

## UNICEF presentation of WFFC report to ECOSOC, 10 June

- Good morning Excellencies and distinguished delegates.
- It is my honour to introduce the Secretary-General's report on the follow-up to the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly on children. This biennial report assesses the progress made in 2022 and 2023 toward creating a world fit for children; identifies persistent gaps; and highlights the strategic shifts needed to accelerate results for children as we approach 2030.
- Only one third of child-related SDG indicators are on track for 2030. While the overall situation of children has improved, there are still setbacks in under-5 mortality, stunting, and access to education due to the compounding impacts of COVID-19, conflict, and climate crises.
- In 2023 alone, the number of people needing humanitarian assistance reached a record 364 million—with grave violations against children at their highest ever.
- The report's analysis is organized along five strategic dimensions that are critical for accelerating results for children:
- **First**, it emphasizes the importance of planning processes that integrate child rights across all levels of policy and programming. This includes calls for a shift away from fragmented, project-based financing toward predictable, long-term investments that strengthen child-centred systems.
- **Second**, it underscores the need to fully implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly by addressing systemic discrimination, upholding legal protections, and ensuring that even in times of crisis, children are seen and treated as rights holders, not passive recipients.
- **Third**, the report calls for more equitable and sustained partnerships and funding to ensure results reach the most marginalized.
- **Fourth**, on data and monitoring, there has been progress such as on tools to track violence against children and child poverty, however significant data gaps remain.
- **Finally**, the report highlights the power of participation: around the world, children and young people are increasingly advocating for their rights, especially in areas like climate action; yet, legal and structural barriers still limit their voices.
- Looking ahead, the report calls for urgent and coordinated action to accelerate progress, especially as we enter the final stretch toward 2030.
- It highlights **six** key transitions identified by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group that can catalyze results for children. These include:
  - transforming food systems to combat malnutrition and reduce child mortality.
  - ensuring access to clean and sustainable energy to protect children from pollution and service disruptions.
  - closing the digital divide, particularly for girls, so that all children can benefit from connected learning and opportunities.

- reimagining education through digital tools, education in emergencies, inclusive curricula, and expanded early childhood programmes.
- expanding decent jobs and social protection as essential mechanisms to breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty.
- Finally, the report emphasizes that children must be central to the response to the triple planetary crisis—climate hazards, biodiversity loss, and pollution—as they are both the most affected and the least responsible.
- The overarching message is clear: children must be at the heart of our development agenda, not only as beneficiaries, but also as active participants and rights holders to whom we are all accountable.
- Now is the time to course correct and invest boldly in a world truly fit for children, today and future generations.