

INFORMATION NOTE

Update on implementation efforts on the repositioning of the United Nations development system

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UNICEF Executive Board
Annual session 2024

1. Introduction

This information note is presented to the Executive Board pursuant to its decision [2018/15](#), in which UNICEF was requested to provide regular updates to the Board on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [72/279](#). It includes updates on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [76/4](#) on the review of the resident coordinator system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (QCPR). A dedicated report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution [75/233](#) on the QCPR is also presented at this session, as an annex to the annual report for 2023 of the Executive Director of UNICEF.

This information note is accompanied by the complete United Nations development system (UNDS) reform checklist, in conformity with Executive Board decision [2023/15](#). With its standardized format, the checklist was developed by the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in response to Member States' request to facilitate the oversight role of governing bodies. It provides a comprehensive overview of UNICEF adherence to the UNDS reform mandates, including the implementation of the Management and Accountability Framework (MAF); derivation of the country programme documents from the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs or Cooperation Frameworks hereafter); country configuration; multi-country office review; efficiency agenda; dual reporting line and mutual accountability; regional approach; and reform-oriented organizational culture.

In consideration of this new and complementary oversight tool, the present information note is organized by the following topics: results of the UNICEF survey to country representatives; country-level examples of UNICEF work in the context of the reform, covering all seven regions; UNICEF work across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (including country-level examples); consolidation of the UNDS reform; support to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; delivering results at regional level,

including multi-country offices (MCOs) and small island developing States (SIDS); and an update on the Our Common Agenda workstreams.

2. Survey of UNICEF country representatives

Survey representation

For the fourth consecutive year, UNICEF surveyed its country representatives on the implementation of the UNDS reform. The survey, which was submitted in consultation with other United Nations entities, had a response rate of 91 per cent (up from 82 per cent in 2022), the highest to date.

Overall findings

The survey findings show that, since its implementation in 2019, the UNDS reform is fully institutionalized, with some areas that will require longer term consolidation. Within UNICEF, efforts at senior management level to make the organizational culture more reform-oriented have been successful. UNICEF representatives continue to report that the reform has strengthened collaboration within the United Nations country team (UNCT) (66 per cent agreed, up from 58 per cent in 2022; 29 per cent were neutral), which in turn led to increased collective United Nations support to achieve national development results (61 per cent agreed, up from 58 per cent in 2022; 33 per cent were neutral) as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (62 per cent agreed; 29 per cent were neutral).

Relationship with the resident coordinators and support to resident coordinator offices

Eighty-one per cent of UNICEF country representatives reported having a good relationship with the resident coordinators (14 per cent were neutral, 5 per cent saw room for improvement). In the open comments, most respondents described their relationship with the resident coordinator as supportive and collaborative, characterized by open and frequent communication. Appreciation was expressed for the resident coordinators' efforts to promote joint collaboration and support initiatives across agencies. The resident coordinators were recognized as facilitating dialogue between the UNCT and the Government (97 per cent, split between 53 per cent responding "Yes" and 44 per cent "Somewhat") as well as facilitating annual results reporting to the Government (96 per cent, split between 61 per cent "Yes" and 35 per cent "Somewhat"). Nine-two per cent responded that the resident coordinators had sufficient capacity to support coordination (up from 59 per cent in 2022, split between 50 per cent "Yes" and 42 per cent "Somewhat").

Among the challenges mentioned were the following: (a) the lack of continuity in leadership from the resident coordinators, with vacancies and staffing changes impacting the functioning of the resident coordinators' offices; and (b) resident coordinators potentially constraining the autonomy of the United Nations entities, particularly with regard to decision-making processes and engagement with line ministries. While 93 per cent of UNICEF representatives reported having direct access to government counterparts, 24 per cent reported always being informed and invited by the resident coordinators to participate in meetings with line ministries relevant to UNICEF work, while 54 per cent reported sometimes being invited.

UNICEF supports its senior staff who consider pursuing the career path to become a resident coordinator. There are currently six former UNICEF staff serving as resident

coordinators and, in 2023, UNICEF recommended three additional staff members (the maximum allowed yearly quota) to the resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator talent pipeline. One staff member passed the assessment and was placed in the resident coordinator pool.

Funding opportunities and challenges

With regard to resource mobilization, UNICEF country representatives mostly reported no visible change in the organization's ability to mobilize resources from: (a) the public sector (75 per cent); (b) the private sector (88 per cent); and (c) international and regional financial institutions (80 per cent). At the same time, UNICEF continued engaging in Sustainable Development Goals financing discussions and initiatives (90 per cent, split between 53 per cent "Yes" and 37 per cent "Somewhat") as well as in joint and pooled funding (88 per cent, split between 54 per cent "Yes" and 34 per cent "Somewhat").

The resident coordinators supported the United Nations agencies in identifying and accessing joint and pooled funding opportunities (89 per cent, split between 46 per cent "Yes" and 43 per cent "Somewhat"), and 70 per cent of resident coordinators initiated the creation of a country-level multi-partner trust fund (MPTF).

Despite this important progress, 48 per cent of respondents mentioned funding competition as the major obstacle to the success of the reform, as it can lead to mandate creep, affecting collaboration as well as strategic allocation of resources. Among areas for improvement, some representatives asked that the resident coordinators fully embrace their normative roles towards increased equity, ending exclusion and advocating for human rights.

Joint programmes and pooled funds

In 2023, 84 per cent of UNICEF country offices actively participated in United Nations inter-agency pooled funding arrangements. The partnership modalities used include MPTFs, joint programmes, United Nations to United Nations agreements, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and country-based pooled funds. Seventy-one per cent of UNICEF country offices were involved in global pooled funds (such as the Joint SDG Fund, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Spotlight Initiative); 42 per cent in stand-alone joint programming arrangements (country- or global-level joint programmes, but not part of broader pooled funds); 39 per cent in humanitarian pooled funds; 23 per cent in country-level pooled funds (e.g. One UN Fund, Transition Fund, Climate Fund); and 3 per cent in regional pooled funds (e.g. Central African Forest Initiative, Great Lakes Region Cross-Border Fund).

