Background

- UNICEF is now revising the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, through an inclusive and consultative process including Country Offices (COs), Regional Offices (ROs) and HQ (Headquarters), as well as partners (UN, INGOs), and external stakeholders and humanitarian experts.
- The revision is expected to be completed by the end of 2019 for a rollout in 2020.
- The new CCCs reflect the diversity of humanitarian crises, updated norms and standards, in line with global humanitarian policy and architecture, and the way the organization operates, with its partners, to remain a principled, timely, predictable and efficient humanitarian actor.
- The new CCCs outline the importance of collaborative partnerships in fulfilling and protecting the full spectrum of children’s rights. They promote predictable, effective and timely collective humanitarian action, putting forth clearly the results where UNICEF can best contribute, and the framework to deliver for children and affected populations.
- The new CCC will be reflected in UNICEF planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting instruments, to ensure UNICEF systematic implementation and to strengthen its accountability to deliver on the CCCs.
- The new CCCs will be anchored in the overall UNICEF Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation cycle, through a monitoring and accountability framework.
- The new CCC are integrated/ mainstreamed into UNICEF Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation (PME) and reporting instruments. This systematic reference to the CCCs in all planning and reporting documents supports UNICEF systematic implementation and strengthens UNICEF accountability to deliver on the CCCs.

Revision Process and Consultations

- UNICEF is revising the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, through an inclusive and consultative process including Country Offices (COs), Regional Offices (ROs) and HQ (Headquarters), as well as partners (UN, INGOs), and external stakeholders and humanitarian experts.
  - The Field Task Force, composed of the Regional Emergency Advisors and CO-based colleagues, will be facilitating the consultations with all the Regional Offices and a sample of 40 Country Offices.
  - The Senior Advisory Group, composed of senior staff with strong experience in emergency response and operations, based at Headquarters, Regional Office, and Country Office.
  - The External Advisory Group, composed of SPHERE, ALNAP, INTERACTION, ICVA, OCHA, WFP, and ICRC.

Scope of the CCCs

1. What are the CCCs?

- Initially developed in 1998 and reviewed in 2004, and in 2010, the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) provide a framework for humanitarian action, around which UNICEF seeks to engage with partners.
- The CCCs are a global framework for humanitarian action for children undertaken by UNICEF and its implementing partners.
- Are guided by international human rights law, in particular the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols, and, in the case of armed conflict, also by international humanitarian law.
UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action

- Apply in all countries, in all contexts, and to all children affected by humanitarian crisis, based on needs, regardless of their country’s state of economic and social development.
- Promote principled, predictable, effective and timely collective humanitarian action and reflect UNICEF’s interagency responsibilities.
- Define UNICEF’s accountabilities and obligations in humanitarian action, including by defining programme and operational commitments and benchmarks against which the performance of UNICEF and its partners can be measured.
- Are grounded in the Principles of Partnership: equality, transparency, results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity.
- The CCCs recognize the importance of collaborative partnerships in fulfilling and protecting the full spectrum of children’s rights. The intent remains to promote predictable, effective and timely collective humanitarian action, putting forth clearly the results where UNICEF can best contribute.

2. What norms and standards guide the CCCs?

The CCCs are guided by international human rights law, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and in complex emergencies, International Humanitarian Law. Norms and standards include:
- Humanitarian Principles;
- General Assembly Resolutions, in particular Resolution 26/182 which creates the IASC1;
- Relevant Security Council resolutions, including those pertaining to the protection of children affected by armed conflict;
- Core Humanitarian Standards, Sphere2, Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies INEE MSEE3, Child Protection Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Action (CPMS)

3. What is the status of the CCCs? (vis a vis other internal policies and strategic documents?)

- CCC are a Policy.
  - Every Policy is issued by the Executive Director consistent with decisions from the UNICEF Executive Board, Security Council, the General Assembly and its relevant Committees (for UN system-wide application).
  - A Policy establishes the overall framework within which UNICEF operates (both programmatically and with regard to administrative or operational matters). All programme, management, and operations policies are issued by the Executive Director. Compliance is mandatory.

- The CCCs are a global framework for humanitarian action for children undertaken by UNICEF and its implementing partners. They target both internal and external audience. CCCs are:
  - a policy for UNICEF personnel
  - a planning and programming reference for UNICEF and implementing partners,
  - an advocacy instrument for engaging with Governments and other relevant stakeholders.

