



## Executive Committee Meeting – Minutes

Thursday 1 September 2022

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### Summary of the outcomes of the meeting

#### Chair's Welcome

##### The Chair:

- Welcomed participants to the meeting and Merete Lundemo, the new Norway MFA Special Envoy for EiE, as the new ExCom Vice-Chair replacing Camilla Fossberg.
- Recalled key points and outcomes from the last ExCom meeting such as the approval of the Job Description for the Deputy Director position and a new P4 Communications Specialist. The ExCom also committed to reviewing an updated Staffing Plan accompanied by a costed plan set out against the Organisational Evaluation ahead of its approval, and to submit feedback on the Annual Results Report and the Organisational Evaluation.
- Outlined the agenda for the meeting as follows:
  - 1) Director's Update
  - 2) ECW Strategic Plan 2023-2026 and endorsement
  - 3) ECW Staffing Plan and approval
  - 4) Update on the UNICEF Hosting Agreement
  - 5) ECW High-Level Financing Conference
  - 6) ECW HLSG Meeting
  - 7) Aob and Conclusion

#### 1- Director's Update

The ECW Director provided the ExCom with an update and made the following points:

- Echoed the Chair by expressing gratitude to ExCom's previous Vice-Chair, Camila Fossberg for her contributions to ECW since its inception and welcomed Merete Lundemo, replacing her as the new ExCom Vice-Chair and ExCom member.
- Thanked ExCom members, the ECW team and Senior Advisors for all the hard, collective and inclusive work that has gone into developing the bold and ambitious Strategic Plan 2023-2026 in a period of five months.
- The Strategic Plan comes at such a crucial time and in harmony with other key pieces of work across the Fund, including the global campaign of 222 million dreams and the publication of 2021 Annual Results Report. In September, the new Strategic Plan in parallel with ECW's Case for Investment will be launched.
- All these strategies, when taken together, represent what funding ECW needs, why it is needed, what it will be spent on and what ECW's delivery has been. ECW has proven its worth as the world's global fund dedicated to EiEPC. In less than 5 years, ECW has exceeded its targets by reaching over 7 million children with a whole-of-child and inclusive education, thanks to the funding made available by its donors and the great and strategic support of all ExCom.
- The Staffing Plan submitted for ExCom's approval was developed based on the recommendations provided by the Organisational Evaluation drafted by Mokoro and upon the request and support of ExCom.

The Staffing Plan will add 16 positions to the ECW Secretariat, with an emphasis on the Quality Education team, M&E, risk management and RM, as outlined in the Organisational Evaluation. With

these positions, the ECW Secretariat will avoid the most severe understaffing and be prepared to implement the 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan. Nevertheless, ECW remains a lean organization, and will diligently manage to retain secretariat cost within the 7% directed by ExCom.

**2- Strategic Plan 2023-2026**

The Chair:

- Noted that ECW’s current Strategic Plan expires at the end of 2022 and the ExCom, with the Secretariat’s coordination, have worked together over the course of 2022 to shape ECW’s strategic direction for its next operational period, 2023-2026.
- The Secretariat led a highly inclusive process which involved multiple opportunities for stakeholder engagement and the possibility to review and comment on the Strategy draft itself.
- The ExCom were now called upon to endorse and recommend to HLSG the final ECW Strategic Plan 2023-2026 which includes ECW’s new Theory of Change and Results Framework.
- Handed the floor to Raakhi Williams, Chief of Strategy, Planning and Accountability, to provide an overview of the process and set out next steps to be taken. The following points were made (See PowerPoint presentation and the decision paper for further details):
- The presentation served to showcase key elements of the plan that were put forward for ECW’s endorsement and to outline the key next steps to be taken to operationalise the Plan [please refer to the attached presentation for details]
- The Plan emphasizes ECW’s responsibility to champion coordination across the humanitarian and development nexus and has thus put *learning access and holistic learning outcomes* (including wellbeing) at the heart of its Plan.
- The two key Strategic objectives in this regard- an increased focus on global financing and on continuing to build systemic changes in the sector- will remain a priority for ECW.
- The Strategic Plan will be launched alongside the Case for Investment. ECW raised USD 1.1 billion in the last Strategic Period and is aiming to achieve its resource mobilisation ambition of at least USD 1.5 billion for the next four years through its High-Level Financing Conference.
- In terms of programming, ECW’s new reach figure has been set to 20 million, up from 7 million reached in the last strategic period. Of this 20 million, 12 million children and adolescents will be reached through our FER and 8 million through our MYRPs.
- A timeline of next steps and key actions to be undertaken over the next six months was presented highlighting both the strategic and thematic deliverables.
- This ambitious piece of work was achieved thanks to the instrumental role played by Joseph Nhan O’Reilly and Charlotte Bergin, ECW’s Senior Strategic Advisors on the Strategic Plan, and thanks to the ExCom and ECW Secretariat.

