

# ***Background note on the***

## **Special Address of the Executive Director of UNICEF**

Annual session of the Executive Board  
Thursday 23 June 2022, 15:00-15:30  
Hybrid event in the Auditorium at WFP headquarters and on Zoom

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works across 190 countries and territories to reach the most disadvantaged children and adolescents – and to protect the rights of every child, everywhere. At a time when climate shocks, conflict, COVID-19 and spiralling costs of food, fuel and fertilizer are pushing millions of families into hunger, strong global partnerships are critical to address the unprecedented challenges to global food and nutrition security. Working on common goals brings WFP and UNICEF together in collaboration in a vital partnership will in helping nations achieve Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNICEF and WFP stand side by side in tackling all forms of malnutrition through complementary interventions across health, food, and social protection systems, working at global, regional and country levels. For healthy growth and development, a child needs continuous access to nutritious, safe, and affordable foods. The right nutrition at the right time saves lives and allows children to reach their full potential. Inadequate nutrition has devastating consequences for young children; almost half of deaths among children under 5 are caused by malnutrition.

In 2020, WFP and UNICEF launched a partnership framework on acute malnutrition, the deadliest form of malnutrition. The framework emphasizes the need to invest in and prioritize the prevention of wasting, while scaling-up actions for the early detection and treatment of wasted children. Amidst growing needs, WFP and UNICEF are appealing for urgent resources to reach the most vulnerable children and women in need of services to prevent and treat malnutrition.

UNICEF and WFP also launched in January 2020 a strengthened partnership to deliver health and nutrition services for school-age children. Today, WFP and UNICEF work together in 40 countries and have developed joint plans of action in the Niger, Chad, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. The agencies advocate together to position the health and nutrition of schoolchildren as a pre-condition to learning and achieving the SDGs. This year, the main engagement platform is the Transforming Education Summit, where WFP and UNICEF collaborate under Thematic Action Track 1 on inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools.

Strong and resilient social protection systems are more important than ever in the midst of the world's overlapping crises. Both UNICEF and WFP support governments through advocacy, capacity strengthening, operational support and analytical services with the aim of ensuring national social protection systems are inclusive and responsive to the differentiated needs of populations now and in the future. Only by addressing multi-dimensional poverty and food and nutrition insecurity, can we ensure that “no one is left behind”. WFP and UNICEF’s capabilities across the humanitarian and development nexus help mobilize political will and catalyse support for strengthening social protection systems in the immediate and longer term.

Under the auspices of SDG 17, UNICEF and WFP also collaborate on supply chain management under the *Saving Lives and Livelihoods* initiative, a ground-breaking partnership led by the Mastercard Foundation and the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. The initiative brings together institutional actors, the private sector, national governments and the United Nations. As part of this initiative, UNICEF and WFP leverage their complementary expertise in humanitarian supply chain to deliver COVID-19 vaccines across Africa.