- The new CCC are integrated/ mainstreamed into UNICEF Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation (PME) and reporting instruments. This systematic reference to the CCCs in all planning and reporting documents supports UNICEF systematic implementation and strengthens UNICEF accountability to deliver on the CCCs.
UNICEF/ NGO Consultations -11-12 November 2019, Geneva
Frequently Asked Questions
UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action

- The new CCCs will be released with a CCC Indicator Guidance, companion to the CCCs, providing a compendium of indicators that outlines the alignment between the CCCs (Commitments and Benchmarks), the Strategic Plan, and the overall Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation system, as well as the reporting architecture, including the Results Assessment Module (RAM), the Strategic Monitoring Questions (SMQs), the Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) and the Situation Reports reporting systems.
- The CCCs and the Indicator Guidance will be used as a programming reference and planning tool by the Country Offices in their planning (CPD, HAC) and reporting cycles (Situation Reports, Annual Reports). This will allow a streamlined and systematic reporting against the CCCs in UNICEF Annual reports.
- The CCCs are also reflected in the key UNICEF planning documents, including in the Strategic Plan. They also guide UNICEF contributions to Inter-Agency Humanitarian planning cycle.

4. **What remains the same? (in comparison with the 2010 version)**

- The CCCs remain the **core framework for humanitarian action** undertaken by UNICEF and its partners. They set out the **overarching policy for UNICEF** and its partners in their actions to save the lives of children and their families affected by humanitarian crisis, to alleviate their suffering, and to support their right to life with dignity.
- The CCCs will continue to be the central policy and framework describing UNICEF's **core accountability and obligations in humanitarian action**. They will state the organization’s – and each Country Office’s – commitment to respond.
- The document remains built on **3 key pillars**: I. Policies, principles and accountability, II. Programme commitments III. Enabling and operational commitments
- The sectoral components remain built on: **Strategic Result, Commitments and Benchmarks**, derived from global standards in the respective programme areas.
- The commitments are **results-based** with associated benchmarks. Monitoring progress towards achieving these sectoral commitments is an explicit commitment.
- UNICEF’s role both as cluster leader and cluster partner is reflected in the sector commitments.

5. **What is new?**

- The new CCC reflect the **main change in global humanitarian context** and the diversity of the humanitarian crises (protracted, complex, multi-layered crises, urbanization, climate change, migration), the impact on children, and the demand for UNICEF to adapt its framework and response.
- The new CCCs will reflect the diversity of humanitarian crises, updated norms and standards, in line with global humanitarian policy and architecture, and the way the organization operates, with its partners, to remain a **principled, timely, predictable and efficient humanitarian actor**.
- A **new section on UNICEF institutional responsibilities** to deliver on the CCCs will be further developed, outlining the role and responsibilities of all divisions, and all staff to deliver on emergency response, and mentioning the internal procedures set up to allow UNICEF to be a timely, predictable and efficient
UNICEF/ NGO Consultations -11-12 November 2019, Geneva
Frequently Asked Questions
UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action

**partner.** Through the CCCs, UNICEF’s roles and responsibilities will be known and visible with consistency to partners.

- **UNICEF role and commitment on public and private advocacy** to protect the rights of children and women and affected populations - as an integral part of humanitarian action - comes stronger in the document, with a greater focus on humanitarian advocacy in complex and high threat environment.

- The new CCCs reflect UNICEF commitments on **Human Rights Based Approach, Centrality of Protection, Gender equality, Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS), Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA).**

- The new CCCs reflect and reinforce UNICEF commitments on **quality programming, linking humanitarian and development action, including commitments on risk-informed-programming, preparedness, and resilience building.**

- The new CCCs include Cross-cutting programme commitments on: **Gender, Disabilities, Adolescents, Early Childhood Development.**

- They also include situation-specific commitments on **public health emergencies, and large displacements of refugees, migrants and internally displaced people.**

- The **enabling and operational commitments are strengthened and further detailed.** They are designed to enable UNICEF and its partners to deliver on the CCC programme commitments, through an effective use of resources and operational support.

- There will be an **additional section dedicated to UNICEF commitments on Partnerships with governments and civil society organizations for programme implementation.**

**Application**

6. **WHEN:** When do the CCCs apply? When are they used?

- **The CCCs should be used by every country office, whether or not facing an acute crisis,** for the following reasons:
  - The CCCs include a commitment to monitor the situation of women and children. This does not mean that UNICEF must necessarily do the monitoring itself but support the development of national monitoring and draw from available data. This entails focus on acquisition of the best data available as well as analysis, including the identification of key gaps.
  - The CCCs also include preparedness.