In 2023, UNICEF received \$417.3 million through United Nations inter-agency arrangements, equivalent to 7 per cent of total other resources contributions received from public sector partners, or 5 per cent of total contributions received (including regular resources, other resources, and other resources (emergencies), from both public and private partners). These inter-agency modalities enhance the United Nations system coherence towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and drive integrated and multisectoral responses to development challenges in a streamlined manner across United Nations agencies and with other stakeholders.

Among the benefits of these funding modalities, representatives cited: (a) improved coordination between United Nations agencies, facilitating collaboration, resource mobilization and collective action towards common goals; (b) cross-sectoral coordination, bridging gaps between different sectors, e.g. between social protection and health, leading to a more integrated operational approach; (c) mobilization of additional funds through joint efforts, including successful fundraising through pooled funds and joint initiatives; and (d) in some cases, cost-savings and simplified processes, allowing for more efficient use of resources.

At the same time, the following challenges were identified: (a) labour-intensive processes leading to relatively limited funding; (b) lack of clarity on the criteria used by resident coordinators to select participating United Nations entities and allocation of funds, with the need for a greater focus on mandate and contribution to results; (c) disparities in capacities among agencies; and (d) while done in coordination, work was siloed as opposed to being genuinely integrated.

UNICEF plays a crucial role in addressing some of the issues mentioned above. In April 2024, UNICEF piloted, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Coordination Office (DCO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the MPTF Office, the first inter-agency training on United Nations pooled funds, targeting partnership focal points in the West and Central Africa region from several United Nations entities, including DCO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UNICEF, WHO and UNCTs. The training session generated interest from other regions and other United Nations agencies and will be replicated and expanded in 2024 and beyond.

In addition to providing day-to-day support and guidance to its country, regional and headquarters offices, UNICEF is improving funding arrangements and reporting mechanisms with other United Nations entities, to become more efficient and effective in the delivery of its Strategic Plan and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Collaboration between UNICEF and other United Nations entities also takes place in parallel, without shared funding or transfers of funding.

Results for children

Recognizing that the reform's objective to deliver better, integrated support to Governments in their pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, UNICEF has invested efforts to attain improved results for children. While progress has been moderate, a number of indicators provide an optimistic outlook. They include the following:

- 30 per cent of country representatives (up from 18 per cent in 2022) agreed that the reform has increased the collective United Nations impact on children, 45 per cent remained neutral and 23 per cent disagreed (down from 30 per cent in 2022), with regions such as the Middle East and North Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa scoring 60 and 55 per cent, respectively.
- 39 per cent of representatives (up from 36 per cent in 2022) deemed the resident coordinators and resident coordinators offices able, and 49 per cent somewhat able (down from 55%), to engage on the normative agenda, including children's rights.

- 46 per cent of representatives (up from 39 per cent in 2022) deemed the resident coordinators able and 44 per cent somewhat able (down from 54) to support the work of UNICEF and advocate for its mandate.

In July 2023, the guidance note of the Secretary-General on child rights mainstreaming was formally endorsed by the Secretary-General’s Executive Committee. Drafted by a United Nations core group led by UNICEF and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the system-wide note promotes the mainstreaming of child rights across the United Nations system. It covers policies, programmes and actions that are both external and internal. The note calls on UNCTs to incorporate the full spectrum of child rights as an integral part of all UNSDCFs throughout the planning and programming processes. A task team co-led by UNICEF and OHCHR under the framework of the Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights has been established to provide technical oversight of, and support to, implementation of its provisions.

In collaboration with other United Nations agencies and DCO, UNICEF continues to work on interoperability of its internal results assessment module and UN INFO to reduce the double reporting burden of agencies. This will also enable integrated reporting across the UNDS on results for children.

UNICEF work in the context of United Nations development system reform

Bosnia and Herzegovina: In preparation for the Transforming Education Summit in 2022, Bosnia and Herzegovina formed a significant partnership – involving the Ministry of Education, academia, civil society organizations, parents’ associations, and parents of children with disabilities – to assess the post-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) education landscape and identify common needs and priorities to drive positive change and improvement within the education system. Along with a statement of commitment at the summit, this marked the first countrywide policy position on education in 20 years. UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) played pivotal roles in mobilizing stakeholders, conducting consultations with children and youth, and facilitating advocacy efforts with key decision-makers. The Resident Coordinator supported these advocacy endeavours and their alignment with broader strategic objectives. Strategies included UNICEF and UNESCO collaborating and leading together, with the Resident Coordinator providing additional support for advocacy initiatives.

Jamaica: The Spotlight Initiative addressed three key priority areas in the country within family violence against women and girls: (1) child sexual abuse; (2) intimate partner violence; and (3) discrimination against vulnerable groups. In 2023, family violence was strategically addressed using a life-cycle approach, prioritizing efforts to prevent and address serious socio-cultural norms and discriminatory behaviours and attitudes that fuel family violence against women and girls. Men and boys were involved as agents of change within community mobilization and school interventions. The coordination team for the Initiative is part of the resident coordinator’s office, which strengthened their coordination role among the UNCT. As the lead agency on pillar 3 of the Initiative, preventing violence through evidence-based programmes and campaigns, UNICEF coordinated activities around

community interventions, parenting and family violence, including child discipline. UNICEF actively participated in the joint communication and monitoring and evaluation groups led by the resident coordinator's office in joint planning, reporting, advocacy and communication. The Resident Coordinator co-chaired the initiative's multi-stakeholder steering committee along with the Minister of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, and convened quarterly progress meetings with the heads of United Nations agencies and the coordination team to facilitate decision-making, increase coordination and address bottlenecks. The programme utilized existing United Nations governance and thematic mechanisms like the education working group for in-school interventions, which provided opportunities for collaboration, had buy in from the ministry and helped to reduce duplication and overlap.

