

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
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Joint Boards Remarks
May 29, 2020

From the very start of the pandemic, our agencies have come together to support children and families.

This work builds on some of the exciting joint efforts we've undertaken over the last year to save both cost and staff time, while achieving efficiencies.

Like our work with UNDP to align our financing instruments — including to finance solar energy systems. Working as one will not only significantly reduce staff time for our agencies to develop these instruments, but will also provide an opportunity to reach more people at a larger geographic scale.

Another example is our work with WFP to simplify and co-ordinate the procurement, delivery and distribution of ready-to-use food to prevent and treat malnutrition. Joint work that could save up to 30 per cent in health care training costs and up to \$12.5 million — or 10 per cent — in procurement costs in the medium-term.

Across the system, we've brought this same spirit of collaboration to our COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

From shaping contextualized health responses that fit the needs of each community...to our joint work on supplies, including a UN-wide joint tender process to urgently access critical items...to our work with WFP on school-feeding programmes and treatment of malnutrition...to our work with UNDP, Microsoft and the University of Cambridge to provide distance learning online, and on TV and radio, to children in East Timor and elsewhere.

As we scale-up our immediate response, we are also focusing on the long-term needs of communities. And doing so together.

For example, UNICEF is proud to be working shoulder-to-shoulder with our agency partners on the SDG Fund and the Secretary General's Multi-Partner Trust Fund for COVID-19. It represents an important opportunity to strengthen systems, including social protection systems, for the future. To "build back better" as we respond to this immediate health crisis.

We're also working with UNDP to bring together our social policy and analytical tools to ensure that the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable are at the heart of recovery efforts and any financial stimulus.

In Argentina and Moldova, we're working with UNFPA and WHO to ensure that data around COVID-19 surveillance and response systems are disaggregated by age, sex, pregnancy status and disability.

In Kenya, we're working with UNOPS to train health workers.

On education — as authorities look to re-open schools in the months ahead, UNICEF joined UNESCO, the World Bank and WFP last month to publish the Framework for Re-opening Schools. It provides governments with guidance on everything from distance-learning tools, to how they can ensure that the most vulnerable children are getting the education they deserve.

On gender — we're working with UN Women in Honduras, Papua New Guinea, Liberia and elsewhere on data and programming to address the rising threat of gender-based violence during the pandemic.

On social protection — we worked with UN Women and ILO to develop similar guidance for employers on family-friendly policies and other good workplace practices to support their employees.

Throughout, we will rely on guidance and support of Member States.

In recent years, our agencies have heard your call to reform the UN Development System through greater system collaboration.

Through our joint work before the pandemic — and now as we support communities as they recover from it — we are living up to this commitment.

The lessons learned from this work will help all of our agencies as we begin developing new Strategic Plans. These plans will be fully aligned with our UNDS reform commitments — including as Regional Coordinators help ensure an aligned and tailored approach to our work in communities around the world. An alignment we're already seeing as UN Country Teams come together to conduct joint analyses, planning, programming and resources mobilization in support of our COVID-19 response.

In fact, above all, what our agencies require is flexible funding to continue all of this important work — to address COVID-19, help communities build back better, and continue our pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals.

At the same time, we urge all governments to continue prioritizing investments in all of the elements of strong, sustainable societies that can support our youngest citizens. Water, digital connectivity for every school and every community, mental health, ending violence, educating girls — all of these elements demand and deserve investment. UNICEF and the entire UN family stand ready to support you in all of this work.

So, let's continue our essential work to support children and their communities as they respond, recover and re-build in the years ahead.

Thank you.
