1. Background

“Whatever the challenge, UNICEF’s focus has always been on achieving results – tangible results that save children’s lives and create new opportunities for young people to fulfil their potential. Our ambitious new Strategic Plan will help us achieve even greater results as we work with our partners to attain the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.”

UNICEF Executive Director H. Fore, UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021

To reach results for children, partnership is crucial to UNICEF and civil society organizations, including national and international non-governmental organizations (NGO), community-based organizations (CBOs) and academic institutions. A recent study undertaken by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) highlighted that NGOs generally highly appreciate partnering with UNICEF. This partnership receives a specific significance in humanitarian settings, where the challenges faced in delivering results for children are even more serious. Below are two charts showing the increasing share of humanitarian assistance in UNICEF activities (chart 1) and the share of financial transfer to Implementing Partners (IP) that goes to Civil Society Organisations (chart 2).

Chart 1. UNICEF Expenditures by type of assistance 2012-2017

According to the 2018 UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) report “UNICEF collaborated with a total of 1,403 civil society partners in the field for its humanitarian programming, nearly 67 per cent of whom were national partners. More than US$575 million in assets (cash plus value of supplies) were transferred from UNICEF to its civil society partners during the year, including US$308 million (54 per cent) to national civil society partners”.

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1 UNICEF- NGOs Partnership in Humanitarian Settings: Strengths, Challenges and Ways Forward, ICVA, April 2019
Considering the importance of this partnership, it is vital that an ongoing dialogue exists between UNICEF and humanitarian NGOs. This is also one of the main recommendations that came out of an ICVA Scoping Study on UNICEF-NGOs partnership in humanitarian settings. The study found many strengths in the current partnership, but also some challenges that need to be addressed to ensure a more fruitful collaboration, which, along with the main recommendations, can be found below:

**Strengths of the relationship**
- UNICEF is seen as a crucial partner which is increasingly investing in humanitarian contexts
- UNICEF supports interventions that other donors do not
- UNICEF presence in the field is strong and is supporting sound analysis of the context, including the political environment, and this helps NGOs in structuring interventions
- UNICEF’s voice in advocacy makes a difference - UNICEF is listened to by the national/local authorities

**Weaknesses of the relationship**
- Heavy bureaucracy for the negotiation of the PCAs
- The PCA guidelines are not clear and/or interpreted differently between COs (and sometimes even within the same CO)
- UNICEF’s financial support for partners is found to be not realistic
- Limited effort by UNICEF to build relations with NGOs on an equal basis

**Recommendations**
- The need for UNICEF to meaningfully engage with NGOs and use the momentum from this study to continue to engage
- Invest to prepare well for such consultations and ensure participation of key decision makers
- Minimize the fragmentation of UNICEF entry points for NGO partners
- Ensure appropriate follow-up on agreed recommendations

The previous consultation held with humanitarian NGOs organized by EMOPS dates to 2012, hence the need for a renewed engagement on new and outstanding issues. This consultation is one of the key steps in response to the findings and recommendations of the above referred study and it will try to address some of the main challenges identified. The consultation will create a safe space

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2 UNICEF-NGOs Partnership in Humanitarian Settings: Strengths, Challenges and Ways Forward; ICVA 2019
for a constructive dialogue between humanitarian NGOs and UNICEF. Discussions will be structured under the umbrella objective of improving the culture of partnership and the respect of the Principles of Partnership (PoPs) as a prerequisite to address other existing challenges.

This consultation will be an opportunity for dialogue on a wide range of issues. Following discussions internally and with partners on potential subject matters, it has been agreed that the key issues to be covered during this event should be:

- UNICEF Core Commitments for Children (CCC)
- Principles of Partnership (PoPs) as the framework for a cultural shift
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)
- Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA)
- Duty of Care (DoC)
- Localization

2. Expected outcome

The main expected outcome is to identify actions that will help enhance the relationships between UNICEF and NGOs. Although evidence needs to be strengthened, there is overall agreement that such partnerships contribute to the delivery of better results for children in humanitarian settings. The consultation outputs should lead to the setting up of a system of measuring progress with clear roles and responsibilities for action on the agreed way forward.

The recommendations of the consultation should feed the Humanitarian Action Review and the follow up of the recommendation from the CHTE evaluation. Furthermore, both NGOs and UNICEF will identify the points within their relationship in humanitarian action that need strengthening. Honing in on productive topics of conversation and through a two-way information flow, UNICEF will be able to hear directly from its NGO partners the strengths and challenges in working with each other, while NGOs will be able to learn about UNICEF policies and procedures relating to partnerships. And together, agree on areas to work on and follow up actions that will improve the UNICEF-NGO partnership.