Malaysia: UNICEF, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is actively involved in joint programming for youth engagement, with support from the Resident Coordinator The Youth Environment Living Labs (YELL) is a dynamic platform that empowers young Malaysians to actively engage in climate-related and environmental actions. The platform localizes climate narratives, emphasizing indigenous perspectives on nature and the environment while also fostering dialogue between young citizens and decision-makers, creating a space for youth to be effective agents of change in environmental policy and action. The joint programme has demonstrated that greater impact could be achieved at country level through joint United Nations development system initiatives and additional financing. To date, funding of 15 youth-led projects has empowered young people and nearly 850,000 people have been reached through awareness-raising communications. The joint programme also collaborates with Amanah Lestari Alam, a local environmental organization, as well as with the European Union, which made financial contributions to the initiative to connect young Malaysians with local environmental organizations so as to benefit from mentorship and work-shadowing experiences.

Nepal: UNICEF, with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), implemented the joint gender empowerment programme Empowered Women for Prosperous Nepal, supported by the European Union, for which the Resident Coordinator provided oversight and coordination support. As the administrative agent, UNICEF was responsible for recruiting programme coordination staff, managing the overall project and reporting to the donor through established coordination mechanisms. Joint, integrated efforts proved effective in empowering girls and women through a strong campaign to end child marriage, prevent abuse and gender-based violence, empower women, increase access to social protection and provide livelihood opportunities.

Senegal: In 2023, in line with the Secretary-General's global agenda on acceleration of the Sustainable Development Goals and with the support of the United Nations Development Coordination Office, the Resident Coordinator initiated coordination on the six Sustainable Development Goals transitions with the UNCT, prioritizing its focus on these pathways. UNICEF co-leads the education transition with UNESCO,

bringing together other agencies (ILO, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP)) to consolidate key initiatives and projects and proactively engage in social protection, climate change and energy, food systems and digital transformation. Since the Transforming Education Summit in 2022, UNICEF and UNESCO have steered the UNCT approach in pursuing the Transforming Education agenda to support the Government's preparatory national consultations to identify four sectoral priorities. UNICEF further leads in joint initiatives relating to the digital transformation agenda – including the Giga initiative (connecting every school to the Internet) with ITU and in collaboration with the United Nations Capital Development Fund and UNDP.

Syrian Arab Republic: Through the United Nations Strategic Framework for the Syrian Arab Republic, 2022–2024, UNICEF worked closely with the resident coordinator's office to implement United Nations joint workplans, joint programmes and to support the voluntary national review process in collaboration with five other United Nations agencies: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), UNDP, UNFPA, and WFP to deliver tangible and measurable resilience and recovery-oriented results. In addition to helping UNICEF to tackle multiple barriers to national targets, Strategic Plan goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, collaboration with the UNCT also helped to address cross-border challenges. Under the leadership of the resident coordinator's office, UNICEF continued to closely engage in effective and harmonized responses to affected communities, particularly through the implementation the United Nations Joint Programme to Build and Strengthen Urban and Rural Resilience and the Conditions for Recovery in Syria, which targeted communities still witnessing setbacks to life and livelihoods. In close coordination with the resident coordinator's office and the other five other agencies mentioned above, UNICEF education, adolescent development and participation and social policy interventions have been successfully implemented. There is regular tracking of progress and financial analysis of programme expenditure is coordinated through the United Nations monitoring and evaluation working group, which includes the resident coordinator's office, for efficient and effective delivery of results and utilization of funds.

Zambia: Interventions facilitated by the SDG Joint Fund, co-implemented by ILO, UNDP, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, UNFPA and UNICEF, have yielded significant results towards an integrated national financing framework to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. UNICEF played a key role in helping all 116 local authorities to transition from activity-based budgeting to output-based budgeting aligned to actual results, for greater accountability and performance. A revision of the intergovernmental fiscal architecture followed, to promote a more equitable and innovative division of labour between the central and local governments and facilitate the smooth flow of grants and resources. Work with selected local authorities enhanced their understanding of the local development finance landscape and helped them to identify ways to increase their own revenue capacity, yielding lessons to amplify resources for children. All this was made

possible by the spearheading by and support of the Resident Coordinator, who facilitated joint programme initiatives and Sustainable Development Goal funding.

A. Humanitarian-development-peace nexus

As protracted crises, climate change, fragility and conflicts threaten children’s rights, resilient, equitable and inclusive communities are necessary to ensure more sustainable development outcomes for children. Seventy-six per cent of UNICEF representatives answered that they had responded to a crisis in 2023, including natural hazards (floods, severe weather and natural disasters, earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts), fragile political and economic context, and/or refugee and migrant response. Representatives overwhelmingly recognized UNICEF ability to engage in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, as well as the ability of the resident coordinators and their offices to make linkages between development and humanitarian activities. Demonstrating the importance of coordination at the UNCT-level, shared multi-agency understanding of risk and vulnerability integrated into planning processes (e.g. common country analysis, Cooperation Framework, humanitarian needs overview, humanitarian response plan) was the most-used approach to inform planning processes, followed by the mapping of UNICEF comparative advantages.

UNICEF actively engaged in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, where it co-led a humanitarian-development-peace nexus mapping exercise of good practices with the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in humanitarian action. Under the United Nations-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Dialogue to implement the DAC recommendation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, UNICEF helped to further shape the Nexus Academy as a joint effort to build capacity across stakeholders. UNICEF is an active partner of the anticipation hub and co-leads the technical working group on protection, gender and inclusion with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Plan International.

There is a current global emphasis on anticipatory action to reduce and mitigate the impacts of an impending crisis/disaster on vulnerable people, including children and youth. Since December 2023, UNICEF successfully engaged in 15 anticipatory action protocols and projects, 14 collective United Nations projects funded by CERF and 1 project funded by the European Commission’s Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations.

UNICEF is increasingly recognized as a leader for child-responsive disaster risk reduction (DRR), which prioritizes children and young people throughout the entire disaster management cycle, ensuring their individual and collective needs, vulnerabilities and capacities are part of policies, plans and systems within DRR and humanitarian contexts. In 2023, at the eighth meeting of the United Nations Senior Leadership Group on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience, UNICEF secured and began co-leading the first-ever United Nations-wide commitment aimed at supporting Member States in scaling up and systematizing child-responsive DRR and climate change adaptation in their implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

UNICEF DRR interventions extend to remote, fragile, conflict-affected and high-risk contexts. Since 2018, UNICEF has invested over \$250 million in DRR and recovery in more

than 150 countries. These investments are increasing as the need to prevent and recover from disasters grows more urgent each year due to a changing climate and other risk drivers. In 2023, UNICEF worked with 85 Governments to establish or enhance preparedness frameworks to incorporate child rights and needs.

