



Statement of the NGO Committee on UNICEF during the UNICEF Executive Board Annual Session, UNHQ, New York – June 11-13, 2019

Mr. President, Ms. Executive Director Fore, Vice Presidents, and Distinguished Members of the Board,

Having reviewed the Annual Report for 2018 of the Executive Director of UNICEF, the membership of the NGO Committee on UNICEF, and especially its Advisory group members SOS Children's Villages, International Federation for Family Development, and Childhood Education International recognize UNICEF's widespread efforts to make global improvements in the five goal areas of the current strategic plan.

There is still much progress to be made. It is of grave concern to us that when reviewing the data in the annual report, the principle of reaching the furthest behind may not be realized by 2021, making the 2030 agenda that much more difficult to achieve.

Many of our committee's members maintain grassroots work and / or advocacy efforts towards SDG 4: Quality Education. UNICEF's current strategic plan in "Goal Area 2: Every Child Learns" mirrors the commitment of the UN to SDG 4. Remarkably, UNICEF had Goal Area 2 programs in 144 countries. More children are in school than ever before, but progress has plateaued. 175 million children are not enrolled in pre-primary education.

We must do better. All children, especially those living with overlapping vulnerabilities, have the right to quality education.

UNICEF and member states have opportunities for partnership that have not yet been executed. UNICEF and member states must improve efforts to join with Civil Society Organizations towards stronger partnerships in order to reach the strategic plan objectives and the SDGs. Together we can engage with innovative solutions utilizing AI, and advocate for family-friendly policy initiatives to foster investment from families, businesses and economies in early childhood development. Our children **cannot wait**.

Disaggregating emergency response measures, child right advocacy, humanitarian efforts, and SDG implementation is costly and inefficient. Let us implement best practices and have UNICEF and member states partner with NGOs for the advancement of the rights of every child. Many NGOs are highly specialized in certain goal areas and can provide expertise and record outcomes from the field. We would be glad to liaise with UNICEF and member states after the executive board meetings to link the appropriate NGOs to the outstanding needs of children in program countries.

The NGO Committee on UNICEF stands ready to continue our partnership, collaboration, and dialogue with UNICEF and its Executive Board to ensure better outcomes for children.

Thank you.