3. Place, time and duration

The consultation will take place in Geneva from 11 to 12 November 2019. Location TBC.

4. Participation

As concluded in the scoping study, the consultation should ensure results-oriented discussions, requiring thereby a limited number of participants. The expectation is to bring about 50 NGO representatives, with priorities given to colleagues working in the field directly with UNICEF in humanitarian settings while ensuring a balanced representation among the regions and between international & national NGO partners. UNICEF will also ensure an appropriate yet smaller representation between relevant staff from Country Offices, Regional Offices and key HQ Divisions.

At country level, NGO participating colleagues will be expected to proactively interact prior to the consultation with other NGOs so as bring to the consultation the diversity of experiences in partnering with UNICEF at the national level. They will also be expected, in tandem with UNICEF offices, to ensure an appropriate follow up by sharing the consultation’s key findings and action points.

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Colleagues from INGOs working in HQs and/or regional offices will also be encouraged to reach out to their colleagues in the field to share the broad institutional experiences about the partnership. Participation from local and national NGOs will be strongly encouraged and their participation criteria decided jointly with ICVA. Another criteria for participation includes having had a Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with UNICEF in the last five years in a humanitarian context and being fluent in English. There will not be any translation during the consultation.

From UNICEF’s side, although the overall coordination and leadership of this consultation remains with EMOPS, other key HQ Divisions (i.e. FRG, DOC, PD and OED) will participate and contribute. Regional Offices will also be invited to join notably through their Regional Emergency Advisors (REAs) and HACT Programme Specialists, and by identifying colleagues from the Country Offices (CO) who can contribute to objectives of the meeting. A total of about 15-20 UNICEF staff are expected to participate.

5. Brief overview of the sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
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<th>Duration</th>
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<tr>
<td>8h15</td>
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<tr>
<td>9h00</td>
<td>09h45 Opening remarks</td>
<td>EMOPS / ICVA</td>
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<td>09h45</td>
<td>11h15 UNICEF: The way ahead in the humanitarian field</td>
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<td>11h15</td>
<td>11h30 Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11h30</td>
<td>13h00 Revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs)</td>
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<td>14h15</td>
<td>15h45 Principles of Partnerships</td>
<td>EMOPS</td>
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<td>16h00</td>
<td>17h30 PSEA</td>
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<td>17h30</td>
<td>18h00 Wrap up</td>
<td>EMOPS</td>
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Day 2

| 9h00 | 11h00 New initiatives and opportunities in the operationalization of partnerships | FRG | 2h00 |
| 11h00 | 11h15 Break | | 15 m |
| 11h15 | 12h45 Duty of Care | EMOPS | 1h30 |
| 12h45 | 14h00 Lunch | | 1h15 |
| 14h00 | 15h45 Localization | DOC / EMOPS | 1h45 |
| 15h45 | 16h00 Break | | 15 m |
| 16h00 | 17h00 Closing – next steps | EMOPS / ICVA | 1h00 |
## Annex 1 – Detailed Agenda

### Day One

#### 08.15 – 9.00 Registration + Light Breakfast

#### 09.00 – 09.45 Opening Remarks (UNICEF, ICVA)
**Speakers:** ICVA Executive Director, UNICEF EMOPS Director (or Geneva Deputy Director)
**Objective:** A short opening session with two senior speakers from ICVA and UNICEF to welcome the participants and briefly introduce the background and objective of the consultation.

UNICEF EMOPS Director welcomes participants and provides perspectives from the UNICEF side.

ICVA Executive Director will frame the consultation as an outcome of the scoping study and will review its key findings and recommendations.

**Outcome:** Welcome participants. Set the scene.
**Methodology:** Presentations, Q&As.

#### 09.45 – 11.15 UNICEF looking forward: Challenges & opportunities in humanitarian settings
**Speakers:** UNICEF EMOPS Director, moderated by ICVA Executive Director (TBC)
**Objective:** A 30-40 minutes presentation on horizon scanning; trends in humanitarian needs and operations (e.g. Middle East; Sahel; Ebola; climate change, Nexus, principles etc.) to possibly tackle the following: (1) How interventions in humanitarian settings do fit into UNICEF overall strategy (i.e. UNICEF humanitarian budget representing now 50% of all its expenditures); (2) What are the priorities and investments UNICEF needs to make to remain ‘fit for business’ in the humanitarian sector (e.g. revision of the CCCs; Humanitarian review etc.); (3) The place of NGOs in UNICEF’s overall partnership strategy (e.g. 50% of its total financial transfers) and; (4) What is needed and relevant for a revitalized UNICEF-NGOs partnership in humanitarian settings.