The Chair opened the floor for questions and comments:

- **Germany** endorsed the Strategic Plan and thanked ECW all the efforts put into producing such a comprehensive document whilst commending the inclusive and collective approach undertaken throughout. Germany stressed the importance of monitoring, evaluation and qualitative reporting and welcomed the emphasis placed on these elements throughout the document. Germany furthermore supported ECW’s strong engagement on localization in the new Plan. It is crucial to prioritise the voice of local actors, including youth, in all country investments and to ensure local ownership. Germany encouraged ECW to further diversify the grantees and include organisations which focus on disability and women. On the overall timeline, Germany suggested to also make amendments as suggested to the Operational Manual and proposed to contribute to this process.

- **EU** commended the process and joint efforts undertaken under the leadership of the Secretariat and noted a significant improvement in the final draft reflecting all feedback received. The EU welcomed the inclusion of climate change as a new thematic and suggest that ECW build on its partners' experience and expertise in the matter. The EU offered to contribute and feed into the policy once the new Strategy is rolled out.
- **Norway** congratulated the Secretariat and the ExCom for the new Strategy and welcomed the inclusive process undertaken whilst endorsing the Strategic Plan. Norway welcomed the incorporation of climate and equal rights in the new Plan and looks forward to participating in discussions around the operationalization of the Plan while also including local partners. Norway is committed to working closely with ExCom partners to implement and garner political support and the financing needed.
- **Education International (EI)** endorsed the Strategic Plan and thanked the Secretariat and its Senior Advisors for developing a solid document. EI would further welcome the inclusion of teachers amongst the programmatic priorities, as a critical aspect of education. It will be furthermore more important to focus on female teachers who are more so disadvantaged and for ECW to take the lead through advocacy and financing to ensure continuity of education and payment to teachers in crisis situations. EI encouraged the Secretariat to include indicators on these programmatic priorities and ensure the strategy is well implemented with an emphasis on localisation through the inclusion of civil society organisations, teacher unions or youth in all parts of the process.
- The **FCDO** endorsed the Strategic Plan echoing ExCom members on the inclusive process undertaken. The UK noted that work on the Operating Model and Operating Manual, to which the UK wishes to contribute, should be conducted jointly as both products were closely related and will define how commitments in the Strategic Plan will be delivered. The UK welcomed the Secretariat's commitment to gain a good understanding and expertise on the global financing landscape but encouraged ECW to further and extend this commitment to tracking and monitoring global results , as critical elements to making a case for funding.
- **USAID** welcomed ECW's larger definition of inclusivity and LGBTQI, and the updated definition of children and adolescents to include sexual orientation and gender identity, which are all key priorities for USAID and the US administration. USAID encouraged the continued focus on gender identity in ECW's work, and on the renewed focus on learning outcomes and how these will be measured to see ECW's impact.
- **World Vision** congratulated the Secretariat and all partners involved in developing the Strategic Plan and welcomed the request for increased staffing although adding further mid-level positions was also highly encouraged.
- **Canada, Porticus and UNICEF** welcomed the final version of the Strategic Plan noting ECW's thorough work and commitment to integrating all feedback received. Canada looks forward to engaging in discussions with regards to the implementation of the Strategy and the operationalization of the results framework.
- **The LEGO Foundation** endorsed the Strategic Plan and the consultative process undertaken. The LEGO Foundation welcomed the ambitions and heightened focus on certain areas set out across the Plan.
- **The Youth Representative** welcomed the inclusion of youth in the Strategic Plan noting that young people are the most affected by educational programmes and should thus continue to participate in the implementation and evolution of programmes.
- **Finland, Ireland and Switzerland** endorsed the Strategic Plan and congratulated the Secretariat for the thorough and consultative process undertaken.

