

# MINUTES

## Executive Committee Meeting



Mon 11 June 2025, Geneva, Switzerland

### 1. Welcome and introduction

#### The Executive Committee (ExCom) Co-Chairs:

- 1.1 welcomed all participants, both in the room and those joining virtually;
- 1.2 presented the agenda, highlighted the key items requiring ExCom decision and added two points for AOB: updates on the Hosting Arrangement and Hosting Review. The agenda was adopted without objection;
- 1.3 sought the ExCom's consent to record the meeting and enable auto-transcription strictly for note-taking purposes. No objections were raised;
- 1.4 thanked the Secretariat for organizing insightful events in the lead-up to the ExCom meeting;

*[Note: See Annex A for the list of participants and Annex B for the Meeting Documents]*

### 2. Director's Update

#### The ECW Director:

- 2.1 acknowledged the difficult context and emphasized the need for collective leadership, adaptability, and trust to navigate ECW's transition. She reaffirmed ECW's urgency in reaching 234 million crisis-affected children, highlighting education as key to the SDGs. Stressing evolution and shared leadership, she reaffirmed ECW's position as a catalyst and called for bold, agile, and empathetic action to deliver lasting impact amid growing crises and limited resources;
- 2.2 emphasized the important upcoming discussions on:
  - a) advancing the organizational restructuring through inclusive and transparent decision-making;
  - b) reviewing ECW's programmatic approach and how it will inform the upcoming Case for Investment;
  - c) assessing ECW's financial outlook with continued transparency and accountability.
- 2.3 urged ExCom members to ensure principal-level participation in the 25 June HLSG meeting, describing it as a critical opportunity to reset, recommit, and build a more unified and impactful ECW.
- 2.4 shared two key updates:
  - a) The Operational Manual was adopted by the HLSG in April;
  - b) The Hosting Arrangement was signed by the HLSG Chair and the UNICEF Deputy Executive Director. The ECW Director reassured the EU ExCom representative that their comment on the Hosting Arrangement has been duly noted and will be followed up in consultation with UNICEF.

**In response, the Co-Chair:**

- 2.5** thanked the Director for the update, noting that it complemented the written update previously shared with ExCom members;
- 2.6** highlighted two important developments since the last meeting that were part of the written update.
  - a) The approval of a new Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) in Somalia;
  - b) The resumption of a previously suspended MYRP in Ethiopia.

**3. Finance Update**

The ECW Chief of Finance and Operations:

- 3.1** recalled that in March 2025, ExCom approved a revised financial framework for the current strategic period, now totaling US\$796 million, including:
  - a) A revised programmatic budget of US\$194.5 million for 2025;
  - b) A revised operational budget of US\$13.5 million for 2025.
- 3.2** reported that actual operational expenditures from January to May 2025 totaled US\$5.8 million, representing 43% of the annual budget.
  - a) Two cost categories exceeded this threshold: UNICEF Secretariat services and consultancy payments, due to early and scheduled disbursements;
  - b) ECW is on track to remain within the approved operational budget of US\$13.5 million for the year;
- 3.3** highlighted the swift implementation of internal adjustments since March to align with the revised budget;
- 3.4** previewed two proposed budget structure changes for October 2025 to enhance transparency:
  - a) revising how UNICEF Secretariat service costs are presented, to better reflect actual expenditures;
  - b) adding a new budget line to identify operational costs directly funded by donors (e.g. secondments, evaluations, or assessments);
- 3.5** invited feedback and suggestions from ExCom members to further improve transparency ahead of the October presentation;
- 3.6** reported that 35% of the programmatic budget had been utilized as of the reporting period, with a significant increase expected soon due to ongoing payment processing;
- 3.7** provided an update on the offset of the US stop-work order, confirming that:
  - a) four affected grants (three in Ethiopia, one in Egypt) were cancelled;
  - b) new grants were issued with fresh funding to resume activities, effectively minimizing disruption to programming and impact on children.

**In discussion, the ExCom:**

- 3.8** welcomed the clear and transparent financial update and commended the Secretariat's effective management of the revised budget under challenging circumstances;
- 3.9** expressed strong support for the proposed changes to the budget structure aimed at enhancing transparency—particularly the addition of a new budget line for donor-funded operational costs;
- 3.10** acknowledged the Secretariat's agile response to external funding constraints, including the swift offsetting of the US stop-work order to ensure continuity of programme delivery;
- 3.11** noted low travel expenditures as a reflection of the Secretariat's internal focus and anticipated that travel may increase later in the year;
- 3.12** encouraged the Secretariat to flag any emerging risks related to budget execution or disbursement progress ahead of the next meeting to support timely donor coordination.

