

## **Participants**

**Executive Committee members:** Tarald Brautaset (Norway, Chair), Jo Bourne (UNICEF), Dean Brooks (INEE), Alicia Herbert (UK DFID), Rudolf Huber (Germany BMZ), Claire James (Australia), Svein Ostveit (UNESCO), Padraig Power (GPE), Evelyn Rodriguez-Perez (USAID), Yasmine Sherif (ECW Director), Nancy Smyth (Canada), Justin van Fleet (Office of the UN Special Envoy for Global Education), Cornelius Hacking (Netherlands), Stijn De Lameillieure (EU), Sune Krogstrup (representing Denmark at this conference call)

**Observers:** Gorka Fagilde (Sida), Randi Gramshaug (Norad), Kerstin Holst (UNESCO), Alice Kunz (Germany (GIZ), Jan Svihlik, (GIZ), Nina Weisenhorn (USAID), Maja Lazic (UNHCR), Emily Todd (DFID), Kelly Loewer (US State Department/PRM), Tara Painter (Canada), Jesper Andersen (GPE), Representing Civil Society: Hayley Pearce (Plan International), Joseph O'Reilly (Save the Children)

**ECW Secretariat:** Zeinab Adam, Niladri Bhattacharjee, Gabrielle Bonnet, Anouk Desgroseilliers, Lucy Earle, Johannes Kiess, Graham Lang, Amrit Sandhu, Dagmar Kunzmann Briefel

**Absent:** Annina Mattsson (Dubai Cares), Mamadou Dian Balde (UNHCR), Thomas Ostermann (Denmark)

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## **Summary of the outcomes of the conference call**

### 1. Hosting review:

- The Chair opened the discussion by addressing ExCom if they were satisfied that the questions raised during the last ExCom call were sufficiently addressed in the Final Report.
- Special Envoy Office: Thanked the Mokoro team for their work. In his view, the revised report reflects what was discussed and agreed to move forward with no further revisions of the report.
- USAID was on board with the decision paper but highlighted that they would have liked to have seen a timeline that reflects when decisions will need to be made.
- DFID was on board with the recommendation for the hosting, but not yet convinced that MPTFO will be a better financial host in terms of costs and would have liked to see a more detailed cost comparison.
- Canada broadly agreed with the comments made so far and commends the consultants for a thorough and detailed revision, but would also have appreciated more detail on the timeline. Further voiced concern that the financial analysis that informs the switch to MPTFO is not sufficiently in-depth.
- EC was mostly in line with Canada's comments and would like to see a clear overview of costs, especially savings that the transfer to MPTFO would entail. Savings to be made and transaction costs would be a first priority for decision taking on a possible transfer to MPTFO in addition to avoidance of conflict of interest.
- SIDA agreed with the overall report and revision. They also voice concern that there was not enough information on transaction costs for MPTFO.
- Netherlands agreed that they would also like more details regarding the benefit of transfer to MPTFO.
- UNESCO voiced their support of the report, including financial hosting by MPTFO.
- Germany stated that the recommendations were clear, but they wanted to hear from UNICEF and MPTFO regarding what they would charge for hosting.
- Denmark was satisfied with the recommendations in the report.

- Australia was broadly in line with the views of the others and supports the need for more financial details to make a decision between UNICEF and MPTFO.

The Chair summarized the discussion:

- ExCom expressed broad agreement that the incubation should continue until 2021
- The choice of permanent host should be taken at the end of the incubation period
- Several ExCom participants voiced concern that they do not have sufficient information on the financial implications to make a decision about a transfer of financial hosting to MPTFO
- The Chair did not deem it necessary that HLSG needs to decide on this matter. ExCom could make that decision at their next meeting in June/early July.
- The Director commended the scientific value of the report and highlighted that it “connected all the dots”. With regards to MPTF vs UNICEF, the Secretariat did not experience any Col in relation to UNICEF, however, it was important that ECW’s stakeholders were confident that there was no Col. She fully agreed with the Chair’s recommendation.
- EXCOM agreed that more time was needed to look into the benefits of the transfer of financial management to MPTFO. The Secretariat would now start to compare the options between UNICEF’s FSO and MPTFO. It was agreed to defer this decision until the next ExCom meeting in June/early July. ExCom to ask HLSG to authorize ExCom to take a decision regarding the transfer of the financial hosting to MPTFO at the next ExCom meeting in June/early July.
- ExCom asked ECW to draft a short decision paper for HLSG. The paper will request that HLSG approves the below two points resulting from the hosting review:
  - a. **The extension of ECW’s incubation at UNICEF until 2021**
  - b. **The deferment of the choice of permanent host for ECW until the end of the incubation period (a decision will be reached on permanent hosting through the evaluation scheduled for 2020/21)**
  - c. ExCom will further ask HLSG to authorize ExCom to take a decision regarding the transfer of the financial hosting to MPTFO at the next ExCom meeting in June/early July

