on its implementation at the 2020 annual session.

105. The group welcomed the focus on the strengthening of accountability at all levels, prevention and deterrence as well as gender equality.

106. The delegations supported efforts to strengthen whistle-blower protection and encourage a speak up culture, encouraged UNICEF to further strengthen community-based reporting mechanisms and welcomed efforts to improve reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment allegations and encouraged that they be aligned to the extent possible.

107. The group welcomed efforts in the context of survivor-centred responses and encouraged UNICEF to continue working with the Office of the Victims' Right Advocate. The group also encouraged UNICEF and partners to work effectively at the country level for victims and survivors. The Victims' Rights Advocate considered that both prevention and response should be victim-centred. She noted that victims wanted clear reporting pathways, provision of assistance and protection and facilitation of their right to justice, all of which required system-wide coordination and cooperation with partners.

108. The group supported the strengthening of the UNICEF investigative function and requested the organization to develop proposals with other funds and programmes to pool investigative resources. The group also supported efforts to better manage risks related to implementing partners.

109. Finally, the group noted three requirements for the whole-of-organization strategy to be effective: sufficient and sustainable resources, an effective monitoring and evaluation framework, and consistency and alignment with system-wide approaches.

110. A delegation asked for more transparency on reported incidents and how coordination between in-house key functions would be achieved. A member of the independent panel agreed that the different functions needed to work together to avoid duplication and overlap and that such cooperation had already started. The Senior Coordinator replied that UNICEF is working on increasing coherence in its internal approach and systems.

111. The President commended the Executive Director's work as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Principals' Champion on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and abuse, lauded her courage in launching a speak up culture and thanked her for introducing a zero-tolerance culture. He noted with appreciation the five points of the whole-of-organization strategy.

112. A delegation posed a question on the scale of investments needed to tackle these issues properly, asked which concrete actions would improve the capacity of investigative units and what the specific barriers were to a speak up culture. A member of the independent panel recognized that it was difficult to gauge the scale of required investments, noting that some investments had been made but that there were still some unknown factors. The Senior Coordinator complemented this response by pointing out that there were still critical gaps. The panel member acknowledged that investments in investigations and in training had been made to improve the capacity of the investigative units. She said the most common barrier to a speak up culture was fear and lack of trust. The Senior Coordinator added that the complexities of working in a multicultural organization also played a role.

113. A delegation suggested setting up a thematic fund to address the gap in resourcing, asked where accountability lay at the country level and for some examples on the type of targets that would be set. The Deputy Executive Director (Programmes) welcomed the idea of the thematic fund and suggested that UNICEF would follow up with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. He confirmed that the humanitarian coordinator was accountable at the country level. The Executive Director added that the organization's aim to have a focal point in each programme country could be considered as a target.

114. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/17 (see annex).

**I. 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**

115. The Vice-President introduced the update on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/279.

116. After introductory remarks by the Deputy Executive Director (Partnerships), the Director of the Public Partnerships Division presented the update.

117. Delegations commended the UNICEF commitment to the process of the repositioning of the United Nations development system and the steps taken to its implementation. Several delegations asked for good examples of how it is being implemented and the conditions giving rise to success. The Deputy Executive Director (Programmes) mentioned the confidence United Nations agencies had in the new resident coordinator system as the resident coordinator was independent and looked after the interests of the whole system rather than an individual agency. The Director said that success was achieved when responsibilities were correctly interpreted, mutual accountability existed and there was clear leadership.

118. A group of delegations took note of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and appreciated the efforts of UNICEF to align its country programme documents accordingly. Another delegation reminded UNICEF of the importance of coordinating and consulting with programme countries. The Executive Director said that it was important to consider how to cooperate with local partners as well as with national Governments and other agencies. The Deputy Executive Director (Programmes) agreed that cooperation frameworks should be aligned with national plans and with partners in programme countries. He said that the UNICEF country programmes would be aligned with the respective cooperation framework and in some cases the organization would take the lead in the design of the framework as the largest stakeholder.

