

Statement by Mr. Manuel Fontaine, Director EMOPS, UNICEF

Grand bargain annual meeting

15th June 2021

Dear Principals and Sherpas of the Grand Bargain

I would like to thank Minister Sigrid Kaag for her leadership as Eminent Person and welcome Jan Egeland.

UNICEF acknowledges the collective progress in operationalizing the GB Commitments. Refocusing our attention to more strategic commitments back in 2018 helped sustaining engagement and progressing on some issues such as accountability to the affected population, localization, cash programming and joint needs analysis. However, lessons from grand bargain 1.0 show that we are still falling short of seeing a real change in reducing the gaps between needs and financing. While the humanitarian needs have driven inter-agency appeals to double since 2016, the lack of progress on widening the resource base of the existing humanitarian system is concerning as the bulk of support to this date is still very dependent on traditional humanitarian donors.

Risk aversion and perceptions, affecting mutual trust, seem to be undermining our efforts. Increased Conditionalities are threatening a principled humanitarian response. We hope that this important topic will receive the attention it requires as we move forward with grand bargain 2.0.

As a principled humanitarian actor, a frontline responder, and a partner, UNICEF is committed to a revised grand bargain 2.0 that puts at the center a shared ambition to meet our commitments to people in need of humanitarian assistance, while respecting humanitarian principles and the

centrality of protection. We stand by the two strategic enabling priorities on localization and quality funding and reaffirm UNICEF's commitment on gender.

UNICEF will continue to invest in the leadership of local actors and put in place measures to complement the capacity of local actors in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

This includes, but is not limited to, our efforts around transfer of quality funding for more efficient response.

As signatories, we must jointly redouble our efforts to address the humanitarian financing gap in a quality way. In the current environment, quality funding is even more critical, and should become the norm rather than exception. We need to ensure that a critical mass of quality funding for efficient, swift, and agile response on the ground.

UNICEF particularly would encourage continued dialogue on quality funding, including at the political level to find pragmatic ways to increase the volume, distribution, and timely flow of quality funding through the humanitarian system.

We call on seriously simplifying and reducing layers of bureaucracy to take our commitments forward. The grand bargain 2.0 should be supported by simplified structures with reinforced leadership and governance which will ensure strategic discussions on how to reach practical solutions and drive meaningful change for those we serve.

We look forward to further discussions on selective collective outputs and activities to leverage meaningful change. Thank you.

END