**4. ECW's Replenishment Campaign and Resource Mobilization**

**The ECW Chief of Partnerships:**

- 4.1** recalled previous ExCom discussions and noted that the Replenishment Campaign will be co-created with civil society, building on discussions held the previous day, and will shift into public-facing advocacy after GPE's replenishment concludes;
- 4.2** emphasized that ECW must be designed to be “investable” in order to meet both donor priorities and the urgent needs of crisis-affected children—beyond traditional fundraising, this requires the development of ECW responses in emergencies that are credible and compelling in a competitive funding environment;
- 4.3** positioned the session as a timely opportunity for ExCom members to shape the strategic rationale for investing in ECW. Rather than focusing on the operational “how” and “from where” of fundraising, the emphasis was placed on reaffirming shared responsibility among donors and partners to meet the financial targets for EiE at the field level. The dialogue aimed to inform three key processes:
  - a) The upcoming High-Level Steering Group (HLSG) strategic dialogue on 25 June, convened by Chair Sigrid Kaag;
  - b) The development of ECW's new Case for Investment (2027–2030);
  - c) The design of ECW's replenishment campaign and broader financial sustainability strategy.
- 4.4** shared that the upcoming Case for Investment will also clarify ECW's future priority contexts, funding model/s, and strategic positioning;
- 4.5** presented the continuing challenge of resource mobilization, including:
  - a) addressing the current funding shortfall for the remainder of the existing strategic plan;
  - b) raising the US\$600 million required for the next period;
  - c) ensuring ECW remains responsive to emergency needs while opening space to be catalytic and innovative in the long term.

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- 4.6** clarified that the background documents shared in advance—including the annex on the Case for Investment—were intentionally shared as working drafts to invite strategic feedback and stimulate informed dialogue, not as finalized proposals;
- 4.7** concluded by inviting ExCom to reflect on three guiding questions to inform the Case for Investment and upcoming HLSG dialogue:
- a) What is ECW's comparative advantage, and how can it be sharpened to reduce fragmentation and increase impact?
  - b) What preconditions or incentives could unlock multiyear commitments from donors?
  - c) What key investment and partnership messages should be carried into the 25 June HLSG meeting?
- 4.8** welcomed further inputs during the discussion and proposed establishing a small group or mechanism to provide early feedback on the evolving Case for Investment.

### **In discussion, the ExCom:**

- 4.9** welcomed the strategic framing of the replenishment session and recognized its relevance in shaping both the Case for Investment and the next Strategic Plan. Members emphasized the need for clarity on ECW's evolving identity—whether as a catalytic funder of first response, a partnership platform, or an investment vehicle—and called for sharper articulation of ECW's comparative advantage within the shifting global education and humanitarian architecture;
- 4.10** called for a focused and compelling Case for Investment that clearly demonstrates ECW's value proposition: its ability to deliver fast, flexible, and accountable funding in fragile contexts; to catalyze system-level responses; and to co-create impact with national actors, working through the existing architecture both at global and local level. Members urged that the Case for Investment go beyond traditional aid language, speaking to economic, social, and political outcomes, continuing the rights-based approach and be tailored to both traditional donors and emerging philanthropic and private sector partners;
- 4.11** expressed mixed views on the US\$600 million target, with some viewing it as ambitious yet realistic, and others requesting a fallback scenario or clearer assumptions. While concerns were raised in light of past shortfalls and current ODA trends, the majority acknowledged the strategic necessity of maintaining ambition. The ExCom endorsed the US\$600 million figure as a credible, politically anchoring goal to frame the next phase of ECW's resource mobilization;
- 4.12** encouraged ECW to pursue innovation in financing, especially tools that can unlock domestic, regional, and private sector contributions—such as disaster-trigger match funding, debt swaps, and co-financing with governments. Members stressed, however, that such mechanisms must be contextually appropriate and not overpromise in fragile environments. The need for policy flexibility from ExCom to accommodate innovative modalities was also noted;
- 4.13** reinforced the importance of civil society and youth inclusion as structural contributors to the replenishment strategy, not symbolic participants. Members called for genuine co-creation with CSOs and young people, especially in shaping the narrative, outreach, and accountability frameworks for the Case for Investment;
- 4.14** reaffirmed ECW's role in addressing “forgotten crises”, with several members pointing to the fund's ability to reach the most neglected contexts where others have withdrawn. They urged ECW to lean further into this niche, including by building on coordination with education clusters, local partners, and refugee-led initiatives;