119. The group encouraged UNICEF to make progress on reviewing accountability and reporting frameworks to ensure alignment with the new Management and Accountability Framework. It appreciated efforts to ensure the resident coordinator's participation in performance assessments of country representatives. A delegation asked for further details on how this would work in practice. The Director clarified that the role of the resident coordinator in performance assessment was to comment on the performance of the country representative and team on work related to the United Nations country team.

120. The group took note of the system-wide strategic document and emphasized the leaving no one behind agenda as well as the consistent application of human rights-based approaches, gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and climate change mainstreaming. The group invited UNICEF to present its plans on the systematic application of the leaving no one behind agenda. The Director noted that UNICEF had and would continue to support this process and recalled the Executive Office of the Secretary-General was taking the lead. She further noted that UNICEF wanted to ensure that the normative agenda was not forgotten in the process of reform.

121. The delegations welcomed the adoption of the funding compact and looked forward to hearing a report from UNICEF about the follow-up to its commitments under the compact.



122. The group recalled the Secretary-General's proposal to develop clear system-wide guidance and principles on working in partnerships. The Deputy Executive Director (Partnerships) noted the importance of partnerships at the country level and that UNICEF had a leadership role to play. She said the shape of partnerships was shifting to a multi-stakeholder approach with platforms rather than between just two partners.

123. A delegation called on the full implementation of the 1 per cent levy, while recognizing its complexity. Another delegation highlighted that the levy would disincentivize tightly earmarked projects.

124. A delegation asked UNICEF to elaborate on efficiency gains and how messaging on the merit and importance of the reform was conveyed to country and regional levels. The Deputy Executive Director a.i. (Management) gave clear examples of efficiencies gained, citing in particular common premises and the Mutual Recognition Framework. She also noted that UNICEF is part of the Business Innovations Group. The Director commented that there was a regular information flow from headquarters to the regional and country levels and that it was important to have a compelling narrative linked to results.

125. The Executive Board adopted decision 2019/18 (see annex).

## **J. Address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association**

126. The President introduced the address by the Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association.

127. The Chairperson commenced her address by thanking the Member States for their appreciation of UNICEF staff members.

128. She noted that the main issue over the past year had been addressing all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment, misconduct and abuse of authority in the workplace. She was proud that UNICEF had taken strong steps to address the problem and to strengthen policies and practices to prevent such behaviour. She believed that organizational culture change was a challenging task that required the support of all staff and sustained efforts over a longer period.

129. The Chairperson highlighted the following gains for staff: flexible work arrangements, stretch assignments, commitment to the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Duty of Care, and the benefits of a special fund for climate change and accessibility to offices for persons with disabilities.

130. Human resource reform has resulted in increased efforts to collaborate with the Global Staff Association in the issuance or revision of policies. However, the Chairperson felt that the transparency of the recruitment process had been called into question by the discontinuation of the Central Review Body, which had previously reviewed recruitment recommendations before selections were made.

131. On managed mobility and rotation, the Chairperson expressed that a number of staff had ended up not being placed or had been separated from the organization due to their having to compete for positions along with other internal and external applicants. She called upon the Executive Director to decide that all vacant position be first filled by staff on rotation before being advertised.

132. She informed the Board that staff were anxious about the potential loss of jobs because of the United Nations reform process and called upon management to safeguard the well-being of staff.

133. The Chairperson stressed the importance of building on the strong partnership between the Staff Association and management at all levels of the organization. She concluded by saying that it would be her final address to the Board and that she believed the Global Staff Association to be grossly understaffed.

134. On behalf of the Executive Board, the President thanked all UNICEF staff members and expressed his appreciation for their dedication and professionalism. He said that the Board would strive to improve their working conditions and reduce the gap between those working at headquarters and those in the field.

135. A delegation further praised the high level of professionalism of staff and took note of the Chairperson's concerns on the mobility and rotation exercise and the disparity between the emoluments and benefits received by national and international staff members.

