



Negotiating Draft of the Pandemic Agreement  
UNICEF Statement and Written Comment, November 6, 2023

UNICEF commends the significant work of Member States and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) Bureau on the draft Pandemic Agreement.

UNICEF would like to highlight the importance of the final text being shaped by the critical component of community engagement, that includes the experiences of girls and boys, women and young people, and the importance of the frontline health and social workforce.

We are committed to supporting this process, sharing our technical expertise in responding to health threats on the ground, and contributing to facilitation of discussions. We would advise the following points are an integral part of discussions this week:

**First**, given the direct and indirect societal impacts of health threats and their mitigation, and in view of facts such as the COVID-19 pandemic causing the largest disruption to education in history affecting more than 1 billion schoolchildren, it is an omission that children are absent – even by name - in the current version of the Agreement. Areas in which children should be specifically referenced are as follows:

- Within the definition of equity in **Article 1 (i)** – children should be inserted where it states: ‘...on the basis of race, colour, **age (including children)**, sex, language, religion...’
- And, in **Article 16 (2d)** – ‘promote equitable representation on the basis of **age**, gender, geographical and socioeconomic status, as well as the equal and meaningful participation of **children**, youth and women’

**Second**, the Pandemic Agreement should further the concept of a whole-of-society approach to pandemics. Continuation of a wide range of services is critical to fulfilling the best interest of the child and their right to health, education and wellbeing as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. To reflect this UNICEF suggests the following adjustments to the text:

- To highlight the multidisciplinary response that goes beyond health, **Article 6 (2a)** should say: ‘...continued provision of quality routine and essential health **and social services, such as in education, child protection and Gender Based Violence (GBV) risk mitigation** during pandemics’
- **Article 6 (2b)** should include: ‘sustaining and strengthening capacities for the multidisciplinary workforce **(including water and sanitation, and risk communication and community engagement)** needed during inter-pandemic periods, and preparing for and ensuring surge capacity during pandemics’
- **Article 7 (1c)** should include: ‘...developing and integrating effective measures to prevent and address violence **(including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse)**, and threats against health and care workers...’
- And, **Article 7 (1d)** should highlight further the need to: ‘...deploy trained health **and social care** workers during pandemics **who are skilled, appropriately remunerated, protected, supplied, and given opportunities for career growth**’



**Third**, on supply and logistics the overall share of available global supply for low- and middle-income countries during a pandemic needs to be equitable, proportionate to the size of the population, and consider disease burden and population at risk. UNICEF's total procurement budget in 2022 was \$7.38billion and we play on ongoing critical role in logistics and last mile delivery of emergency and humanitarian supplies. The Pandemic Agreement should specifically reference UNICEF given our role in this area during the COVID-19 response and in the future:

- **Article 13.1** should state that: "The WHO Network will operate within the framework... in partnership and collaboration with **UNICEF** and other relevant international organizations..."