- 4.15 highlighted the need for close coordination with GPE, particularly in sequencing replenishment efforts, ensuring complementarity, and exploring potential shared platforms or systems. Several called for a clearer articulation of roles and boundaries between the two funds to avoid duplication and donor fatigue;
- 4.16 requested more detail on the underlying assumptions behind the US\$600 million target, including expected donor mix, innovative finance contributions, and pathways for new donors to engage;
- 4.17 urged ECW to maintain strategic focus in the Case for Investment, cautioning against trying to incorporate all ideas and expectations from the broader stakeholder group. Members emphasized that the Case for Investment must reflect what ECW is uniquely positioned to deliver—resisting the temptation to become a consensus document diluted by competing priorities. A focused, coherent, and bold narrative will resonate more than one that attempts to please everyone.

**In response, the Secretariat:**

- 4.18 reaffirmed that the feedback will directly inform the next iteration of the Case for Investment, the strategic framing of ECW's replenishment campaign, and the upcoming HLSG dialogue on June 25;
- 4.19 clarified that the Case for Investment is being co-created with partners—including civil society and youth constituencies—and will be structured to appeal across the political, humanitarian, and financial spectrum. The Case for Investment will emphasize ECW's agility, catalytic impact, and ability to safeguard education in contexts where systems are collapsing;
- 4.20 stressed that the US\$600 million target was carefully calibrated, drawing on internal analysis of donor behavior (including a 40% average drop in humanitarian education contributions), and was meant to strike a balance between realism and ambition. The figure also serves as a confidence-building measure for donors seeking clarity and predictability;
- 4.21 emphasized ECW's identity as a broker of joint solutions, not an implementer, and reaffirmed its delivery through local coordination mechanisms that prioritize national leadership, humanitarian-development integration, and inclusion of marginalized groups;
- 4.22 highlighted ECW's record of speed, accountability, and learning, citing tools such as third-party spot checks, programmatic risk flags, and built-in flexibility (e.g., no-cost extensions) as examples of adaptive management in volatile contexts;
- 4.23 acknowledged calls for innovative financing and affirmed that ECW is actively exploring practical tools—such as outcome-based financing, blended finance, and match-funding modalities—with a commitment to testing them in selected pilots before scaling;
- 4.24 noted the need for clearer positioning in relation to GPE and committed to deeper coordination ahead of both funds' replenishment campaigns. The Secretariat welcomed proposals for formal mechanisms to strengthen this partnership.

**The following decision language was discussed and subsequently finalized at the end of the session:**

### Decisions (per official record)

*The ExCom:*

- A1.** approved ECW's approach to adopt the 2027–2030 Case for Investment with a target of US\$600 million at the High-Level Steering Group (HLSG) meeting in September 2025;
- A2.** supported the launch of a global public campaign in Spring 2026, ahead of a replenishment moment in September 2026, ensuring coordination with GPE's replenishment timeline;
- A3.** encouraged continued coordination between ECW and GPE on replenishment efforts through regular dialogue and information sharing;
- A4.** agreed to organize a light but effective replenishment moment in September 2026.

## 5. Management Response to the Evaluations

### The ECW Chief of Strategy, Planning and Accountability:

- 5.1** presented the key updates from Management Response to the Organizational Evaluation, highlighting that the background paper reflects month-by-month progress and thoughtful implementation;
- 5.2** stated that ECW is at the end of the organizational evaluation journey, with three key evaluations having reached maturity—some dating back 3 to 5 years—and emphasized that implementation is now focused on celebrating achievements, fine-tuning residual actions, and reflecting on lessons learned;
- 5.3** confirmed that ECW has a concrete plan to complete the residual actions, with the paper outlining how the final milestones will be met. She also noted constraints—such as limited funding to issue a planned localization requests for proposals (RFP) under the Acceleration Facility (AF)—unless additional resources are secured. Nonetheless, ECW will proceed with a review of the consortium model and continue advancing locally led, nationally owned solutions;
- 5.4** highlighted a number of “big ticket” institutional achievements, such as the Operational Manual, MYRP Manual, Hosting Arrangement, and the MYRP transition strategy, all of which required multi-level, intensive processes;
- 5.5** encouraged reflection on how ECW can approach similar processes in the future, questioning whether the same level of intensity will be feasible or necessary, particularly in a context of constrained resources;
- 5.6** emphasized ECW's ambition and achievement in global standard-setting, with encouraging results in areas like the Nexus approach and holistic learning outcome measurement, including upcoming global guidance and a white paper;
- 5.7** emphasized that ECW remained fully committed to the *Leave No One Behind* agenda while delivering institutional reforms. Examples included: the development of a new gender minimum standards checklist; progress in localization with at least 25% of MYRP budgets implemented by national partners; and new approaches to disability inclusion using the Child Functioning Module in extended MYRPs;