136. On behalf of a group, a delegation commented that the most important resource of UNICEF was its people. The delegation also referred to a sense of responsibility towards the well-being of staff and asked the Chairperson how the organization had addressed the mental health of its staff.

137. The Chairperson responded that UNICEF and the United Nations take the issue of mental health very seriously. She recalled a survey on the mental health of all United Nations staff in 2015 that showed high stress levels in the workplace. UNICEF is committed to implementing all seven recommendations that the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy has made to improve the mental health of staff members.

## **K. Other matters**

### **Provisional list of agenda items for the second regular session of 2019**

138. The provisional list of agenda items for the second regular session of 2019 was presented by the Secretary of the Executive Board.

139. The President proposed that in the future the provisional list of agenda items for the following session be defined as its own agenda item to demonstrate the importance that the Board attached to the next session.

## **L. Adoption of draft decisions**

140. The Executive Board adopted decisions 2019/9, 2019/10, 2019/11, 2019/12, 2019/13, 2019/14, 2019/15, 2019/16, 2019/17 and 2019/18 (see annex).

## **M. UNICEF Staff Team Awards and closing statements by the Executive Director of UNICEF and the President of the Executive Board**

141. The Executive Director announced the winners of the 2019 Staff Team Awards which recognized the efforts of UNICEF staff around the world. The awards went to four teams: the Somalia Country Office; the Zalingei suboffice, UNICEF Sudan; the Thailand Country Office; and the Papua New Guinea Country Office.

142. The President joined the Executive Director in congratulating those who received the awards.

143. He commenced his closing remarks with a review of the three days of discussion during the session.

144. He went on to remark that an underlying theme of the session had been partnerships in action confirming that UNICEF is committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in partnership with many actors: Governments, civil society, business, academia, the United Nations family and children and young people.

145. He was proud of the leadership exhibited by UNICEF on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and workplace abuse. He noted the need for a collective approach across all agencies and partner organizations to ensure cohesive and effective responses. The Board had taken note that UNICEF requires additional resources to ensure that this work was embedded throughout its country programmes.

146. He encouraged Member States to come to the next session fully prepared to engage and better guide UNICEF in its work and to continue to examine its own work to gain efficiencies as outlined in the decision on working methods. He recognized the efforts and report of the Core Group on working methods and noted that further negotiations on areas of non-convergence required inclusiveness, participation and transparency. At the same time, the unique characteristics and mandate of each agency should be preserved, and one-size-fits-all approaches should be avoided. He urged Member States to adapt to the changes at hand.

147. The President concluded by reiterating the importance of the November commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

148. In closing, the Executive Director reiterated her appreciation for the Executive Board's guidance and oversight as well as its commitment to rendering its own operations more effective and efficient. She said presentations from UNICEF would be adjusted in keeping with the shorter length of interventions at this session. She committed to including more speakers from partners in future sessions.

149. The Executive Director noted that UNICEF remained committed to the reform of the United Nations development system and would continue to work closely with its sister agencies. She also noted that UNICEF would report on the additional costs of implementing the reform at the first regular session of 2020.

150. The Executive Director affirmed that UNICEF was fully engaged in addressing the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse and remained committed to change at all levels of the organization. She welcomed the opportunity to update the Board on work in this area and said the organization would explore funding modalities to support its commitments, including consideration of the pooling of resources across United Nations agencies.

