

**Statement of ChildFund Alliance: Second Regular Session of the UNICEF Executive Board
September 7, 2021**

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 appreciate the opportunity to address you today about the ongoing harms to children worldwide resulting from COVID-19. As Secretary General of [ChildFund Alliance](#), I speak on behalf of 12 child-focused development organizations committed to advancing and protecting the rights and well-being of children.

As we all know, the growing economic uncertainty since the outbreak of the pandemic has resulted in numerous negative impacts on children including increased threats of violence against them, escalated risks of child labor, child marriage and child trafficking, and significant effects on their education.

In April 2020, ChildFund launched a global emergency response plan focused on four key areas to mitigate the collateral damage of the pandemic. Our goals were to help stop the spread of infection; get children the food they need; keep children safe from violence; and help children to continue their learning.

Later this month ChildFund will release a report detailing our COVID-19 response and recovery work. I am pleased to share with you in advance that following a yearlong effort, ChildFund exceeded our goals, reaching more than 6.8 million children and families, and directing more than \$100 million dollars to relief efforts.

To lessen the spread of the virus, we installed handwashing stands; educated communities on symptoms, hygiene, and testing; and distributed gloves and masks. To alleviate hunger, we provided food, essential household items, and cash assistance. We arranged for safe and appropriate care for children separated from caregivers, provided virtual counseling, and expanded the reach of crisis hotlines. To ensure children continued their education, we supported learning activities online and by radio, and distributed home learning kits where internet access was unavailable or unreliable.

Limitations on travel, quarantine periods, and internet and phone connectivity all made for challenging situations, as did school closures and illnesses among our own staff. But we also learned valuable lessons. Among them, coordination with local leaders who best know a community increases the level of trust and access among those we are trying to help. In addition, having a digital system in place to register beneficiaries and adequately map banking institutions is essential to the successful delivery of cash assistance and food baskets. Also, counseling services are viewed more positively when delivered in tandem with food assistance.

In closing, I share that ChildFund remains committed to this work, as COVID-19 and variants of the virus, continue to spread and evolve. I wish to thank UNICEF for its own commitment to help vulnerable populations during these challenging times, and on behalf of ChildFund members, I express our gratitude and appreciation to ED Fore for her tireless work and leadership. Her devotion, passion and voice inspired many, and were instrumental in achieving progress toward making the world a better place for all children.