- 5.8** reaffirmed ECW's diligence in reporting back on evaluation recommendations, citing concrete examples such as the strategic redesign of the AF, anticipatory action in First Emergency Response (FER), the High-Level Financing Conference (HLFC), and the Zurich Cantonal Bank initiative—each reflecting thoughtful follow-through on the Organizational Evaluation;
- 5.9** invited ExCom members to reflect on future approaches to evaluation and reporting, asking whether detailed papers and formal presentations remain the best format or if other tools—such as the Annual Work Plan—could serve as a proxy for reporting on evaluation implementation;
- 5.10** asked ExCom members how ECW and its partners could best leverage the success of this evaluation journey—whether to support political engagement, strengthen policy and operational areas, or sustain positive momentum in ECW's strategic direction.

**In discussion, the ExCom:**

- 5.11** welcomed the Secretariat's comprehensive progress on implementing the organizational evaluation and supported future efforts, encouraging the Technical Advisory Group to assist in shaping the next cycle.
- 5.12** commended achievements in Nexus programming, holistic learning outcomes, and ECW–GPE collaboration, while encouraging sustained implementation and practical results at the country level;
- 5.13** raised concerns about paused investments in localization and disability inclusion due to limited funding, urging clarity on how ECW intends to uphold its commitments despite these constraints, e.g. measuring its commitment from the Global Disability Summit in Berlin on 2-3 April;
- 5.14** emphasized the need to strengthen meaningful participation of youth and local actors, noting that this remains an area requiring further progress and concrete actions;
- 5.15** supported using the Annual Work Plan as a proxy reporting mechanism to reduce transaction costs while maintaining transparency and accountability;
- 5.16** stressed the importance of strengthening local leadership in MYRP design and delivery—especially among women-led, disability-focused, and community-based organizations—alongside more inclusive planning processes;
- 5.17** highlighted the need to monitor power dynamics and promote equity in joint programming, while also calling for clear sustainability and responsible exit strategies from ECW-supported investments;
- 5.18** underscored the relevance of teacher-related indicators, domestic education financing, and ECW's ability to respond rapidly in emergencies as critical areas for continued focus and measurement;
- 5.19** called for the replenishment process to be closely monitored and jointly owned by all partners, recognizing it as essential for ECW's long-term viability;
- 5.20** commended ECW's diverse and globally representative Secretariat; encouraged the organization to safeguard organizational culture, particularly as staffing and structural changes are implemented; and asked for feedback from the staff survey;

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**5.21** requested further clarity on how the ECW–GPE complementarity framework will translate into actionable efficiencies on the ground, beyond high-level coordination.

### **In response, the Secretariat:**

**5.22** thanked ExCom members for their rich and constructive feedback, noting that the Secretariat will provide a more detailed written response to the points raised;

**5.23** clarified that while one proposed localization activity (a specific RFP under the AF is on hold due to lack of funding, broader work on localization—such as the review of the consortium model—is still progressing;

**5.24** acknowledged that a planned grant related to disability inclusion under the AF is also on hold, but affirmed that other actions, such as promoting the use of the Child Functioning Module, are moving forward;

**5.25** explained that for action closure, the Secretariat considered items closed when they had clear deliverables and when ongoing efforts were integrated into the Annual Work Plan, while noting that some actions—like meaningful participation—remain part of an active process and could be reconsidered as “not yet closed” based on feedback;

**5.26** welcomed suggestions to integrate themes such as domestic resource mobilization, power dynamics, and voice into upcoming strategic processes, including the next Organizational Evaluation and Strategic Plan;

**5.27** reiterated that the current paper will not be revised, but any follow-up action will aim to provide reassurance on specific points, and key themes raised will be considered in ongoing workstreams.

**5.28** shared that that ECW uses UNICEF’s annual staff satisfaction survey and periodic pulse checks to inform its internal processes; results feed into staff retreats and action plans, with progress monitored over time to identify areas of improvement and track staff satisfaction.