In response to questions and comments, the following responses were provided:

- Teacher-related indicators in the Strategic Plan's Results Framework are on reach and outcome figures for children, adolescents and organizational strategic outcomes. Grants will however monitor the number of teachers trained against topics and how they are financially supported, which in turn will be reported on in the Annual Results Report.
- On localization, there will be a year-on-year increase in the proportion of funds disbursed to local actors.

- Although the Strategic Plan focuses more on women and persons with disabilities, the Secretariat remains committed to including youth further and looks forward to working with youth as part of its efforts on localization.
- The Results Framework will serve as a main tool to take forward the operationalization of ECW's work on climate and equal rights as it will allow ECW to consider the year-on-year increase and the extent to which local actors are impacting on the design, delivery and monitoring of ECW's programmes.
- Prioritising support to teachers and teachers' wellbeing is part of the programmatic priorities in the first section of the Plan, and feedback received was taken into account throughout the consultative process with ExCom.
- Both financing and results are emphasized in the Plan, although the Secretariat acknowledges the increased work and thinking needed around global financing and global results.

Joseph Nhan O'Reilly, ECW's Senior Advisor on the Strategic Plan, thanked all ExCom members and the Strategic Planning team for their collective engagement and valuable inputs in building the Strategic Plan. The results will not only lead to a plan for ECW as a Fund but will serve as a plan for the wider EiEPC community, as a reflection of partners' priorities and commitments.

#### The Chair:

- Requested the ExCom's endorsement and recommendation to the HLSG for the Strat Plan 2023-2026, the theory of change and the results framework.
- **Noted that no objections were received, and the Strategic Plan was subsequently endorsed by ExCom.**

### **3- Staffing Plan and approval**

Michael Corlin, Chief of Finance and Operations, delivered an overview on the Staffing Plan presented to ExCom for approval (See PowerPoint presentation and the decision paper for further details):

- The Secretariat was composed of 28 staff at the start of 2022 and two positions were approved and re activated at the June ExCom meeting. ECW is now seeking the ExCom's approval for an additional 16 positions, which will bring the total to 46 positions in the next Strategic period. The related costs will grow accordingly to this increase.
- Rationale: The staffing needs and positions requested are fully aligned with ECW's Strategic Plan, Strategic Objectives and the recommendations of the Organisational Evaluation.
- Levels: A description of the levels of positions proposed and the titles aligned with the UNICEF standard terminology was provided. Overall, the Secretariat is asking for 1 position at the General Service level, 3 positions at the P2 level, 4 positions at the P3 level and 8 positions at the P4 level.
- Financial framework: In the first Strategic period, the Secretariat was guided by a target of 7%, with the aim to keep operational costs below this threshold of program expenditure. The current estimate is that by the end of 2022, operational costs will have remained below 5.8% for the current Strategic Period. ECW is committed to retaining the operational costs below 7% of programme disbursements in the coming Strategic Period.
- Locations: New positions will be assigned to ECW offices in New York and Geneva. The Secretariat has taken into account the feedback received in regard to shifting some staff closer to the points of delivery. To this end, the Secretariat will develop in 2023 a policy on ECW's geographical presence for the ExCom's consideration.
- Financing Outcomes: Three financing scenarios were presented with Resource Mobilisation targets achieved at 70%, 85% and 100% of the planned USD 1.5 billion over the next Strategic Period. By considering the 70% scenario with a Secretariat cost of USD 16.4 million, the 7% threshold for operational costs will be maintained; by considering the 85% scenario, the Secretariat will meet 6% of operational costs against its programme expenditure, and by considering the final scenario of 100%, operational costs will be kept as low as 5% of programme expenditure. The proportion of funds

allocated to each funding window (72.2% for MYRPs, 24.9% for FERs and 3% for the AF) will remain as agreed in the Strategic Plan regardless of the cash flow and agreements made.

- **Timeline:** The Secretariat was seeking the ExCom's approval to add new positions and upgrade some existing positions in order for job descriptions to be drafted and announced. In November, the Secretariat will present the budget and the recruitment timeline for the ExCom's approval. The recruitment plan will be reviewed in March after the HLFC. By November 2023, all new positions will be reflected in the budget and organogram.