## 2. ECW Strategic Plan:

- ECW’s Director expressed thanks and appreciation for the substantive contributions to the Strategic Plan over the past five months. The comments received in this last stage of finalizing the Strategic Plan revealed that there might be different expectations of what ECW was meant to do and what it was equipped to do. The ECW Secretariat had therefore further reviewed the extensive research and documentation underlying the establishment of ECW, so to align the Strategic Plan with its original objective and identity vs. its capacity.
- The Director referred to the two Strategic Plans shared with EXCOM (GPE and OCHA) as model examples of a Strategic Plan, and that the Secretariat had now aligned the revised draft with these models. As such, the Strategic Plan was now concise and shortened to 20 pages, while the operational and guideline documents were made as annexes and attachments, since additional documents will be developed and evolve over time with a new resource mobilization strategy, an advocacy/comms strategy, among others.
- The Director presented the commonalities in what everyone agreed upon:
  - Quality in learning outcomes
  - Nexus between humanitarian and development
  - A New Way of Working (endorsed by UN and donor principals and the WB)
  - Gender
  - Protection
  - Innovative Financing Mechanisms

The Chair opened the floor for final comments to allow the Secretariat to finalize the Strategic Plan ahead of the HLSG. In his capacity as Norway's representative he added that the current version of the plan represented a major improvement. Still, both the financial ambitions and the value added need to more clearly explained.

- ExCom members agreed and commended the evolution of the Strategic Plan, particularly the extensive work that the Secretariat had put into its revision since the last ExCom call on 9 March.
- The Special Envoy's Office suggested minor tweaking of the Strategic Plan, while attachments would evolve over time.
- UNICEF suggested that HLSG be given space to make comments.
- Canada suggested tweaking in the added value summary, the localization agenda and working with smaller organizations, further reference to GPE, and the IASC GBV Guidelines and making reference to gender-based analysis in the document.
- UNICEF suggested a short section on the governance structure and levels of accountability, capacity development of small agencies to be highlighted, and a paragraph of risk appetite – not to be risk averse.
- GPE suggested an update in language on the evolving collaboration between GPE and ECW, queried about in-country partner consultations, as well as the ambition of the financial targets.
- EU suggested stronger coherence between the narrative on pages 15-18 and the Results Framework, suggesting the narrative be reformulated. The SRF refers to beneficiary outcomes in addition to the systemic outputs. EC suggested coherence with this division in the narrative. Currently the narrative refers to strategic outcomes which are actually the systemic outputs. Need to highlight the First Response Window on page 15.
- USAID inquired as to why the Theory of Change was removed from the Strategic Plan itself and now included as an attachment.
- Save the Children queried about the multi-year programme evolution, the need to mention that SDG4/quality education is free, and how to approach the annexes in relation to approving the Strategic Plan.
- DFID queried about the next steps in the process, especially in regard to the Annexes and financial targets.
- Germany and INEE concluded that they would share any additional comments bilaterally immediately after the EXCOM meeting.
- The Director and the Secretariat welcomed the final comments and advised that these will be incorporated in the final version for HLSG.
- The Director and EXCOM welcomed the suggestion that HLSG provides comments, so to ensure HLSG ownership of the Strategy. Meanwhile any EXCOM comments were to be addressed and resolved in advance in the EXCOM.
- The Secretariat responded that the Theory of Change was mentioned in the Strategic Plan, but that the comprehensive document on the TOC had now been returned as an annex, in order to keep the Strategic Plan brief and following examples of other organizations.
- The Director referred to page 2 of the Strategic Plan, and advised that the following in-country partners (governments, UN agencies, NGOs, civil society) had been consulted: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Lebanon, Uganda and Yemen. She also advised that free education was mentioned in the Vision Statement. Annexes that required alignment with the Strategic Plan will be the subject of the next EXCOM meeting so to jointly ensure alignment, while new documents will be added (resource mobilization plan, advocacy/comms plan). Similarly, the financial targets will be the subject of discussion at the next EXCOM meeting.
- ExCom asked how the country list was developed and the Secretariat explained the extensive process that went into the development of the list. Several aspects were taken into account, including the severity of the crisis, financing needs, forgotten crisis,

