

Input UNICEF policy consultation; development cooperation

- UNICEF commends the global leadership and strong voice of the Netherlands in advocating for protection of the rights of children and for gender equality. Globally, 426 million children and counting live in conflict zones -- more children than at any time in UNICEF's 75-year history. Meanwhile, the number of climate-related disasters has tripled in the last 30 years, with a profound impact on children. Approximately 1 billion children – nearly half the world's children – live in countries classified as at extremely high-risk to the impacts of climate change. More than 50 countries will not meet the under-five mortality target by 2030 and more than 60 countries will miss the neonatal mortality target without immediate action.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the crisis of early childhood care and learning, interrupting services and further straining the capacities of families, communities, parents and caregivers to provide responsive care and feeding. Meanwhile, children face a triple burden of malnutrition – undernutrition in the form of stunting and wasting, micronutrient deficiencies, and a rapidly increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity. Malnutrition leaves one in three children under 5 years old, or 200 million children, not growing well, while at least two in three children aged 6 to 23 months are not fed the minimum diet they need to grow, develop and learn to their full potential. The global WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) needs remain huge, 2 billion people lack safely managed drinking water, 3.6 billion lack safely managed sanitation, and 2.3 billion lack basic handwashing facilities with soap and water available (JMP, 2021).
- **Core funding** - The Netherlands government and UNICEF are strong partners in promoting the rights and wellbeing of children globally, especially the most vulnerable children. As a partner, the Dutch government is among UNICEF's top 10 government funders. Of the total annual Dutch contributions to UNICEF, between 20% to 25 % in the past few years has been unrestricted core funding, and this is an area where the Netherlands can continue to show more leadership by championing the Funding Compact commitment of 30 per cent core resource share.
- This core resources contribution is indispensable as it enables UNICEF to achieve the greatest impact for the most vulnerable children based on needs alone. With its sustained presence across 190 countries around the world, UNICEF works for all children globally, even in the most remote and sometimes forgotten areas. With the Dutch support, UNICEF works across the entire childhood from birth through adolescence, innovates and scales up proven solutions globally, and responds rapidly in emergencies and rebuilds thereafter.
- **Use of new and bold partnership modalities.** We encourage greater use of global and country thematic funding modality by the Netherlands rather than maintaining a traditional project-based earmarked funding for different sector and thematic priorities.
- **Building on shared priorities** - The Netherlands is a strong partner to UNICEF in water and sanitation, humanitarian assistance, nutrition, and migration with a focus on education and child protection. This support is ever more critical for building back better after COVID-19, and advancing gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. UNICEF prioritizes girls and women across all its programmes and in its advocacy, with a focus on programmes that support and empower adolescent girls' learning and development, promote menstrual health and hygiene; address child marriage and FGM; and reduce and prevent gender-based violence.

- **UNICEF's Children's Climate Risk Index** reveals that 1 billion children are at 'extremely high risk' of the impacts of climate change. As a high-quality donor to UNICEF, the Netherlands directly supports climate action which is integrated into UNICEF programmes. For example: UNICEF improves water and sanitation services in communities so they are climate-resilient and the carbon footprint is reduced; UNICEF improves the accessibility of education through resilient schools and sustainability education; building sustainable food systems for children, and UNICEF improves the climate resilience and quality of health services by responding to pollution and implementing sustainable energy and disaster risk reduction services.
- The Netherlands could take on stronger role in addressing the **education consequences of COVID-19** for children especially for girls. To address the learning crisis requires developing strategic programmes that embed a gender transformative approach to equip children and young people, teachers and other stakeholders to challenge power relations. This approach also promotes holistic multi-sectoral programmes that work to eliminate the multi-faceted barriers to girls' education.
- The Netherlands could strengthen its role in ensuring that investments in **primary healthcare** are made at the requisite level required to curtail collateral damage caused by the pandemic, position countries to protect the progress made to date, and ensure all women and children can survive and thrive. Strengthened health systems, including health workforce and infrastructure, are vital to provide equitable access to healthcare, promote peace and build resilience.
- The Netherlands government is supporting a groundbreaking multiyear partnership on **migration** (2019–2023): PROSPECTS. This is a bold partnership to drive alternative and innovative learning-to-earning pathways for youth on the move.
- UNICEF values the position of the Netherlands as a strong supporter of the **humanitarian reforms** through the Grand Bargain and the reform of the UN Development System.
- UNICEF welcomes the intention of the Netherlands government to remain committed to contributing to **ACT-A and COVAX**.
- UNICEF welcomes the proposals of new strategies for **Africa and global health** and look forward to contributing and sharing our experiences and inputs.
- **Multilateral organisations** are a valuable vehicle for the Dutch government to achieve impact at scale as these organisations have a global presence, the power to invest in system change, advance the global human rights agenda, the strength to demonstrate thought leadership and play a leading role in data driven development cooperation policies at global level.
- UNICEF supports the focus on **mandatory human rights due diligence** as a requisite for the Dutch ambitions in trade and development. UNICEF stresses the necessity to integrate this with investments in social services development, be it in quality education, social norms change or other child protection systems. While the Dutch government has continuously invested in sectoral social services in the South, more impact can be achieved if the Dutch government scales up and promotes programmes that invest **in sustainable trade and responsible supply chains in tandem with social services developments within an area-based approach**. This is best achieved through intergovernmental collaboration and in multi stakeholder partnerships. Such integrated approaches will deliver structural socio-economic improvements and an equal level

playing field for partners (cf WNCB programme). UNICEF is well placed with boots on the ground and influence in the policy domain to make this happen.