The Chair opened the floor for questions and comments:

- **World Vision** approved the staffing plan and requested further clarification on the role of country managers in relation to MYRPs and FERs and their relationship to country leads. World Vision encouraged the Secretariat to further align language in this regard in the Staffing Plan and the MYRP Discussion paper.
- **GPE** approved the staffing plan and appreciated the Secretariat's efforts to keep costs at a reasonable level. GPE welcomed the various anticipated funding scenarios and the recruitment of staff ahead of the HLFC.
- **Germany** approved the Staffing Plan and welcomed the appointment of a female to a senior position. and encourage the Secretariat to continue like this. Germany suggested to review the grade proposed for the Disability Specialist (P3) to be recruited to a higher grade of the given the complexity of the portfolio.
- **Norway** approved the staffing plan and welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to keep the operational costs under 7%. Norway welcomed the appointment of a female to a senior position and encouraged the Secretariat to continue focusing on gender balance and diversity, whilst also considering recruiting more mid-level positions. Given the planned increase of staff, Norway recommended reviewing the administrative capacity in place to support through this process.
- **The UK** followed up on the staffing planned under the AF window further to the Organisation Evaluation's recommendation of a management unit and given the complexity of this window.
- **Canada and USAID** followed up on the Secretariat's priorities should the requested funding not be raised.
- **The EU** welcomed the reinforcement of staff and particularly in the Education team, in line with the Organisational Evaluation's recommendations and in this regard encourages the Secretariat to ensure that all of the Organisational Evaluation's recommendations are considered in the recruitment process.
- **UNHCR** noted the challenges of not having technical expertise on refugee issues built into the Staffing Plan and looked forward to discussions to address this gap.
- **The LEGO Foundation** approved the Staffing Plan and welcomes the Secretariat's upcoming efforts to operationalize the plan whilst focusing on diversity and upholding the ambitions outlined in the Strategic Plan. The LEGO Foundation requested further information on UNICEF's contractual conditions and obligations for full-time staff, and the policy on retrenchment should the funds not be fully raised.

In response to the above questions and comments, the following responses were provided:

- Country managers will each manage a portfolio of five to six countries of MYRPs and FERs.
- Country managers and country leads will work closely on each portfolio. Typically, P5s are able to politically lead in higher level conversations with country partners, whilst P4s will support these discussions on the working level.
- UNICEF provides great support to ECW throughout the whole recruitment process ensuring that it is in line with all UNICEF HR policies and procedures up to the interviews, in which they also participate.
- The Secretariat took note of requests received to prioritise diversity and gender balance throughout recruitments and to consider a review of the Disability Specialist position.
- The Secretariat also took note of the recommendations to strengthen administrative support and recalled that the new Hosting Agreement might outline certain areas that will need reviewing and require the ExCom's approval.

- The Strategic Plan includes a dedicated position for the Acceleration Facility (AF) under the Education Team. This position will however now be moved to the Strategy, Planning and Accountability Team by mid-2023. The Chief of Strategy, Planning and Accountability will oversee this position and all new positions within the Strategy, Planning and Accountability Team will include supporting AF deliverables in their job descriptions.
- The Secretariat has drawn up a gradual recruitment plan to be done in batches to avoid the scenario in which insufficient funds would impact the staffing plan. Staff recruited from the UNICEF pool can be absorbed back into UNICEF should the need arise. However, this is not the case for ECW staff recruited outside of UNICEF. Staff with a UNICEF contract, fall under UNICEF HR rules and regulations and these positions are registered under Fixed-Term contracts. Hosted-Funds staff are not subject to mandatory rotations unlike UNICEF staff members. For this reason, some contractual distinctions were put in place to ensure the functioning of different units based on their environments. UNICEF can provide further clarity once the Hosting Agreement is presented.

#### The Chair:

- Requested the ExCom's non-objection to the Staffing Plan.
- **Noted that no objections were received, and the Staffing Plan with the addition of 16 new positions was subsequently approved by ExCom.**

#### 4- UNICEF Hosting Agreement

Nazim Khizar, UNICEF Deputy Director, Financial Reporting and Grant Management, provided an update to the ExCom on the status of the Hosting Agreement. The following points were made:

- The Hosting Agreement was unfortunately not finalised at the time of the meeting. Its development was put on hold for some time as whilst the internal audit exercise was being finalised in order to allow UNICEF to incorporate the recommendations and findings of the auditors in the proposed Agreement.
- Preliminary drafts of the audit reports have been shared with each Hosted Fund and UNICEF for feedback. Once all feedback and comments are compiled, the final report will be submitted to the UNICEF Legal Office before it is shared with the different Hosted Funds, by the end of October.