UNICEF work in the context of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus

Armenia: In addressing the refugee crisis, UNICEF Armenia employed emergency approaches while also leveraging existing expertise and partnerships to improve and strengthen the shock-responsiveness of national systems. This resulted in mainstreaming humanitarian programming throughout the regular programme, in line with the nexus. This strategy allowed for explicit reflection of lessons learned from previous emergencies for the development of policy reforms, as well as increasing the government’s capacity for a timely and effective emergency response, in addition to the coordination of the displacement crisis. UNICEF further strengthened the shock-responsiveness of the national social protection system by leading a multisectoral needs assessment of displaced children and mobilizing partner resources for government-led cash support schemes. UNICEF continued to generate evidence and to provide technical assistance to critical gender-responsive and inclusive social policy reforms affecting families and children, including legal and policy framework development, vulnerability assessment system reform and administrative data systems strengthening, in close collaboration with the Government and joint advocacy and action with international financial institutions and other partners.

Benin: Within the new UNSDCF, 2023–2026, UNICEF led the joint programme on resilience and social cohesion with UNDP, UNFPA, WFP and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). UNICEF involvement in the inter-agency preparedness working group resulted in two joint missions in 2023 to respond to emergencies in the north of the country and to enhance inter-agency interventions in Zou (a department in the centre of Benin), led by the Resident Coordinator and the Minister of Home Affairs and Public Security, This contributed to strengthening collaboration between the United Nations and the Government in response to the spillover of violence from the Sahel Region. UNICEF further strengthened its localization approach, signing 33 partnerships with civil society organizations, including 26 with national and local non-governmental organizations. In some instances, UNICEF was joined by UNHCR, WFP and other international organizations in support of local partners, contributing to a “stay and deliver” approach in all parts of Benin, including security-restricted areas. UNICEF promoted the increased capacity in field offices: 48 UNICEF staff, or 34 per cent, are now based in the four northern departments. To pool inter-agency resources, UNICEF signed two memorandums of understanding with UNFPA and WHO for the sharing of office and storage space in Natitingou and Parakou. This additional presence is transforming UNICEF collaboration with decentralized authorities and contributing to a greater understanding and adaptation of programmes based on local context and needs. Moreover, UNICEF has been at the forefront of establishing sectoral humanitarian coordination, such as the nutrition cluster with WFP, WHO and FAO

as well as coordination with the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector with WHO.

Bangladesh: The country is highly prone to emergencies and UNICEF, as co-chair of the UNCT programme management team, led the preparation of a multi-hazard contingency plan. The plan identified multiple issues, such as earthquakes and the increased risk of natural disasters related to climate change and put in place life-saving emergency interventions to provide continuity of critical services, including up-to-date security measures for United Nations staff. The plan incorporated humanitarian, development and civil society-related components, and proposed appropriate coordination mechanisms and crisis task teams.

Libya: UNICEF participated in the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund joint programme on community stabilization in the southern municipalities of Ghāt, Sabhā and Ubari, together with IOM, UNDP, WFP, as well as governmental and non-governmental partners. UNICEF, with other United Nations entities, drafted the joint programme and conducted joint advocacy for funding, providing a pragmatic road map for advancing stabilization and recovery programming in the south of the country, while the Resident Coordinator promoted the programme at headquarters level with donors. The UNSDCF was used to leverage the programme and connect humanitarian and development interventions through the peacebuilding and conflict joint analysis. In the implementation phase, UNICEF strong partnership with the Ministry of Education helped to scale up life skills training in the curriculum in schools across the country. The establishment of child-friendly spaces and community centres helped to promote social cohesion, providing multisectoral services to children and youth. The project focused on building local capacities and adopted an inclusive approach to promote sustainability.

Peru: During the floods that affected the northern part of the country in early 2023, the UNCT, with the support of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and in coordination with all United Nations agencies in the country, launched an immediate joint needs assessment and a joint call for funding from CERF, which were fully integrated with the 'needs and plans of the Government. The Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator led the advocacy and coordination efforts and coordinated a series of field visits, joint assessments and joint responses that supported government capacity. These plans were also integrated in future response plans for El Niño, which is a top national development priority. In addition to UNICEF, FAO, IOM, UNFPA and the United Nations Office for Project Services were also key partners in this effort. UNICEF led the education, nutrition and WASH clusters, providing supplies and services to people in need and resulting in the strengthening of the capacity of government counterparts at the subnational level to respond to similar situations in the future. UNICEF brought its experience from development contexts to support the strengthening of sectoral capacities of subnational counterparts in the areas of health and education, as well as at community-level, with civil society organizations and families.

South Sudan: In Renk County, the influx of an estimated 630,000 displaced persons from the Sudan crisis since April 2023 required a scale up in the UNICEF response to the humanitarian situation. Instead of implementing a humanitarian-focused water

supply system, UNICEF adopted a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach that was buttressed by the UNCT decision to establish area-based coordinators, with delegated authority from the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator. Under the leadership of IOM and UNHCR, in collaboration with the Government of South Sudan, a reception centre and two transit centres were established at Joda (the entry point) and in Renk town, respectively, to facilitate the recuperation and onward transportation of the displaced persons to their final destinations. The daily influx of displaced persons exceeded estimates and the forward transportation was delayed, causing a rise in the number of displaced persons. Recognizing the strain on resources and the need for long-term solutions, UNICEF, partnering with World Vision International, the WASH cluster and local authorities, undertook the rehabilitation and expansion of a dilapidated 500 cubic meters water treatment plant. This critical intervention, extending access to potable water to both transit centres covering humanitarian needs and restoring access to safe drinking water, benefited over 187,000 people, including 105,000 people from the host community and 82,000 refugees and returnees. To further promote peace and social cohesion, UNICEF fostered community engagement and dialogue with traditional and political leaders on effective water use and management practices. The project's sustainability was assured through the handover of management and operational responsibilities, including tariff collection, to the South Sudan Urban Water Corporation in Renk. This holistic intervention demonstrates UNICEF commitment to addressing immediate needs, fostering long-term development and promoting peaceful coexistence in the face of a complex humanitarian crisis in a cost-efficient manner. Similarly, in Malakal, which hosts over 40,000 returnees and internally displaced persons and a transit centre for returnees, UNICEF is working in collaboration with the Government and humanitarian agencies to extend access to safe water to internally displaced persons and returnees who have reclaimed their plots of land and are being resettled as part of implementation of the area-based durable solutions strategy.