## **6. Risk Management Update**

### **The ECW Chief of Strategy, Planning and Accountability:**

**6.1** provided a brief update on ECW’s risk management framework, noting that although significant progress had been made and the ExCom had been regularly briefed, the framework has not been finalized or published due to unexpected last-minute comments from UNICEF;

**6.2** explained that the situation is currently defined by uncertainty, particularly pending decisions from UNICEF’s new risk policy and regulatory framework, which will determine whether ECW can adopt and publish its own risk and safeguarding frameworks;

**6.3** noted that UNICEF may provide ECW with access to corporate risk tools previously unavailable, and ECW is awaiting clarity on expectations for using these tools in corporate risk reporting;

**6.4** highlighted that on the portfolio side, ECW’s approach will need to be adjusted based on the outcome of the organizational restructuring and the current lack of funding for a planned online risk reporting system;

**6.5** assured the ExCom that business-as-usual risk reporting will continue in the meantime, including the annual corporate risk report and the detailed portfolio risk report aggregating grantee data;

- 6.6** concluded that once UNICEF's hosting parameters and ECW's internal resourcing are clarified, the Secretariat may return to the ExCom with a revised risk approach and potentially a revised risk management framework for discussion.

**In discussion, the ExCom:**

- 6.7** acknowledged the uncertainty surrounding finalization of the risk management framework and emphasized the importance of continued transparency and communication during this period;
- 6.8** expressed interest in how risk management developments would affect grantee diversification and localization efforts, particularly regarding access to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) improvement windows;
- 6.9** encouraged the Secretariat to provide timely updates on any significant changes to risk levels, especially in the context of ongoing organizational restructuring;
- 6.10** called for ensuring continued reporting on safeguarding and fiduciary risks, with hope that the forthcoming Hosting Arrangement would help accelerate UNICEF's internal decision-making process.

**In response the Secretariat:**

- 6.11** reaffirmed its commitment to grantee diversification and emphasized that risk and safeguarding measures are being designed to avoid disadvantaging local partners. It clarified that all partners can undergo assessment, as there are no minimum standards excluding them from entry. While PSEA and HACT assessments remain mandatory under UNICEF rules, the Secretariat is exploring ways to streamline processes without compromising equity.

## **7. Report from the Technical Advisory Group (TAG)**

**The TAG Representative from the International CSO Constituency:**

- 7.1** expressed overall satisfaction with the prioritization criteria, commending the Secretariat's analytical work as among the strongest in the education space;
- 7.2** emphasized the importance of complementing data-driven ("science") approaches with qualitative ("art") judgment, particularly in applying investment criteria to assess added value in specific contexts;
- 7.3** raised questions about how the evaluation criteria would be applied in practice, especially given the resource demands of country-level evaluations, and highlighted the role of the annual report in informing these decisions;
- 7.4** underscored the need for clearer communication on how political and strategic considerations influence investment decisions, recognizing that prioritization cannot be purely technical;
- 7.5** welcomed the integration of a refugee adjustment into the data and the use of a refugee flag in the scale of needs to ensure attention to displacement in decision-making;
- 7.6** encouraged greater flexibility in the type and duration of support—particularly in early crisis phases—advocating for contextual decisions between MYRPs and FERs, and tailoring investment size accordingly.

**In discussion, the ExCom:**

- 7.7** referred to a written feedback on the TAG’s draft Terms of Reference (TOR) pointing out the need to clarify how former reference groups will be reflected in the new TAG approach. It was agreed that feedback on ToR would be sent to ECW by 30 June;
- 7.8** clarified that the agreement of the Operational Manual Advisory Group was to establish one single working group with gender and refugee education being regular agenda items and specific meetings on these topics to be scheduled, whenever needed;
- 7.9** discussed the idea of a unified TAG (“mothership”) that includes expertise on gender and refugees within the main structure rather than creating multiple standalone groups. The focus should be on sustained, informed discussion without fragmentation.
- 7.10** noted the Secretariat’s explanation of the distinction between the TAG and the Evaluation Advisory Groups, which are mandated in the evaluation policy to ensure methodological rigor and are separate from the TAG’s broader strategic input. She advised that both mechanisms be maintained for their distinct purposes.