151. She concluded by thanking the Executive Board for welcoming the initiative to include children's voices at the second regular session, to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Annex

### Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its annual session of 2019

2019/9

#### Working methods

##### *The Executive Board*

1. *Reaffirms* the rules of procedure of the Executive Board of UNICEF;
2. *Welcomes* the written account of the core group of Member States that led the joint consultative process with Member States, in an open, transparent and inclusive manner, with a view to examining the efficiency and quality of its current sessions, as well as the functions of the joint meeting of the Executive Boards in line with decisions 2019/1 and 2018/14;
3. *Recognizes* the technical support provided by the secretariats of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UNICEF, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Food Programme (WFP) Executive Boards to the core group and notes the annex to the written account as prepared by the secretariats;
4. *Stresses* that the overarching principles of the discussion on working methods of the Executive Boards are the preservation of executive guidance and oversight of agencies; avoidance of duplication with the function of the Economic and Social Council operational activities segment and the respective Executive Boards; and respect for the different mandates and characteristics of each agency, fund, programme and entity;
5. *Requests* UNICEF, in collaboration with UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UN-Women and WFP, to organize joint informal briefings/consultations and strongly encourages that they be scheduled within socially acceptable hours to allow the WFP Executive Board to participate from Rome;
6. *Also requests* the secretariat of the UNICEF Executive Board, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UN-Women and WFP, to present initial proposals to improve the working methods of the joint meeting of the Boards, including an optimal timing for convening the joint meeting of the Boards, for consideration by Member States at the second regular session of 2019, mindful that the joint meeting of the Boards does not have decision-making authority and of the need to avoid duplication and overlap with the functions of the Economic and Social Council operational activities segment;
7. *Further requests* that the secretariat propose different alternatives for adjusting the date of the second regular session, mindful that it does not overlap with the other schedules, for consideration by the Executive Board at the second regular session of 2019;
8. *Requests* that an informal meeting of the Presidents of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP, at no cost to the organizations, be held on a regular basis for enhanced harmonization of common issues, and for increased coordination among agencies, funds, programmes and entities and the respective Executive Boards, while bearing in mind that, according to the rules of procedure of the Executive Boards, the Presidents remain under the authority of the respective Executive Boards and do not have the authority to make

decisions on any substantive matters, and that the outcome of the meetings be shared with the wider membership;

9. *Affirms* the need to elect the Bureau members early on to minimize leadership gaps and enhance the efficient functioning of the Presidency and Executive Board at large;

10. *Recommends* that, for continuity and smooth transition between outgoing and incoming Bureaux, whenever appropriate and consistent with the relevant rules of procedure, regional groups could consider taking appropriate measures so that one of the Vice-Chairs/Vice-Presidents of the Bureau can take on the Chair/Presidency and could be effective in that capacity in the following year;

11. *Notes* the need for flexibility on chairing the informal meetings of the Executive Board from the President of the Bureau or one of the Vice-Presidents;

12. *Requests* that the secretariat, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS and UN-Women, continue convening consecutive formal sessions of the Executive Boards in order to avoid gaps between the formal sessions of the various Executive Boards;

13. *Also requests* that the secretariat present practical proposals for improving the efficiency of the sessions of the Executive Board, including by reviewing the agenda items and the Board's efficient consideration of these, for deliberation and consideration by the Executive Board at the second regular session of 2019;

14. *Further requests* that the Executive Board, with the support of the secretariat, make its sessions interactive, while securing the time slot for group and national statements as appropriate and necessary;

15. *Requests* that, while encouraging interactive discussions, any format for enhanced interaction with the heads of the agencies should contain follow-up actions within existing mechanisms;

16. *Encourages* the heads of agencies, funds, programmes and entities participating in Board sessions to provide the full texts of their statements or opening remarks (presentation) online in advance and deliver shorter statements at the Executive Board sessions. The statements and presentations should be concise in highlighting the main issues, evidenced-based and action-oriented in addressing the challenges;

17. *Strongly encourages* the President to enforce implementation of time limits for statements;

18. *Affirms* the participation of diverse stakeholders in Executive Board sessions with full respect of the relevant clauses in the rules of procedure and based on the agreement of the Executive Board, recalls decision 2018/14, paragraph 11, and reaffirms the importance of giving due consideration to gender parity in the composition of panelists participating in the Executive Board;

19. *Requests* the Bureau to decide the destination of field visits two years in advance, while allowing the flexibility to change host countries if circumstances dictated, in order to give host countries as well as agencies as much time as possible to prepare for the visits;