3. Support to the consolidation of the United Nations development system reform

A. Management and Accountability Framework

UNICEF senior management is expected to fully adhere to its obligations under the MAF, together with UNCTs and resident coordinators, to deliver development results. This is reflected in the survey results, where 92 per cent of representatives responded that the country office was guided by the MAF in its interactions with the UNCT and resident coordinator at country and regional level.

In an effort to increase knowledge and capacity on the provisions of the MAF, in 2023 UNICEF continued conducting capacity-building sessions at regional management team meetings, as well as during the internal partnerships network meeting in March 2023 in New York, which was attended by 70 staff members from 38 countries, and developed and circulated a suite of internal communication products on the MAF provisions.

The next revision of the MAF will allow the integration of lessons learned from the country representatives of the United Nations entities and the resident coordinators, as well as from the recommendations of relevant evaluations. During the revision, the MAF will be adjusted to increase its utility as an enabler of a harmonized United Nations system in support of achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is important that the MAF continues to clearly reflect the guiding principles of mutual accountability at all levels and collective decision-making through the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

B. Alignment of country programme documents with United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks

The UNSDCF is a centrepiece of the UNDS reform. UNICEF believes that by (a) enhancing the alignment between country programme documents and UNSDCFs; (b) playing an active or leading role in developing common country analyses and (c) ensuring children's situation and needs are reflected in the inter-agency planning process, then the UNDS will be able to advance results for children.

UNICEF contributes to the system-wide, coherent implementation of reform mandates. Working within UNCTs in the context of the Sustainable Development Goal-focused UNSDCFs gives UNICEF the opportunity to elevate the level of results achieved for children within its own goal framework, through strengthened linkages between national development plans, strategies and budgets and the global priorities articulated in the Strategic Plan.

The survey findings demonstrate that UNICEF continues to drive coherence processes forward. In addition to co-chairing UNSDCF results groups and providing substantial support to UNCTs and resident coordinator offices, all representatives were engaged in (a) developing a new or revised common country analysis (with 86 per cent very engaged); (b) the design of the new Cooperation Framework (with 83 per cent very engaged) and (c) the annual United Nations country results report on the implementation of the Cooperation Framework.

UNICEF representatives also recognized the key role played by the resident coordinators in UNSDCF processes, such as: (a) promoting the alignment of UNICEF country programmes with the UNSDCFs; (b) promoting the participation of all UNCT members, guided by their comparative advantages; and (c) promoting coordinated engagement with the Government on the development of the UNSDCF. On a positive note, the number of representatives flagging delays in the development or finalization of the country programme documents caused by the Cooperation Framework processes decreased from 33 per cent to 14 per cent. Causes of delay identified were related to coordination issues, both internal (UNCT), as well as external (Governments).

In 2023, an inter-agency team including DCO, OHCHR, the United Nations System Staff College, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNICEF produced and launched a training course for United Nations personnel on the integration of human rights, leaving no one behind and gender equality and women's empowerment in common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks. A second module will be rolled out in 2024 and will involve additional United Nations entities. UNICEF also supported the roll-out, via global and regional webinars, of an inter-

agency checklist targeting United Nations personnel for the integration of these principles in common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks.

C. Funding the resident coordinator system

In accordance with the agreed funding arrangements for the resident coordinator system, in 2023 UNICEF transferred \$8.1 million in United Nations Sustainable Development Group cost-sharing. It also transferred \$8.5 million in agency-administered coordination levy payments to the United Nations Secretariat, representing almost 20 per cent of the total levy received by DCO (\$43.1 million). For the second consecutive year since its implementation in 2019, levy payments administered by UNICEF exceeded cost-sharing arrangements. As of April 2024, UNICEF has transferred a total of \$37,475,956 in levy payments since its first processing in 2019.

UNICEF remains fully supportive of the existing funding arrangements but believes greater socialization of the 1 per cent levy is necessary among the donor community. In the survey, only 22 per cent of respondents said donors agreed to add the levy amount in addition to the total grant amount, diminishing the net amount of funding received that can be used for programmes. Moreover, administering the levy on behalf of donors adds administrative costs in terms of staff time devoted to negotiations, and to registration, transferring and tracking of levy contributions.

In addition to cost-sharing and levy payments, 78 per cent of survey respondents (or 88 UNICEF country offices) said that their country office provided additional support to the resident coordinators office, in the following manners: 51 country offices (58 per cent) provided in-kind support; 23 (26 per cent) funded personnel; 10 (11 per cent) seconded staff, and 32 (36 per cent) provided some other kind of support, such as acting as resident coordinator a.i. and providing training and leadership on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The sustainability of funding for the resident coordinator system remains a concern for UNICEF and the UNDS. UNICEF has fulfilled its cost-sharing provisions in a timely manner and hopes that the Member States will sustain and increase, in a predictable manner, their contributions to DCO. A strong, fully funded resident coordinator system is in the interest of the entire UNDS and is a necessary condition for a successful and sustainable reform.

D. Efficiency agenda

UNICEF remains engaged and committed to the efficiency agenda and plays a leading role in the roll-out of operational aspects of the UNDS reform. UNICEF co-chairs the inter-agency Business Innovation Group at the Assistant Secretary-General level, and the supporting Reference Group at the D-2 (Director) level, which oversees the practical operational implementation of the efficiency agenda, as well as the efficiency reporting task team at the technical level.