**The Co-Chair:**

- 7.11** acknowledged the diverging interpretations around the TOR for the TAG and noted that the original intent was to establish a consolidated mechanism that brings together key thematic areas—such as gender, refugees, and evaluation—under a single structure. The Co-Chair emphasized the value of an integrated TAG that enables cross-thematic engagement, avoids fragmentation, and strengthens coherence across advisory inputs.
- 7.12** proposed extending the deadline for written inputs until 30 June 2025 to allow for further reflection and discussion. It was confirmed that the TAG would remain in its interim composition until a final TOR is agreed. ExCom members agreed to defer approval and extend the consultation period.

**8. Programme Portfolio: Size, Structure and Prioritization Methodology**

**The ECW Chief of Education:**

- 8.1** presented the proposed decisions on the programme portfolio and highlighted that they are guided by lessons learned from the past nine years of ECW’s operations and respond to the current funding and operational context.
- 8.2** recalled that the programme portfolio has been reduced by 17% within the current financial framework, and a minimum funding target of US\$600 million has been set; and thus emphasized the importance of rebalancing humanitarian-development coherence and shifting towards a more strategic, flexible and focused portfolio, in light of growing humanitarian needs.
- 8.3** provided context and further details on the proposed decisions, particularly:
- a) adoption of a revised portfolio prioritization methodology that separates the data-driven priority index from the qualitative investment criteria. Refugee considerations are now integrated. The priority index will generate a list of eligible countries, while investment criteria will guide the selection of the appropriate funding window;

- b) clarification that countries on the priority list will not automatically receive a MYRP or FER. Eligibility will be assessed using the relevant FER and MYRP investment criteria, and funding proposals will be approved according to established thresholds;
- c) introduction of a 10% flexibility across FER and MYRP allocations to improve responsiveness. Proposed ranges are 30–40% for FERs and 55–65% for MYRPs, allowing for real-time adjustments in volatile contexts;
- d) recommendation to increase the average MYRP size to US\$20 million to enhance programme impact and portfolio manageability anticipating at least 15 MYRP countries in the next strategic plan. This aligns with the overall US\$600 million funding target.

**In discussion, the ExCom:**

- 8.4** welcomed the overall direction, supported the revised prioritization methodology and flexible allocation approach, and encouraged consistent application of the new methodology from 2025 onward;
- 8.5** emphasized the need to document and clearly communicate how qualitative/investment criteria are applied, including how funding decisions are made and how trade-offs and weightings are assessed and recommended to specify more details in the TAG;
- 8.6** supported flexible disbursement and the MYRP base allocation model with potential earmarked top-ups, while recommending that FERs be limited to acute crises and cautioning against over-reliance in protracted contexts;
- 8.7** called for safeguards to prevent deprioritization of countries in protracted or forgotten crises with weak data or limited capacity, and sought assurance that the methodology reflects localization, gender equality, equity, and disability inclusion;
- 8.8** underscored the role of MYRPs in system strengthening and crisis resilience; argued for a stronger focus on the peace part of the triple nexus; and encouraged greater use of crisis modifiers and anticipatory action, and welcomed alignment with education cluster timelines;
- 8.9** welcomed the integration of refugee and gender-related indicators—including early and forced marriage—into the prioritization index, and emphasized the need to track actual refugee funding and maintain a strong FER share;
- 8.10** called for addressing procedural barriers that may hinder aid delivery in complex contexts such as Gaza;
- 8.11** requested clarity on emergency reserve funding arrangements and recommended avoiding an excessive number of small FERs, calling for transparent rationale behind allocation decisions across FERs and MYRPs;
- 8.12** proposed that ExCom hold a future discussion on ECW's strategic approach to refugees, to clarify how refugee needs will be reflected in the Case for Investment and ensure consistency in addressing vulnerable populations in protracted settings. A follow-up on the status of GRF commitments was also requested, including whether pledges remain on track and how they are being implemented.