**Outcome:** Participants are informed by UNICEF and ICVA on its priorities, challenges and perspective on partnership with NGOs, and have the opportunity to react and ask questions.
**Methodology:** Moderated presentation followed by a Q&A session with participants.

11.15 – 11.30 Coffee Break

#### 11.30 – 13.00 UNICEF revised Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) in Humanitarian Action
**Speakers:** UNICEF EMOPS + 1 NGO partner (TBC)
**Objective:** Initially developed in 1998 and reviewed in 2004 and 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 synthesis of UNICEF evaluations of humanitarian action 2010-2016 highlighted the need to revisit the CCCs to reflect the changing nature of humanitarian situations, the operational environment and their impact on children. The revision process is ongoing and will be finished by the end of 2019 to allow for the roll-out of the new CCCs in 2020.

The session will aim to update participants on the review of the CCCs process, what is new/different and what it means for UNICEF’s partnership with NGOs. Discussion will then shift
to the roll-out phase and the specific collaboration with NGOs and several recommendations/action points (up to three) could be agreed upon.

**Outcome:** The participants are informed on the revision and rollout of the CCCs and can react and ask questions.

**Methodology:**
1. Presentation and Q&A: 30 min;
3. Collecting feedback from the groups: 20 min
4. Wrap up, identification of key recommendations and follow up: 10 min

**13.00-14.15 Lunch break**

**14.15 – 15.45 The Principles of Partnership (PoPs) as the framework of a renewed engagement**

**Speakers:** 2 NGOs, UNICEF DOC + EMOPS

**Objective:** A recent external review report indicated that ‘despite good intentions, UNICEF is not living the organization’s core values of care, respect, integrity, trust and accountability when it comes to this most important resource, its staff.’ Based on the recent ICVA scoping study, UNICEF may come short in respecting the PoPs and its own guidelines on partnerships. One of the current priorities of UNICEF is also to invest into an institutional culture that respects these values and principles.

In addition, one of the challenges that NGOs face in their partnership with UNICEF as per the scoping study is the complexity of the UNICEF accountability structure. In addition to a very decentralised modus operandi, the overall UNICEF interface with NGOs is very fragmented -- without having a one-stop-shop entry point for its NGO partners. As highlighted in the scoping study, many of the NGOs are concerned as ‘they do not understand the structure of UNICEF and where accountabilities are.’ This makes it difficult for them to get solutions for the identified problems.

**Outcome:** NGOs experiences presented, UNICEF accountability framework and processes explained, NGOs concerns identified by UNICEF for appropriate follow-up.

**Methodology:** Presentation from 1 or 2 NGOs on their experiences in interacting with UNICEF staff in the field, Regional or Country Office on how the PoPs are reflected in their daily work. A short presentation by UNICEF headquarters on recent/ongoing changes on its organizational culture and restructuring. This is followed up by a Q&A, focusing on what are the opportunities these present for its partnership with NGOs. At the end of the session, the main concerns raised by the participants are identified with agreed follow-up actions.

**15.45 – 16.00 Coffee break**

**16.00 – 17.30 Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**

**Speakers:** UNICEF (OED + PD & FRG); NGO partners- ING and N/L NGO.

**Objective:** UNICEF Executive Director H. Fore, as the outgoing IASC Champion on PSEA, has mobilized leadership within UN agencies to mitigate the risks of sexual abuse and exploitation, to properly address any allegations and putting at the centre the rights of the victims. Some of the initiatives undertaken impact the partnership and the work of NGOs as well. NGOs welcome such measures and their overall aim at mitigating risk for the affected population, but proper implementation of such measures requires a strong coordination and mutual support between UNICEF and NGOs at the country level.
UNICEF will present the various PSEA measures undertaken and tools developed, especially the draft PSEA toolkit and PSEA assessment. Participants will be divided into working groups, where they will complete the PSEA assessment for their own organization, discuss, identify potential challenges in implementation and come up with a few recommendations (up to three) for both NGOs and UNICEF to address such challenges.

**Outcome**: NGOs are informed of PSEA measures and tools and come up with recommendations for both UNICEF and NGOs.

**Methodology**: Presentation / working groups + self-assessment exercise + plenary.

17:30 – 18:00  **Closure of Day One – Wrap up**
In this last session, UNICEF EMOPS summarizes the key learning and action points of the day. The session will close with a few instructions on the next day.