In 2023, UNICEF delivered improved efficiencies through a variety of initiatives and demonstrated savings from ongoing and new initiatives totalling about \$100.7 million, including internal cost savings (equivalent to \$55.1 million) and time savings (equivalent to \$19.1 million); United Nations reform agenda efficiency savings (estimated at \$21.1 million); as well as the use of the United Nations Partner Portal and global long-term

agreements, and global network infrastructure modernization. Since the beginning of the reform in 2019, UNICEF recorded \$321.506.996 savings from efficiencies.

UNICEF is driving the efficiency agenda across every workstream, as outlined in the UNDS reform checklist, and is set to lead service provisioning for the United Nations House in Senegal to all other agencies in the UNCT, as well as jointly with UNOPS in Jordan. The data show that the greatest savings occur from global vertical efficiencies and shared services. UNICEF is also very active in providing services to other United Nations agencies, as well as supporting them as they start their own global shared services, WFP being one example.

4. System-wide support to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 implicitly recognizes a shared struggle in accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the need to operationalize and accelerate the existing QCPR mandates and live up to the tone and vision of the Secretary-General’s 2021 report, *Our Common Agenda*.

UNICEF, together with other United Nations entities, has identified several common and complementary indicators that contribute to inter-agency processes, track system-wide changes and clarify how the entities, including UNICEF, are achieving results in a coherent manner.

In 2023, in an effort to produce tangible and measurable data to assess progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, UNICEF issued the report *Progress On Children’s Well-Being: Centring child rights in the 2030 Agenda*¹, providing an integrated analysis of 48 child-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators, and introducing a benchmarking (by country and indicator) of progress up to date and efforts required to reach the targets over the next seven years. This exercise will allow UNICEF to assess the status of country-level targets in a manner that is comparable across all 48 indicators.

UNICEF also continued to co-lead the Integrated Policy Practitioners’ Network (IPPN) with FAO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNPFA, among others. The IPPN promotes an integrated policy approach, serving as a platform for capacity-building and exchange of ideas. With a global constituency of 3,400 individuals from the United Nations and beyond, the network showcases integrated policy work in action through the monthly Knowledge Cafes. Notably, in 2023, in collaboration with the United Nations System Staff College, the network launched an e-course titled “Applying Integrated Policy Approaches to Accelerate the 2030 Agenda”, with over 1,600 participants enrolled as of April 2024.

In 2023, UNICEF also engaged closely with the UNSDG System-Wide Evaluation Office to further orient the Global SDG Synthesis Coalition in support of UNDS reform efforts, including acceleration of delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Global SDG Synthesis Coalition is an alliance of more than 45 United Nations agencies, Member States and civil society organizations that aims to synthesize rigorous and evaluative evidence

¹ Available at: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/sdg-report-2023/>.

organized around the five pillars of the Sustainable Development Goals – people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. The UNSDG System-Wide Evaluation Office was also represented on the advisory group for the Joint SDG Fund Sustainable Development Goal financing/Integrated National Financing Framework portfolio evaluation and made several contributions to this important evaluation.

In 2024, UNICEF will work with the System-Wide Evaluation Office to identify additional UNICEF evaluation products providing evidence to inform the 2024 QCPR process for reform of the UNDS.

5. Delivering results at the regional level

A. Regional review

UNICEF actively supported the transformation of the regional architecture of the United Nations, initiated by the Secretary-General in the context of the UNDS reform, and focused on five key areas: regional collaborative platforms (RCPs); knowledge management hubs; transparency and results-based management; data and statistics; and regional efficiency initiatives through common back offices.

UNICEF sees clear value in RCPs as unified regional coordination mechanisms and has already taken on a lead role in a number of issue-based coalitions (IBCs) as an opportunity to mainstream children’s rights across regions and to lend support to the overall acceleration of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Nevertheless, the value proposition of the regional reform has not yet been fully realized at country level. When asked whether their UNCT had received support from an IBC, 9 per cent of representatives replied affirmatively, 45 per cent said no, and 46 per cent did not know.

Africa

UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa Regional Offices participated, at regional director level, in periodic strategic reviews and engagements on country situations, including on the Sudan crisis, in addition to engaging in the annual RCP meetings and retreat. UNICEF continued to engage and contribute to the Africa Continental Data Strategy through the work of the IBC, as an opportunity to strengthen national data systems and system strengthening. The IBC continued to focus its work on data analysis needed for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals agenda and the leave no one behind programming principle, with a focus on improved coordination to support UNSDCF processes. On education, UNICEF continued to engage in providing support to countries with their implementation of the Transforming Education Summit commitments. The IBC questioned how it could align its work with the Sustainable Development Goal platform activities, as this was seen an opportunity to bring together all stakeholders within a broad-based partnership framework, as well as an opportunity for joint support to the African Union youth programmes. UNICEF contributed to the development of technical guidance in support of missions to several countries in their efforts to leverage new technologies and enable digital learning. UNICEF also participated in the IBC task force on knowledge management in an effort to achieve inter-agency goals, such as the establishment of a one-stop knowledge resources hub. Finally, the Africa Climate Summit 2023 last September provided an important moment for UNICEF and the United Nations Environment

Programme to strengthen their partnership through the joint launch of the Africa report and advocacy brief *Time to Act*, and to jointly organize side events on education, green skills and jobs for the green economy. Amid the worsening impacts of climate change, UNICEF and UNDP established a joint collaboration agreement on water security in the Horn of Africa.

Asia-Pacific

UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia Regional Offices are represented in the Asia-Pacific regional coordination mechanism. In 2023, UNICEF co-chaired the coalition on inclusive economic growth and recovery together with UNDP and participated in the other three coalitions (raising ambitions on climate actions; building resilience and promoting human rights; and gender equality and women’s empowerment). The coalition on inclusive economic growth and recovery was broadened to also include economic shocks and social protection. The coalition supported UNCTs in providing technical and advisory support on jobs and social protection for just transition, and in strengthening regional cooperation on social protection by demonstrating how policy advocacy for increased child benefits could help reduce poverty. The IBC also responded to the financial and economic crisis in Sri Lanka through a joint assessment of available resources and potential financing policies to inform high-level dialogues on closing financing gaps in social protection. UNICEF continued its active participation in the peer support group mechanism, providing guidance and quality assurance support for UNSDCFs, as well as its participation in the working group on Sustainable Development Goals data and statistics. UNICEF also continued to provide support to the Asia-Pacific Knowledge Management Hub.