20. *Also requests* the Bureau, assisted by the secretariat, to consult with the Bureaux of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UN-Women and WFP to coordinate for the selection of field visits and to propose harmonized criteria for individual field visits, for evaluation by the Board at the first regular session of 2020;

21. *Further requests* the secretariat of UNICEF to circulate proposed draft decisions to the wider membership at least four weeks prior to each session, at the discretion of the Bureau, and reiterates its strong encouragement to Member States to provide their comments on draft decisions, to the extent possible, prior to the start of the session, with a view to starting substantive consultations on the draft decisions on the first day of negotiations, without pre-empting bringing in additional proposals during negotiations;

22. *Requests* the secretariat, in collaboration with the secretariats of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UN-Women and WFP, to track the implementation of Executive Board decisions using the matrix of common use as attached to the written account of the core group;

23. *Also requests* the secretariat to distribute the minutes of Bureau meetings to members and observers of the Executive Board once these minutes have been approved by the Bureau;

24. *Reiterates* the request that the secretariat of the Executive Board of UNICEF regularly update the joint online calendar of all Board meetings in real time so as to avoid overlap of schedules with other funds and programmes as well as major official meetings, including the Economic and Social Council operational activities segment.

*Annual session*  
*13 June 2019*

## **2019/10**

### **Annual report for 2018 of the Executive Director of UNICEF**

#### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the annual report for 2018 of the Executive Director of UNICEF, including 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 (QCPR); the report on the implementation of the common chapter; and the data companion and scorecard;

2. *Requests* UNICEF to include in future reporting to the Executive Board on the implementation of the QCPR the milestones and targets set out for each reported QCPR indicator;

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.

*Annual session*  
*13 June 2019*

## **2019/11**

### **Annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action**

#### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action ([E/ICEF/2019/12](#));

2. *Welcomes* the continued increase in dialogue between the UNICEF secretariat and the Executive Board on the critical work of UNICEF in humanitarian

action, including through improvements to the annual report on UNICEF humanitarian action and more geographic diversity;

3. *Recalls* its decision 2018/9 and urges UNICEF to include reporting on the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 and the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action in subsequent annual reports on humanitarian action;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to include information on the revision process of the Core Commitments for Children, including a time plan, in the oral update on humanitarian action at the second regular session of 2019.

*Annual session*  
13 June 2019

## **2019/12**

### **UNICEF programme cooperation**

#### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* that the country programme document for the Congo ([E/ICEF/2019/P/L.3](#)), including the aggregate indicative budget, was made available to Member States for their comments and input from 18 March to 5 April 2019, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1 on modifications to procedures for consideration and approval of country programme documentation;

2. *Approves* on a no-objection basis, and in accordance with decision 2014/1, the country programme document for the Congo ([E/ICEF/2019/P/L.3](#)), including the aggregate indicative budget.

*Annual session*  
11 June 2019

## **2019/13**

### **Extensions of ongoing country programmes**

#### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the two-month extension of the country programme for Mali and the first one-year extension of the country programme for Tunisia, which were approved by the Executive Director and are presented in table 1 of document [E/ICEF/2019/P/L.4](#);

2. *Approves* the one-year extension of the country programme for Yemen, following two previous one-year extensions and a previous two-year extension, as presented in table 2 of document [E/ICEF/2019/P/L.4](#).

*Annual session*  
13 June 2019

## **2019/14**

### **Evaluation reports and management responses**

#### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the annual report for 2018 on the evaluation function in UNICEF ([E/ICEF/2019/14](#)) and its management response ([E/ICEF/2019/15](#)), and welcomes the timely implementation of the revised evaluation policy;

2. *Welcomes* that UNICEF had the highest number of evaluations since 2012, and takes note with appreciation of the addition of three senior evaluation specialists at the regional level and the increase in spending on evaluation to 0.8 per cent of total programme expenditure in 2018, and requests UNICEF to reach the target of 1 per cent by the end of 2019, in accordance with its decision 2018/10;