- The CCCs define **humanitarian crisis** as any circumstance where humanitarian needs are sufficiently large and complex to require significant external assistance and resources, and where a multi-sectoral response is needed, with the engagement of a wide range of international humanitarian actors. Thus, the determination of a humanitarian situation is made in part based on objective measures (benchmarks), on national capacity and depending on the threat to the lives and well-being of large numbers of a
population. There is also a criteria linked to the speed of deterioration of a situation. Thus, we should distinguish between normal, stable situations where poverty causes poor social indications; and deteriorating humanitarian situations.

- **CCCs cover sudden-onset and protracted emergencies.** The threshold for response will be lower in countries with weak response capacity compared with countries with strong response capacity. The threshold for a situation becoming ‘humanitarian’ and therefore requiring the monitoring of the CCCs will vary from country to country depending on that country’s capacity. It may include smaller-scale emergencies in countries with limited capacities.

- Once the threshold for response is reached, the Programmatic and Operational Commitments and Benchmarks apply.

7. **WHERE: Are the CCCs applicable everywhere? Do the CCCs apply in every country?**

- The CCC combine two principles:
  1) **universal of children’s rights:** the commitments express the universality of rights for all children. They are based on global standards and norms. Therefore, they are framed to be relevant to all countries and all children. They thus apply to sudden onset crises, protracted crises, complex crises, natural disasters and hazards, in war-affected countries, in middle or high-income countries.
  2) **the context-specific response based on need assessments and national capacities:** UNICEF’s role in realizing its commitments varies by context. UNICEF’s scope of action and programming will be adapted to the context and needs, based on a context analysis. Therefore, UNICEF’s scope of action will be adapted depending on context.

- **While the CCCs apply in all contexts, UNICEF’s implementation modalities vary according to context.** Depending on the situation, UNICEF’s role may include promoting the CCCs including direct implementation, support for service delivery, intervention through operational partners, remote programming, technical assistance, systems strengthening, policy development and normative work, capacity building, and coordination.

- The fulfilment of the CCCs depends on many factors including availability of resources (cash, in-kind, technical expertise, core assets), partners’ resources and their ability to deliver on the ground, access to affected populations and security conditions.

**UNICEF and the CCCs**

8. **What is UNICEF’s level of accountability to the CCCs?**

- The CCCs are a Policy defining UNICEF’s accountabilities and obligations in humanitarian action, including by defining programme and operational commitments and benchmarks against which the performance of UNICEF and its partners can be measured.

- Every Policy is issued by the Executive Director consistent with decisions from the UNICEF Executive Board, Security Council, the General Assembly and its relevant Committees (for UN system-wide application). They are part of Regulatory Framework Library (RFL). Compliance is mandatory.
Frequently Asked Questions

UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action

- CCCs are referred in audits, and evaluations
- The CCCs set out commitments and benchmarks against which UNICEF holds itself accountable for the coverage, quality and equity of its humanitarian action and advocacy. They state the organization’s – and each CO’s – commitment to respond. UNICEF’s Programme CCCs are formulated as benchmarks, and UNICEF is accountable for its own planned contribution to results.
- The benchmarks are a reference point against which performance or achievements can be assessed, and against which UNICEF’s core accountability and obligations in humanitarian action can be assessed. They represent a result that a sector response should strive to achieve.
- UNICEF is accountable for working towards meeting benchmarks with cluster partners, which may include advocacy with government and other partners to implement, and advocacy for resources for UNICEF and partners

9. How does UNICEF plan to monitor and hold oneself accountable on the CCCs?

- The CCCs describe commitments made by UNICEF via other processes. The CCC refer to the key UNICEF procedures and policies adopted in the last years – for which monitoring, and accountability procedures exist. This includes:
  - Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse,
  - UNICEF’s Policy on Conduct Promoting the Protection and Safeguarding of Children,
  - UNICEF’s Policy Prohibiting and Combatting Fraud and Corruption,
  - Emergency Procedures activated for Level 3 and 2 emergencies,
  - Procedure on Linking Humanitarian and Development,
  - Procedure on Emergency Preparedness, etc.
  - …/…
- The CCCs are systematically referred to in the existing UNICEF corporate monitoring system. The CCC Indicator Guidance, released as a companion to the CCCs, outlines the alignment and correspondences between the CCCs (Commitments and Benchmarks), the Strategic Plan, and the overall Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation system, and reporting architecture, including the Results Assessment Module (RAM), the Strategic Monitoring Questions (SMQs), the Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) and the Situation Reports reporting systems.
- The CCCs are also referred in audits, and evaluations.