Europe

UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office continued to engage in seven IBCs and co-chaired three of them. UNICEF played an active role in the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development in 2023, notably through co-organizing a youth pre-meeting to equip young delegates for robust participation in each Sustainable Development Goal round table. Additionally, UNICEF made significant contributions to various sessions, including those focused on fostering effective partnerships for digital transformation and a session on social protection, climate and poverty. Collaborative efforts were undertaken in co-organizing panel discussions addressing climate change mitigation within food systems, and policy frameworks targeting climate risks and biodiversity loss. Furthermore, UNICEF remained actively engaged in the United Nations digital transformation working group, playing a key role in developing the digital skills compendium and collaborating with UNCT to strengthen digital transformation efforts across various countries in the region. In alignment with the endorsement by the Conference of European Statisticians of the Guidance on the improvement of statistics on children, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and UNICEF jointly convened an expert meeting on children in 2024. This gathering coincided with the UNICEF TransMonEE (Transformative Monitoring for Enhanced Equity) network meeting, strategically leveraging thematic and geographic synergies for enhanced impact.

Latin America and the Caribbean

UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office has co-chaired the RCP working group on youth, since May 2023. The working group, which is integrated by 15 United Nations entities, provides support to UNCTs to strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Youth Strategy and promote initiatives that address the demands and needs of young people in the region. This aims to (a) improve inter-agency collaboration at UNCT level on adolescents and youth; (b) promote spaces for participation of adolescents and youth regionally and globally to advance the 2030 Agenda; and (c) establish intergenerational dialogue to advance youth, peace and security. In 2023, the group co-hosted the Regional Intergenerational Meeting on Youth, Peace and Security with the aim to advance the consolidation of a regional narrative on youth, peace and security and develop a regional road map to promote the narrative's implementation at national level. To commemorate International Youth Day in 2023, the group created an inter-agency social media package to support UNCTs and resident coordinators in communicating cohesive and coordinated key messages across United Nations agencies. The group also provided technical and logistics support to the organization of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum, including the LAC regional breakout session and the Youth Forum in the framework of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean for Sustainable Development 2023. In 2023, UNICEF co-chaired the IBC on governance for peace, justice and strong institutions and continued to participate in the working group on partnerships and communications, co-chaired by UNDP and UN-Habitat.

Middle East and North Africa

UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office continued to co-convene two IBCs: one on education (Learning to Earning), with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and one on jobs and social protection with ILO. The UNICEF Regional Office continued to engage in other key IBCs such as climate change and food systems. The social protection IBC has played the leading role in articulating the UNDS engagement with social protection reforms in the region, advising on the contextualization and adoption of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions in the Arab Region. In 2023, the IBC supported UNCTs in advancing on the Global Accelerator and its priorities in Iraq, Jordan and Morocco; supported consolidation of TRANSFORM, an innovative regional capacity development tool for social protection; and convened humanitarian and development actors on coordination of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in social protection. In 2024, the IBC will organize a technical meeting to follow-up on the Arab Ministerial Forum 2021 and will assess the status, identify constraints and accelerate progress towards the commitments articulated in the Ministerial Forum Declaration. This will also serve as an important opportunity to generate more awareness and demand for the Global Accelerator; undertake a strategic review meeting of the TRANSFORM social protection capacity building initiative; and ensure its deeper adaptation to the realities of the region and the needs of the Member States and the UNCT. Under the IBC on education, UNESCO, UNFPA and UNICEF, together with ILO and UNDP, will jointly convene the 2024 Regional High-Level Meeting in Tunisia to deliver two tangible products: (a) renewed national voluntary commitments on policy and regulatory frameworks with a focus on young people's learning, skills development and transition to decent work; and (b) Middle East

and North Africa/Arab States regional contributions to the Summit of the Future, in particular for chapter IV of the Pact for the Future on youth and future generations.

B. Multi-country offices and small island developing States

Notwithstanding their intrinsic complexities and unique vulnerabilities, UNICEF continued to make progress towards supporting MCOs and SIDS, in line with the commitments outlined in the 2019 review of United Nations multi-country offices. UNICEF manages two major multi-country programmes: the Eastern Caribbean Area Office (12 countries and territories) and the Pacific Area Office (14 countries and territories), and has the added challenge of working with three resident coordinators and their offices. In line with the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Frameworks, UNICEF multi-country programmes are fully aligned with and contribute to the national development plans of the countries and territories they cover.

In the Eastern Caribbean, UNICEF co-chaired the United Nations emergency technical team for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, which was instrumental in strengthening strategic approaches to working with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), implementing partners and other stakeholders in the region. Under UNICEF leadership, the relationship between the emergency technical team and CDEMA was fostered and a joint technical workshop was held in January 2024 to bolster interoperability between the two entities. The first ever emergency technical team retreat was held to evaluate the progress of the inter-agency group, identify key initiatives and finalize key documents, including a plan of action and the Hurricane Contingency Plan. UNICEF, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and UNFPA led the establishment of a United Nations Data Group to strengthen joint work on data in the Eastern Caribbean context. UNICEF and UNFPA led the survey with United Nations agencies (ECLAC, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), UNDP and UN-Women) to develop a joint strategy and plans to close data gaps in the Eastern Caribbean.

UNICEF partnered with PAHO, UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women to implement the European Union-funded Spotlight Initiative in Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago. Joint efforts included several interventions to support Governments and civil society organizations in preventing domestic violence by raising awareness and continuing to advocate for, and support, laws and policies, as well as improving quality essential services for survivors. UNICEF also worked with ILO, UNESCO and WFP under the SDG Fund to implement the second year of the joint programme Resilient Caribbean, strengthening institutional capacities for social assistance delivery; reinforcing linkages between contributory and non-contributory social protection; promoting the extension of social security coverage to the informal sector, and empowering young people and community youth leaders to develop the skills required to enter the labour market in Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Grenada, and Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Under the Giga initiative, UNICEF, the International Telecommunication Union and ministries of education spearheaded data collection, visualization and advocacy for connectivity in over 1,800 schools.