19:00 – 20:30  **Reception - TBC**

**Day Two**

9.00 – 11.00 **New initiatives and opportunities in the operationalization of partnerships**

**Speakers**: UNICEF FRG + CO, 1/2 NGO (if possible from the Contact Analysis Group)

**Objective**: UNICEF will present its civil society partnership processes, including recent changes introduced by the 2019 CSO Procedure. UNICEF will present key findings from recent internal quality reviews of civil society partnerships, which identified areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. UNICEF will present new systems and resources (e.g. UN Partner Portal, eTools Partner Reporting Portal, CSO manual and e-course on civil society partnerships, and KPI on cash disbursement timeliness) that have been recently developed and/or will be shortly launched to streamline and improve partnership processes.

After a short presentation from FRG, NGO and UNICEF CO experiences, and a Q&A session, participants will work in groups to identify good practices and key challenges/bottlenecks in current partnership processes, and propose recommendations to improve the quality of partnership and the focus on results. A few questions that will guide the discussion: 1) How to include comprehensive risk management and mitigation measures as part of the PCA? 2) How to resource multi-year PCA agreements?

**Outcome**: Participants are informed about key changes to UNICEF’s civil society partnership processes, and new initiatives intended to streamline and improve partnership processes. Concrete recommendations are identified.

**Methodology**: Presentation + Q&A / working groups + plenary.

11.00– 11.15 **Coffee break**

11.15 – 12.45  **Duty of Care (DoC)**

**Speakers**: UNICEF EMOPS (+DHR?) + NGO colleagues (INGO and L/NNGO)

**Objective**: In broad terms the Duty of Care (DoC) defines UNICEF’s accountability for psychosocial support, health, human resources and administration and safety and security of its staff, standby partners and implementing partners during the pre and post phases of an emergency deployment.

Indeed, humanitarian workers sometimes face various threats including endangerment to their life and to their physical and mental wellbeing. UNICEF has made robust investments in the security of its own staff. Partly due to these measures, security and safety risks are often
transferred to partners. What is the UNICEF practice in covering and supporting the NGO partners in managing and responding to such risks? Are changes needed and if so which ones?

After a brief introduction of UNICEF policy on duty of care towards NGO partners and intervention of NGO colleagues (INGO and N/L NGO) on their respective experience on the subject, participants will work in (5-7) groups to identify examples of good practices and weaknesses and come up with (2) concrete recommendations on how Duty of Care can be improved in the partnership. Each group will report back in plenary at the end of the session.

**Outcome**: Duty of Care policy explained, NGOs experiences shared and recommendations identified.

**Methodology**: Presentation. Working groups + plenary.

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**14.00 – 15.45 Localisation**

**Speakers**: UNICEF EMOPS (+ Clusters?), selected NGOs (L/NNGO).

**Objective**: In line with the Grand Bargain (GB) and the World Humanitarian Summit commitments, the session will focus on localisation as a priority for UNICEF and the broader humanitarian community. It will explore the 2019 Grand Bargain annual meeting call for a holistic approach to localization focusing on funding, coordination, capacity strengthening, risk management, inclusive decision-making processes, and encouraging South-South leadership. Some of the questions the session will answer include: What are UNICEF’s objectives on localisation and how are they pursued in partnership with NGOs? 2) How are these experienced by national and local NGOs?

Furthermore, in the scoping study, UNICEF investment in the capacity development of the partners is highlighted as one of the strengths of the partnership. It is important to discuss how the partnership can further enhance each other’s capacities towards realizing localisation objectives.

After a short presentation by UNICEF EMOPS and two NGO colleagues (L/NNGOs), participants will work in groups to identify good practices, challenges and propose two concrete recommendations to move forward.

**Outcome**: Participants are informed of UNICEF’s localization efforts, share good practices and identify recommendations for improvement.

**Methodology**:

1. Presentation UNICEF: 10 min
2. NGO1: 10 min
3. NGO2: 10 min
4. Groupwork: 45 min
5. Plenary: 20 min
6. Wrap up: 10 min

**References**:

1) UNICEF Working Paper on Localization in Humanitarian Action
2) Proposed UNICEF approach to Localization in Humanitarian Action
3) Localization examined: An ICVA Briefing paper

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**15.45 – 16.00 Coffee break**
16.00 – 17.00  Closing session and next steps

**Speakers:** ICVA and UNICEF EMOPS + independent expert (TBC).

**Objective:** An independent expert on organizational culture will briefly share with the participants his/her analysis of this two-day exchange and what he/she reads of it in terms of partnership between UNICEF and NGOs in humanitarian settings.

**Outcome:** ICVA Executive Director (TBC) will provide a summary of the main action points of the consultation. UNICEF EMOPS Director (or Deputy Director) will close the meeting by sharing UNICEF’s take-aways from the consultation and agreed next steps. A process for following-up and monitoring progress on this consultation will be proposed by UNICEF and discussed/agreed to with the participants.

**Methodology:** Presentations.