**In response, the Secretariat:**

- 8.13** clarified that countries up for renewal will be assessed using the new prioritization methodology; however, no funds are currently available for renewal in 2025. If new funding emerges, recommendations will be made accordingly;
- 8.14** noted that all countries with MYRPs ending 2025 have requested no-cost extensions, allowing time for responsible transitions tailored to context. Internal guidance and lessons learned, such as in Iraq, will inform exit planning;
- 8.15** confirmed plans to expand use of crisis modifiers and anticipatory action, particularly for countries prone to climate-related shocks, while maintaining preparedness and adaptability within MYRPs;
- 8.16** committed to improving transparency around the application of qualitative investment criteria, including through documentation and review of analysis and recommendations by the TAG, and noted the separation of data-based and qualitative components to avoid rigid weighting;
- 8.17** acknowledged concerns about forgotten and protracted crises and confirmed ongoing work to refine definitions, address data gaps, and assess relevance of current data sources such as appeals and severity indices;
- 8.18** emphasized that refugee needs will remain a key factor in investment decisions in future cycles;
- 8.19** noted that the “peace” dimension has been integrated into the Nexus guidance for MYRPs, with approaches tailored to conflict stages—from protection in active crises to reconciliation in post-conflict settings;
- 8.20** confirmed that funding flexibility will be managed through the annual MYRP investment paper to be submitted to ExCom during the last official ExCom meeting in November of every year together with the annual financial framework, ensuring alignment with agreed ranges and honoring donor earmarking commitments;
- 8.21** reaffirmed ECW’s strong commitment to the GRF pledges, highlighting early and continued support to major refugee responses in Colombia, Peru, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Uganda, and Ethiopia; *and* confirmed that GRF data is being tracked and that an updated analysis will be shared following the publication of the Annual Results Report, building on the last update presented in Nairobi in October 2024.

**The following decision language was discussed and subsequently finalized at the end of the session:**

**Decisions (per official record)**

*The ExCom:*

- B1.** approved the revised Portfolio Prioritization Methodology, including the adoption of a needs-based prioritization index, updated MYRP investment criteria, and the introduction of an annual MYRP decision paper process;
- B2.** approved the proposed portfolio rebalance, introducing a flexible annual disbursement range of 30–40% for FER and 55–65% for MYRP, to enhance responsiveness and strategic allocation across investment windows;

**B3.** approved the MYRP allocation scheme, consisting of a minimum base allocation of US\$4 million per year (or US\$12 million over three years) and an additional allocation that is informed by an assessment against the MYRP investment criteria and available funding including dedicated funding;

**B4.** noted that the ECW Secretariat will review the countries where MYRPs have ended, or are ending in 2025, and where they will not be renewed based on the new prioritization methodology and due to limited resources and communicate the results to the concerned countries.

## 9. Organizational Restructuring<sup>1</sup>

### The ExCom:

**9.1** convened a closed-door session to deliberate on ECW's organizational restructuring, excluding ECW Secretariat Senior Management, ECW Director and UNICEF staff, advising that this was due to potential conflicts of interest. The outcomes of the session are as follows:

#### Decisions (per official record)

*The ExCom:*

**C1.** acknowledged the comprehensive approach which has been taken by the Secretariat for the restructuring process;

**C2.** noted the urgent need for an organizational restructuring due to the challenging global funding landscape and with the expectation to stay within the 7% threshold;

**C3.** requested the Secretariat to present a revised proposal by 20 June 2025, in line with ECW's mandate and strategic focus, including the following considerations:

#### Location

**C3.1.** maintain the Geneva office as a centre of gravity due to strategic importance for ECW's work with other relevant stakeholders in the EiE sector;

**C3.2.** close the New York office;

**C3.3.** identify a second location, assembling a bigger proportion of staff in or close to partners (e.g. Nairobi), maximising opportunities for localization of staffing;

#### Internal structure

**C3.4.** reduce the manager to staff ratio while reducing head count and continue considering regrading of (senior) staff positions;

#### Communication with staff

**C3.5.** request the Secretariat to be in close contact with the staff representatives;

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<sup>1</sup> For the agenda item on Organizational Restructuring, UNICEF did not participate in the discussion. Decision language for each agenda item requiring collective action is presented, deliberated, and adopted by the ExCom during the same session, with all decisions deemed valid upon confirmation of a quorum. UNICEF's participation is expected in all deliberations, except where a conflict of interest is identified, acknowledged, and accepted by the ExCom. UNICEF recommends that potential conflicts of interest (CoI) be discussed in advance of meetings to ensure clarity and agreement on recusal procedures. If identified during the meeting, recusal should still be discussed with the relevant party and reflected in the Summary of Decisions and Minutes. In the case of this agenda item, as no process had been agreed upon beforehand, UNICEF was not given the opportunity to formally recuse itself. In the future, the proposed procedure for recusals will be adopted by the ExCom Co-Chairs.