#### 5- HLFC

Nasser Faqih, Chief of Resource Mobilisation and Partnerships, delivered an update on preparations for the HLFC. The following points were made:

- The Secretariat and HLFC co-conveners have been conducting bilateral meetings with donors and civil society partners to get a clearer of the funding landscape.
- The Secretariat has led positive dialogues with existing donors and prospective partners such as Qatar, the UAE, Italy and Japan. ECW and its co-conveners will be relying on the ExCom's and HLSCG's political and diplomatic influence to reach remaining partners.
- A number of bilateral engagements will take place on the margins of UNGA and TES. ECW's successful campaign will scale up and begin to shift from focusing on ECW's work to date to assertively advocating for the USD 1.5 billion target.
- The Secretariat welcomes the efforts and engagement of donors such as Switzerland, Denmark and the USA for their active pursuit of strong partnerships with the private sector and hope more partners will be able to follow suit.
- The Secretariat and HLFC co-conveners call on all partners to help ECW reach at least USD 1 billion during the conference, and USD1.5 billion by the middle of the strategic cycle at the latest.
- The Case for Investment is close to be finalised and will serve as a complimentary document building on the commitments in the Strategic Plan with a focus on the financing needs. The ExCom will have

received a first draft and any final inputs are welcome. The Case for Investment will be launched alongside the Strategic Plan at the HLSG meeting on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

- Preparations for the HLFC were underway. ECW and HLFC co-conveners were in the process of drafting the programme for the conference and seeking to incorporate a follow-up to the TES with a concrete focus on EiE.

The Chair opened the floor for questions and comments:

- **The LEGO Foundation** enquired about how ECW foresaw commitments made by national host governments further to those made by the major bilateral donors at the HLFC.
- **UNHCR** recalled some points that had been discussed and addressed in the Strategic Plan but were not reflected in the Case for Investment. UNHCR proposed to send detailed feedback in writing for its incorporation into the document.
- **USAID** reiterated the importance of private sector engagement and asked if ECW had developed a private sector engagement strategy.

In response to the above questions, the following responses were provided:

- The TES will focus on raising sincere commitments jointly crafted by donor and recipient countries of aid, including many of ECW’s MYRP countries. The TES outcomes will hopefully provide positive substance for policy commitments from some of ECW’s beneficiary countries which will also connect to the HLFC.
- ECW very much appreciate US counterparts’ joint efforts with ECW to formulate a strategy with the private sector. The Case for Investment does include a reference to private sector engagement but the Secretariat is also keen to provide a more tailored strategy for each incoming private sector partner according to the needs and priorities.

**6- High- Level Steering Group Meeting.**

Yasmine Sherif, ECW Director, provided a short update on the upcoming HLSG meeting:

- The HLSG meeting will take place on Tuesday 20 September at 07.30am.
- The Agenda was circulated to the ExCom and includes briefings from the UNICEF Executive Director and OCHA Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and its impact on girls’ education, the approval of the Strategic Plan and an open discussion on the HLFC.

The Chair opened the floor for questions and comments:

- **The EU** requested to add an additional item on the agenda summarising the TES outcomes in order to discuss how HLSG members can contribute to these.
- **Germany** echoed the EU’s request to add a discussion on the TES, but also to add an update on the situations in Ukraine and Pakistan, to the HLSG agenda.

The ECW Director confirmed that the Secretariat has taken note of these requests and will circulate an updated agenda including the additional items following the meeting.

**Chair’s Summary and Close:**

The Chair thanked ExCom members for their participation and summarised key points and decisions of the meeting:

- The Strategic Plan 2023-2026 was endorsed by the ExCom for the HLSG’s approval.

- The ExCom approved the new Staffing Plan with the addition of 16 new positions.
  - UNICEF will provide an update on the Hosting Agreement in the coming months.
  - The Secretariat will include updates on the TES outcomes and on the impacts on education in Ukraine and Pakistan to the HLSG agenda.
-