UNICEF Partners and the CCCs

10. What is the role of partners (governments, CSOs) and other external stakeholders in realizing/applying the CCCs?

- UNICEF works with partners to build an alliance around the Core Commitments for Children. The contribution of all partners (governments, civil society organizations, private sector) is essential in realizing the CCCs.
- The CCCs are realized through close collaboration with host governments, affected populations, civil society organisations including international and national NGOs and community-based organisations,
human rights institutions, faith-based organisations, academic and research institutions, the UN system including its operational agencies, the private sector and donors.

11. How the role and contribution of partners (who are the major implementers of the CCCs) is featured in the CCCs?

- A section on Partnership for Program Implementation in Chapter 1 section 1.2.3 Partnerships acknowledging the critical role played by partners, their role as advocacy allies, technical expert, local experts and UNICEF commitments to Principles of Partnerships (PoP)
- UNICEF commitment to effective Partnership practice is explicitly reflected in Chapter 1 section 1.2.3 Partnerships, Section 1.5.5 Institutional Responsibilities (at HQ, RO, CO level), as well as in 3.5 Partnerships
- The section 3.5 Partnerships has been beefed up with reference to UNICEF Commitments in the frame of the PCAs
- Partnerships and Collaboration with key partners for results is reflected in Key Considerations of All Programme Commitments
- All Operational Commitments reflect UNICEF commitments to partners: 3.1 Admin Fin, 3.2 Human Resources, 3.4 Communication and Advocacy section on 3.5 Partnerships, 3.7 Security 3.8 Supply. Ex: The Security section describes UNICEF support to partners to set up establish their Security Risk Management Framework and comply to their Duty of Care responsibilities

12. What is the level of obligation and accountability of partners (CSOs) to the CCCs?

- Partners are guided by the global norms, standards and principles of intervention described in the CCCs. CSOs, have agreed to commit to the global norms and standards that also guide the CCCs. It includes: Core Humanitarian Standards, Sphere, Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies INEE MSEE, Child Protection Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Action (CPMS).

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1 In the case of Partnerships for programme implementation, when signing a PCA (Programme Cooperation Agreement) with partner, UNICEF commits to contribute to the implementation of each Programme Document covered by the Agreement by:

- Commencing and completing the responsibilities allocated to it in the Programme Document in a timely manner, provided that all necessary reports and other documents are available;
- Making transfers of cash, supplies and equipment in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement;
- Undertaking and completing monitoring, assessment, assurance activities, evaluation and oversight of the Programme Document;
- Liaising on an ongoing basis, as needed, with the Government (as applicable), other members of the United Nations Country Team, donors, and other stakeholders; and
- Providing overall guidance, oversight, technical assistance and leadership, as appropriate, for the implementation of the Programme Document, and making itself available for consultations as reasonably requested; and
- Initiating joint monitoring and review meetings that shall be held at least at mid-term and at the end of the Programme Document in order to agree on the resolution of findings and to build on lessons learned to better serve the needs of children. The joint partnership review shall take into account: (a) the progress of the Programme Document; (b) working relationship of the Parties; (c) the compliance of the Parties with this Agreement; and (d) the success and challenges of the IP in meeting the agreed objectives and desired results of the Programme Document.

2 The Sphere Project, [www.sphereproject.org](http://www.sphereproject.org)

3 Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies

4 In addition, the IASC guidelines for addressing HIV In humanitarian settings.
UNICEF/ NGO Consultations - 11-12 November 2019, Geneva
Frequently Asked Questions
UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action

- The Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA) and associated Programme Documents signed at country level contribute to the fulfilment of the CCCs, and to the achievement of the Programmatic Commitments described in the CCCs.

- Partners are accountable for delivering the expected results and using funds and resources allocated, as described in the frame of the Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA) and Programme Documents signed with UNICEF. This includes detailed activities, timeframes and budget.

- When signing a PCA and Programme documents with UNICEF, CSO commits to:
  - undertake the activities described in the document, according to the expected results, detailed activities, timeframes and budget
  - display the highest standard of conduct in ensuring that the core values of the United Nations, the Convention on the Rights of the Child,
  - provide the reports required under this Agreement in a timely manner and satisfactory to UNICEF
  - establish and maintain a system for monitoring progress of the implementation of the Programme Document using the defined results, including outputs, indicators and targets as set out in the Programme Document.
  - take all appropriate measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, and child safeguarding violations, by its employees, personnel or subcontractors promptly and confidentially, in a manner that assures the safety of all involved, report allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, or any reasonable suspicion (or allegations) of child safeguarding violations.