



Statement of the NGO Committee on UNICEF during the UNICEF Executive Board First Regular Session, UNHQ, New York - February 5-7, 2019

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

This year 2019 marks the 30th anniversary on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 10th anniversary of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. As you have noted, we are presented with special and unique opportunities to celebrate the world's progress and commitments made in accordance to the convention on the rights of the child. However, as a committee promoting the common good that is children's rights, we also realize that this year is not just one of celebration, but of evaluation. We must not only examine the difference between where we were and where we are, but also between where we are now and where we ought to be.

We know that children are often left the furthest behind- particularly those impacted by poverty, inequality, loss of parental care, violence, displacement, physical, mental, or emotional disabilities, natural disasters and other conflict affected and fragile settings. These factors and others affect a child's health and ability to survive and thrive which has lifelong implications and create higher risks for childhood death. These challenges also create higher propensities for a child to be out of school, again with long-term consequences for the child.

We thank the members of the Executive Board for their notable attention and resources given to the imperative issue of out-of school children, such as support of the Out-of-School Children Initiative, or OOSCI. However, as noted in the update on the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021, the world's poorest children are still "5 times more likely to be out of school." By increasing the resources and political will for universal basic education, current education initiatives may be sustained and SDG#4 on inclusive and equitable quality education can be realized. SDG#4 is a vital driver in achieving each of the 17 goals and many of our committee's member organizations work in this area. For these reasons we support the recommendation of the executive summary of the formative evaluation on the initiative to expand the partnerships of this program so that we might work together towards 2030.

Policies that truly improve the lives of even the most disadvantaged children are most effective when implemented at all levels, and when nations view child rights and SDGs as feasible objectives rather than unreachable asks. We urge all member states to implement child-centered policies with urgency so that our common goals as child rights advocates can be realized.

We also urge you to include children's voices when creating these policies meant to solve child related issues. Meaningful and safe child participation in all matters that affect them is a fundamental child right, as articulated in Article 12 of the CRC, and yet it is rarely realized.

We, the NGO Committee on UNICEF, remain steadfast in our commitment to collaborate with you all in the multifaceted task of upholding the entirety of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to the highest standard; a standard that is rights based, and therefore, a standard in which no child can be left behind. We are committed to working towards this aim by building on our own field experiences and utilizing the committee's extensive networks and programs. While executing our steps forward, we are eager to continue our partnership with UNICEF and welcome continued collaboration and dialogue.

Thank you for your time and all the best to you this year.