In the Pacific region, UNICEF is partnering with UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women to deliver the Spotlight Initiative in Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands and

Vanuatu. In 2023, following the visit of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children to Fiji and Solomon Islands, and as the Initiative was coming to a close, recommendations were made to increase the integration of programming on violence against children and violence against women. As a result, the UNCT, in line with the global country programme strategy, established a working group that has identified areas for integrated programming starting in 2024.

UNICEF is one of five United Nations entities officially tasked to support the implementation of the Pacific Regional Education Framework that promotes inclusive learning opportunities and assists 15 Pacific Islands Forum states to operationalize their commitments to raise the quality of education, enhance the education outcomes of learners and produce high-quality graduates able to contribute economically and socially to their communities. Important coordination also exists with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Pacific Disability Forum.

In addition to its ongoing work with national statistical offices across the Pacific, through inter-agency collaboration with OHCHR, UNFPA, WHO and the resident coordinator offices, UNICEF continues to work on monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, social protection, social inclusion, peacebuilding and leaving no one behind. UNICEF is an active member of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board and the Regional Reference Group on Disability, and has partnered with the national statistical offices to conduct multidimensional child deprivation analyses to improve the quality and relevance of child poverty estimates in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tokelau and Tuvalu.

The 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States, taking place in May 2024, will be preceded by a child and youth action summit co-hosted by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, the Ashley Lashley Foundation and UNICEF. For UNICEF, addressing the needs of SIDS includes responding to current social, cultural, environmental, or economic challenges, as well as safeguarding children's futures and protecting future generations. Tailored short- and long-term solutions to address specific needs and contexts in each SIDS for a sustainable, equitable and resilient future, especially for the most vulnerable children. Ensuring that social services are functional and resilient, and that children and young people are empowered and actively involved in solutions, must be a key focus of the outcomes of the conference. UNICEF supports the forthcoming outcome document of the conference, which is informed by children and young people in SIDS to confront the escalating challenges of climate change, disasters and economic shocks, seeks to increase access to education and comprehensive health care, improve poverty mitigation and reduction strategies, work towards protection from all forms of violence and increase access to digital technology, adequate transportation and infrastructure and clean water.

6. Our Common Agenda workstreams

A. SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future

The 2023 SDG Summit marked the midpoint to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and represented a key opportunity for the UNDS to advocate for accelerating progress towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In the lead-up to the Summit, UNICEF, as part of United Nations-wide collaboration, contributed and

supported preparations through Sustainable Development Goal round tables that brought together Governments, civil society and other stakeholders to identify pathways and key commitments. UNICEF hosted the signature event Champions for Children: Children at the Heart of the SDGs, which was attended by over 150 high-level guests for an inspirational evening of commitments to children and a focus on solutions. Despite a large focus on a whole-of-society approach for the achievements of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, direct mention of children’s rights was noticeably absent from the political declaration. Nevertheless, UNICEF continues working towards the realization of the 19 child-centric Sustainable Development Goals of which it is custodian or co-custodian.

The Summit of the Future in September 2024 will mark another critical opportunity to champion the child rights agenda. UNICEF is working closely with the Member States, including the Group of Friends of Children and the Sustainable Development Goals, to advocate for the inclusion of children’s rights in the outcome document (the Pact for the Future) as well as its annexes: the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations. UNICEF will continue seeking support from the Member States for public and private investment in social services for children. This is essential to advancing the rights of every child and to accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. The organization will also continue advocating for the inclusion of children as critical stakeholders before, during and after the Summit. Following the adoption of the outcome document and its annexes by Member States, UNICEF will work with regional and country offices to support their implementation and follow up.

A. Six transitions: Investment pathways to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals

The six transitions – food systems; energy access and affordability; digital connectivity; education; jobs and social protection; climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution – are crucial aspects of sustainable development and have been identified for their potential to have transformative effects on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. These transitions are supported by four “engine room” actions – policy and regulatory framework shifts; project identification and development; financing convening; capacity-building – are essential for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals as they provide a structure for UNCTs to support countries in their efforts to achieve the Goals. The resident coordinators and UNCTs will play a significant role in driving these actions, harnessing the expertise and networks of the entire UNDS to convene Governments and stakeholders to accelerate progress towards the Goals. UNICEF has created and shared internal guidance on the implementation of the six transitions at country and regional level. Tested in selected countries, the guidance provides strategic recommendations for UNICEF to leverage accelerated progress for children towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the regional and country level.

7. Conclusion

Since the last update to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2023, UNICEF has continued to play a pivotal role in the repositioned UNDS and to leverage the reform as an opportunity to accelerate results for children.

The year 2024 will be crucial for the UNDS and its support to Governments in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Several milestones will determine the future – and the success – of collective action. At headquarters level, UNICEF has been actively engaged in the DCO-led negotiations of the new funding compact. The organization looks forward to Member States’ endorsement and consequent operationalization of the compact, with the hope that its renewed format will enable full implementation of the shared commitments. UNICEF also looks forward to the outcomes of Member States’ consultations on a fully funded resident coordinator system – the cornerstone of a functional and performant UNDS. Finally, UNICEF is eager to engage with and support Member States in their negotiation of the QCPR, which will guide the UNDS over the next four years.

UNICEF also looks forward to supporting all resident coordinators and UNCTs with the implementation of the Secretary General’s guidance note on child rights mainstreaming throughout all programming. The organization sees this as pivotal recognition that addressing child rights throughout the work of the United Nations, including in the context of the six transitions, is critical as it focuses global efforts on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Internally, UNICEF will prepare the fifth iteration of its annual survey for UNICEF representatives on UNDS reform. The findings will continue to inform the constructive engagement of UNICEF with DCO and other United Nations entities, as well as high-quality and comprehensive reporting to the Executive Board, facilitating its oversight function on the implementation of the reform.