**C4.** requested the Secretariat to provide essential information on financial details.

**9.2** agreed to establish an ExCom Working Group to review the proposal of the ECW Secretariat and finalize the language for the upcoming HLSG meeting on 25 June, comprising of: INEE, UNHCR, Ireland, Germany, Porticus, Norway, Switzerland, CSO representative;

**9.3** invited the ECW Director and Staff Representative for their feedback on the outcome of the closed-door session.

**In response:**

**9.4** The **ECW Staff Representative** delivered a statement underlining the key points outlined below:

- a) acknowledgement of the financial pressures and need for restructuring, while emphasizing the importance of anchoring changes in a forward-looking vision;
- b) recommendation to defer major structural decisions until after the next replenishment to avoid disruption of business continuity;
- c) concern regarding the proposed abolishment of 15 out of 36 posts and the relocation of most staff, which could result in significant capacity loss at a critical time;
- d) call for exceptional and temporary flexibility to exceed the 7% operations ceiling, if needed;
- e) note that cost-saving measures are already underway, including reductions in travel, consultancies, and institutional contracts.

*[For the full statement, see Annex D.]*

**9.5** The **ECW Director** thanked ExCom members for their time and commitment in seeking the best path forward for ECW. She confirmed that she would consult with the ECW Staff (including SMT) before drawing a conclusion. A response would be presented through the 20 June submission.

## **10. ExCom Co-Chairing Role: Survey Feedback**

### **The ExCom Co-Chairs:**

**10.1** presented a summary of their co-chairing term, covering achievements, reflections, and feedback received through a recent member survey, structured around three overarching objectives:

- a) Governance and Structure:
- b) Advocacy and Visibility:
- c) Coordination and Programme Operations

The key points from the survey are summarized in the presentation which can be downloaded in Annex E.

**10.2** invited further suggestions to inform the incoming co-chairing team and expressed openness to continued dialogue, noting that more can be done to improve coordination, governance, and stakeholder engagement.

## 11. Election of new ExCom Co-Chair / Vice-Chair<sup>2</sup>

### 11.1 The ExCom:

- a) elected Dr. Heike Kuhn, Head of the Education Division, BMZ, Germany, to the post of Co-Chair for an additional year from June 2025 to June 2026.
- b) elected Ambassador Dominik Stillhart, Head of Swiss Humanitarian Aid, Deputy Director General of Swiss Development Cooperation, to the post of Co-Chair for two years from June 2025 until June 2027.

**11.2** raised no objections to the election process and extended appreciation and thanks to the outgoing Co-Chair, Merete Lundemo, Special Envoy of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for her Co-Chair role the past two years.

A symbolic handover followed, formally welcoming Ambassador Stillhart of Switzerland as the new ExCom Co-Chair.

### The outgoing Co-Chair from Norway:

**11.3** expressed her thanks to her colleagues who had made it possible for Norway to shoulder the responsibilities as Co-Chair, to the German Co-Chair and her team for the outstanding cooperation, to ExCom members for their support and cooperation, and to the Director and the secretariat staff for all the assistance. She pointed out important accomplishments made by ECW and its governance, as well as daunting challenges that lie ahead as she wished the new team of Co-Chairs all the best for their term and assured them of her cooperation.

### The new Co-Chair from Switzerland:

**11.4** expressed gratitude for the trust placed in him, emphasized the importance of impact for children in crisis, and called for inclusive, locally led solutions amid shifting global dynamics. He committed to supporting ECW and the ExCom in navigating the challenges and opportunities ahead.

## 12. AOB and Close

**12.1** The **ECW Secretariat** provided a brief update on the Hosting Review, noting that a consultant is expected to be contracted soon and an advisory group has been formed, with outreach to ExCom members planned in the coming weeks.

**12.2** **Denmark's representative**, Line Friberg Nielsen, Chief Technical Advisor – Education, announced her departure from the ExCom, expressing appreciation for the collaboration over the past two and a half years.

**12.3** The **Co-Chairs** thanked members for their active participation and reminded them of the launch of the EiE Flagship Report and upcoming thematic sessions on 12 June, as well as the next ExCom meeting scheduled online for 18 November 2025.

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<sup>2</sup> Elections are likewise conducted in the presence of a quorum, including the presence of a UNICEF representative. UNICEF also did not participate in the election. Unavoidable time zone differences and last-minute schedule adjustments prevented their attendance. Absent any raised objection, the election results shall stand as approved.

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## **Annexes**

**Annex A:** [List of Participants](#)

**Annex B:** [Agenda and Supporting Papers](#)

**Annex C:** [Summary of Decisions](#)

**Annex D:** [Statement of ECW Staff Representatives](#)

**Annex E:** [Presentations](#)