3. *Also welcomes* the continued coordination of the Evaluation Office within the United Nations development system and the good progress on the evaluation of UNICEF activities, but notes with concern a reduction in the evaluation rate in some regions and the substantial increase in management-response actions that are not yet started, and requests UNICEF to address these issues and report back to the Executive Board at the annual session of 2020;

4. *Further welcomes* the summary of corporate evaluations, evaluability assessments, syntheses and reviews completed in 2018 and requests UNICEF to hold an informal briefing on the evaluation on innovation on the margins of the second regular session of 2019 and to present the report and its management response at the first regular session of 2020;

5. *Requests* the Evaluation Office to demonstrate progress in building its capacity to undertake gender-based analysis in evaluations and include this analysis in summary reports to the Executive Board;

6. *Takes note* of the evaluation of the coverage and quality of the UNICEF humanitarian response in complex humanitarian emergencies, its executive summary (E/ICEF/2019/16) and its management response (E/ICEF/2019/17);

7. *Requests* UNICEF to develop structured approaches to accountability towards affected populations and to country-level dialogue with implementing partners about humanitarian principles;

8. *Encourages* all country offices in complex humanitarian emergencies to make use of vulnerability analysis clearly identifying the girls and boys most in need;

9. *Requests* UNICEF to demonstrate progress towards resolving the dilemma of how to balance coverage and equity in complex humanitarian emergencies in the annual report for 2019 on the evaluation function in UNICEF, which will be presented to the Executive Board at its annual session in 2020.

*Annual session  
13 June 2019*

## **2019/15 Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2018, and management response**

### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2018 (E/ICEF/2019/18) and its management response (E/ICEF/2019/19);

2. *Appreciates* the increased activities of the Ethics Office in providing advice and guidance to staff and management on ethical issues, and welcomes the proactive role of the Principal Adviser, Ethics, in promoting ethical standards system-wide and within UNICEF;

3. *Requests* UNICEF to fully implement the UNICEF-related recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in its review of whistle-blower policies



and practices in United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2018/4) and requests the Ethics Office to report on progress at the annual session of 2020;

4. *Recalls* its decision 2018/11 and requests UNICEF to share a summary of the results and recommendations of the Global Staff Survey 2017 with the Executive Board, and to share a similar summary of the upcoming Global Staff Survey 2019 with the Board at its annual session of 2020;

5. *Recalls* its decision 2018/11 and takes note of the Ethics Office's notable increase in activities and requests UNICEF and the Ethics Office to conduct an assessment of the level of resources provided to the Office, with a view to fulfilling its mandate, and requests the Office to present the results to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2020.

*Annual session*  
*13 June 2019*

## **2019/16**

### **Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2018 annual report to the Executive Board, and management response**

#### *The Executive Board*

1. *Takes note* of the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit and Investigations 2018 annual report to the Executive Board (E/ICEF/2019/AB/L.3) and its management response (E/ICEF/2019/AB/L.4) and the report of the Audit Advisory Committee and welcomes the overall opinion of the adequacy and effectiveness of the organization's framework of governance, risk management and control;

2. *Welcomes* the reporting against key performance indicators related to the work of the Office;

3. *Also welcomes* the inclusion in the 2018 annual report to the Executive Board of more-detailed analysis of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries and sexual harassment in the workplace, in accordance with its mandate, including allegations, investigations and actions taken;

4. *Further welcomes* the establishment of the Child Safeguarding Unit within the Office of the Executive Director of UNICEF;

5. *Takes note* of the significant increase in allegations regarding sexual exploitation and abuse, harassment and abuse of authority;

6. *Encourages* UNICEF management, in its reporting on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, to further enhance transparency on the total number of initial reports and on how the actions to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse ensure a victim-centred approach and are aligned with United Nations system-wide efforts;

7. *Acknowledges* the high implementation rate of audit recommendations and takes note of management's development of action plans to address the most-significant risk areas related to programme management, risk management, accountability, supply, logistics and asset management and safety and security;

8. *Notes with concern* the challenge to recover funds from implementing partners;

9. *Encourages* UNICEF to strengthen the systematic prevention and detection of and response to fraud and misconduct in all its forms in accordance with the UNICEF Anti-Fraud Strategy, taking note with concern of the low number of allegations related to fraud;

10. *Welcomes* the recommendation to UNICEF management to simplify the policy architecture for the better understanding of and compliance with organizational policies and manuals by staff;

11. *Requests* the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations to fill all existing vacancies and requests UNICEF to ensure that the Office is adequately resourced.

