

Negotiating Draft of the Pandemic Agreement
UNICEF Written Statement, March 23, 2024

UNICEF commends the significant work of Member States and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) Bureau on the revised draft of the negotiating text of the WHO 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 as we collectively moved towards the May 2024 finish line, 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 integrated into the final text:

First, given the direct and indirect societal impacts of public 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 a significant 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:

- **Article 3 (3)** – children should be inserted where it states: ‘...ensuring the absence of unfair, avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people (including children);’
- **Article 17 (4d)** - ‘facilitate the rapid and equitable restoration of public health capacities and routine and essential health and social services for all ages, including children, during and following a pandemic;’

Second, the Pandemic Agreement recognizes 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: ‘...provision of, and equitable access to, quality routine and essential health and social services during pandemics with a focus on primary care, education, child protection, gender-based violence risk mitigation, routine immunization and mental health care...’
- **Article 17 (2)** should include: ‘...Each Party shall establish or strengthen and maintain, a national coordination multisectoral body that includes water and sanitation, education and social welfare, for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.
- **Article 17 (4b)** ‘...multidisciplinary surge capacity of human and financial resources (including risk communication and community engagement) and facilitate the timely allocation of resources to the frontline pandemic response;’

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 Network shall be developed, coordinated and convened by WHO in partnership with the Parties, **UNICEF** and other relevant international and regional stakeholders...”