education situation etc. Gabrielle can share the excel sheets that outline the several levels if someone is interested.

- UNESCO inquired about the protocols for joint ventures with GPE.
- The Secretariat replied that the complementarity with GPE, IFFED and ECW will also be further explored under the Argentina G20 Presidency. A meeting took place two weeks ago with GPE to define the protocols of cooperation, particularly in view of creating clarity for people on the ground on how ECW and GPE work together.
- The Chair advised regarding the G20: ECW, GPE and IFFED are invited to the G20 meeting in Buenos Aires, where complementarity between the three would be key. He reminded all on the call to reach out to colleagues who will be present in Buenos Aires that they would back ECW as an institution that wants to play a constructive role together with GPE.
- The Director underlined that in order to operate it was very important for ECW to have the country list approved by HLSG on 19 April, alongside the Strategic Plan.
- The Chair summarized agreement to recommend HLSG to approve the Strategic Plan, including HLSG comments, and the Country list, and to take note of the annexes and attachments.
- EXCOM agreed that: the decision paper will request that HLSG **approves the Strategic Plan, including HLSG comments, approves the Country List** for multi-year programmes and **takes note of the attachments**.
- Regarding financial targets, ExCom agreed to ask HLSG **to take note that further discussion on financial targets, financial projections and implications will be featured on the agenda of the next HLSG meeting in September in New York.**

### 3. AOB and Conclusion

The ECW Director outlined the following points:

- a. The next ExCom meeting will be held at the Secretariat in June/early July.
- b. Kind reminder to reply on behalf of principals regarding attendance at HLSG 19 April.
- c. ECW will present a comprehensive report on initial investments and FR. The Results Report will be shared before the HLSG meeting.
- d. Multi-year programmes are currently being developed in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the West Bank and Uganda.

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking the ECW Director and the ECW Secretariat, the Strategic Task Team and EXCOM for the work on the Strategic Plan and asked DFID to extend ExCom's appreciation to the Mokoro consultants for their substantive work on the hosting review.

### 4. Next Steps

- The Secretariat will draft a decision paper for HLSG. The paper will request HLSG to approve the following four points on the hosting review and Strategic Plan:
  - a. **The extension of ECW's incubation at UNICEF until 2021**
  - b. **The deferment of a choice of permanent host for ECW until the end of the incubation period (a decision will be reached on permanent hosting through the evaluation scheduled for 2020/21)**
  - c. **The ECW Strategic Plan 2018-2021, including comments from HLSG**
  - d. **The Country List for Multi-Year Programming, annexed to the Strategic Plan**

The decision paper will further request HLSG to take note of

- e. **The attachments to the Strategic Plan**

- f. **Further discussion on financial targets, financial projections and implications will be featured on the agenda of the next HLSG meeting in September in New York**
  - g. **The decision paper will ask HLSG to authorize ExCom to take a decision regarding the transfer of the financial hosting to MPTFO at the next ExCom meeting in June/early July**
  - The decision paper will be circulated by email to ExCom in the coming days. If no objections are raised it will be submitted to HLSG on April 11 for a decision on April 19th.
  - The Chair will inform UNICEF and GPE of the agreement reached to present to HLSG and that the possibility of transferring financial hosting to MPTFO will be further explored in the coming months. The Chair will circulate his letter to UNICEF and UNICEF's reply regarding UNICEF's acceptance to continue to host the Secretariat, if that is the request from HLSG.
  - The Secretariat will circulate a package for HLSG (Decision Paper, Hosting Review Report, Strategic Plan and Country Selection, Agenda) by 11 April.
  - The Secretariat will circulate the Results Report by 16 April - to be presented at HLSG
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