*Annual session*  
*13 June 2019*

## **2019/17**

### **Update on policies and processes of UNICEF on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment**

#### *The Executive Board*

1. *Recalls* its decisions 2018/8 and 2019/5, and takes note with appreciation of the zero-tolerance approach of the Executive Director to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment, within the organization and system-wide, and welcomes the updates presented at this annual session in this regard;

2. *Requests* that UNICEF present the report of the Independent Task Force on Workplace Gender-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment and Abuse of Authority and its management response at the second regular session of the Executive Board in 2019;

3. *Takes note with appreciation* of the UNICEF strategy to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries and sexual harassment, including actions for victim support, reporting, accountability and partnerships, and stresses the need for adequate resources; and requests that UNICEF present an update on the implementation of the strategy at the annual session of 2020.

*Annual session*  
*13 June 2019*

## **2019/18**

### **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. *Welcomes* the update provided by UNICEF on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) of 31 May 2018 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;

2. *Requests* UNICEF to work towards adequately sequencing entity-specific country programme documents so that the individual programmes derive directly from the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework (now renamed United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework), which is to be prepared and finalized in full consultation and agreement with national Governments and is the most important planning document of the United Nations development system at the country level; and requests UNICEF to provide an update at the next session of the Executive Board on adjustments required;

3. *Also requests* UNICEF to provide, for information at the next session of the Executive Board, a detailed mapping of its regional assets and capacities, in accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/279](#) and mindful of ongoing discussions on the revamping of the regional approach of the United Nations development system;

4. *Welcomes* the preliminary update provided by UNICEF on efficiencies, including through shared business operations and premises; calls upon the Executive Director of UNICEF to continue to take action to ensure the full achievement of efficiency gains and their redeployment in line with relevant existing mandates, including from General Assembly resolutions [71/243](#) of 21 December 2016 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and [72/279](#) on the repositioning of the United Nations development system, as well as to take into account the applicable recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in the report on opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation ([JIU/REP/2018/5](#));

5. *Requests* regular updates to the Executive Board on efficiency gains and their redeployments, through existing reporting mechanisms;

6. *Also requests* UNICEF to continue to support the efforts of the Secretary-General to develop a tracking system to monitor efficiency gains;

7. *Welcomes* that UNICEF contributed its doubled contributions to the resident coordinator cost-sharing, and calls on UNICEF to implement the 1 per cent levy, as applicable, as per the operational guidance for implementing the coordination levy (12 March 2019) issued by the United Nations Development Coordination Office;

8. *Recalls* its decision 2018/15 and notes that the agency-administered option for collecting the coordination levy adds administrative tasks to UNICEF and requires adjustments to agency administrative processes, and requests UNICEF to provide information on the adjustments and to promptly report to the Executive Board on any additional transaction and administrative costs associated with the administration of the levy, within existing reporting;

9. *Also recalls* the importance of funding predictability and urges Member States in a position to do so to prioritize regular resources and multi-year pledges;

10. *Encourages* UNICEF, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), to place special emphasis on the implementation of their respective strategic plans, including the common chapter on joint programming, in accordance with their respective mandates and comparative and collaborative advantages, and to report at the annual session in 2020, including through the midterm reviews of their respective strategic plans, where and how the inter-agency process among the United Nations funds and programmes has led to greater efficiencies and effectiveness.

*Annual session  
13 June 2019*