

## Statement of ChildFund Alliance: Second Regular Session of the UNICEF Executive Board 8-11 September 2020

### Agenda Item 2: Opening Statements by the President of the Executive Board and the Executive Director of UNICEF

Ms. President, Executive Director Fore, and Distinguished Members of the Board, I begin by offering my appreciation for the opportunity to address you today and to thank UNICEF for its ongoing leadership during these challenging times.

As Secretary General of ChildFund Alliance, I speak on behalf of 11 child rights and development organizations. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our members joined in a unified global appeal to help children and their families in the 60+ countries where we operate. We immediately adopted measures to ensure the well-being, protection and safety of those we serve. Of key importance is how to keep children safe from increased risks of violence—both physically and emotionally. To date, our members have reached tens of thousands of children through community-based child protection interventions.

One of our core commitments in our global response plan is to provide opportunities for children and youth to elevate their voices during COVID-19, and to use their perspectives to influence our response efforts. To further this goal, our ChildFund Alliance member, Educo, recently produced [a global report](#): *Schools are shut but learning is on! Confinement and the new normality post COVID-19 explained by children from around the world*. Based on a survey with nearly 4,500 children and young people from 10 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas, the report highlights how they are experiencing restrictive measures imposed by COVID-19.

Key findings are that children miss going to school, seeing their friends, visiting family and friends, and engaging in play outside the home. Main worries include getting sick—or someone in their family falling ill, that adults are unable to go out to work, or their family will not have enough money to pay for necessities.

Tomorrow, on 9 September, ChildFund Alliance is convening the online event: *What Children Have to Say: Conversations with Advocates and Policy Makers on the COVID-19 Lockdown*. Four (4) children from ChildFund country offices will speak to their lockdown experiences and engage with high-level policymakers and advocates—including a representative from UNICEF El Salvador—about effective child protection measures during the pandemic.

During this unprecedented time, it is imperative we come together to protect the world's most vulnerable. In doing so, we must actively engage children, respect their concerns, seek their recommendations, and work with them to identify and adopt effective solutions.

We thank our young participants, and all of our partners, including UNICEF for working tirelessly to help those in need.