

EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE**CF/EXD/2017-004****11/12/2017****Subject: Executive Directive****Accessibility in UNICEF's Programme-Related Construction Activities**

UNICEF is committed to promoting equity and inclusion for all and to comply with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Article 9 of the CRPD¹ recognizes the importance of accessibility, specifically referring to accessibility of buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces.

The Sustainable Development Goals have explicit references to children and adults with disabilities across the SDG framework, in particular to accessibility of the built environment in goals on Education and on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements. UNICEF has also endorsed the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action², launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, thereby committing to make humanitarian action inclusive to children with disabilities.

Accessibility helps children and adults with disabilities to enjoy their rights as outlined in Human Rights instruments and development frameworks. Accessibility is a precondition for children and adults with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society.

This directive reinforces the Supply Manual guidance on accessibility.³

UNICEF will also promote and advocate for accessibility and universal design in construction-related activities through dialogue with governments and partners.

Section 1**Definitions**

1.1 The following definitions shall apply for the purposes of this directive:

1.2 *Accessibility*: “Accessibility” is defined as a provision of buildings or parts of buildings for people, regardless of disability, age or gender, to be able to approach, enter, use, egress from and evacuate a building independently, in an equitable and dignified manner and to the greatest extent possible.⁴

¹ As of November 2017, 175 governments have ratified the CRPD.

² <http://www.disabilityhumanitariancharter.org>

³ Annex 12 of Chapter 6, Section 11, paragraph 9.8 of the Supply Manual “Accessible Components for the Built Environment: Technical Guidelines embracing Universal Design.”

⁴ Accessible Components for the Built Environment: Technical Guidelines embracing Universal Design, p.1.

1.3 *Built environment:* A “built environment” is a construction that is commissioned, designed and managed for use by persons – whether child or adult – and includes internal and external facilities and any product that is fixed to the construction.⁵

1.4 *Disability:* Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.⁶

1.5 *Universal design:* Universal design refers to the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. The concept refers to products and building that are accessible and usable by everyone, including persons with disabilities. This concept is consistent with UNICEF’s focus on inclusive programming that can accommodate the needs of all, including children and adults with disabilities.

Section 2

Scope

2.1 This Executive Directive builds on internal technical guidelines already in place and reinforces the implementation of current procedures.⁷

2.2 This directive applies to new construction activities in which UNICEF is involved. For projects involving remodeling, extension or repair, accessibility will be considered and implemented wherever feasible.

2.3 This directive focuses on the built environment related to all areas of UNICEF programmes and excludes other components of physical environment such as public transportation and road networks.

2.4 UNICEF should also promote and advocate for accessibility and universal design in dialogue with governments and partners which involve construction components, both in development programmes as well as in humanitarian action.

Section 3

Inclusion of accessibility to support Programme Design

3.1 To be consistent with UNICEF’s focus on equity and social inclusion, programming should be designed to accommodate the needs of children and adults with and without disabilities. To achieve this, in cases where UNICEF engages in construction, accessibility standards should be included as per paragraph 5.1 below. For construction projects, the design and costing should include accessibility provisions as an integral component and not as an add-on. Wherever applicable, accessibility should be clearly mentioned and budgeted in project proposals. See paragraph 8.1 for any rare exceptions.

⁵ International Standard Organization, *International Standard, ISO 21542, Building construction — Accessibility and usability of the built environment*, ISO, Geneva, 2011, p. 3.

⁶ Art. 1, UN CRPD.

⁷ Refer to paragraphs 9.8 and 9.9 of Section 11 of Chapter 6 of the Supply Manual.

Section 4

Cost consideration of accessible construction

4.1 External studies indicate that in new construction, the cost of meeting accessibility standards is between 1 and 3 per cent of the total cost.⁸

4.2 The cost of altering a construction to make it disability accessible may be significantly higher than incorporating accessibility at the design and construction stage.

4.3 In some cases (e.g. WASH constructions) complying with standards of accessibility may require going beyond the basic standard design, implying higher costs. In situations when all units cannot be made accessible, a minimum number of units should comply with accessibility standards based on the nature of the facility and the population it serves. For example, ensuring that there is at least one accessible unisex latrine in every school.⁹

Section 5

Standards for accessible construction

5.1 While engaging in construction activities, UNICEF should observe the accessibility standards defined in the existing national legislation/standards on accessibility. ISO 21542:2011 sets out International Standards for Building construction – Accessibility and usability of the built environment. In the absence of national legislation on accessibility, or where national legislation falls short of the standards set out in ISO 21542:2011, the ISO 21542:2011 should be used as a reference while taking into consideration local context.¹⁰

Section 6

Implementation

6.1 UNICEF has developed guidance documents and tools to support the implementation of accessible built environment in its programmes. Technical information on accessibility can be found in the Accessible Components for the Built Environment: Technical Guidelines embracing Universal Design (Annex 12 of paragraph 9.8, Chapter 6, Section 11 of the Supply Manual).¹¹ The Construction Unit of the Supply Division will provide additional technical information and support as required.

⁸ Ratzka A. *A brief survey of studies on costs and benefits of non-handicapping environments*, Independent Living Institute, Stockholm, 1994; Steven Winter Associates. *Cost of accessible housing*, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, 1993, in *World Report on Disability*, World Health Organization, 2011, Geneva, p.173, *Education for All the cost of accessibility*, Steinfeld, Edward, World Bank, 2005, Washington, p. 3.

⁹ Under a universal design approach, this accessible toilet can also incorporate features for girls' menstruation hygiene and serve as toilet facilities for teachers.

¹⁰ Paragraph 9.9, Chapter 6, Section 11 of the Supply Manual.

¹¹ Accessible Components for the Built Environment: Technical Guidelines embracing Universal Design.

Section 7

Responsibilities

- 7.1 For all construction activities undertaken by UNICEF, the responsible programme/thematic section(s) should follow the procedures described in UNICEF's Supply Manual (Chapter 06: Procurement of Supplies, Equipment and Services; Section 11: Guidelines for the Assessment and Undertaking of Construction Projects).
- 7.2 The Contract Review Committee (CRC) is responsible for reviewing compliance for direct implementation through UNICEF contracts, including accessibility considerations, and will make recommendations to the Head of Office for approval.
- 7.3 The Programme Cooperation Agreement Review Committee (PCARC) is responsible for reviewing accessibility compliance for implementation of construction projects through partner-related contracts/arrangements and to make recommendations to the Head of Office for approval.
- 7.4 As part of the Local Procurement Authorizations (LPA) process for projects valued above US\$100,000, Supply Division should highlight the need to include accessibility requirements at the design stage, for projects under direct implementation or through implementing partners.
- 7.5 Programme Information Database (PIDB) codes will be created, as required, and used to monitor expenditures and progress made on accessible construction.

Section 8

Exceptions

- 8.1 In circumstances where it is not feasible to make the whole built environment accessible, utmost consideration should be given to make essential parts of the built environment accessible to ensure reasonable access and usability by children and adults with disabilities.
- 8.2 In exceptional circumstances when compliance with paragraph 3.1 or with the accessibility standard stipulated in paragraph 5.1 above is not feasible, the office/section(s) responsible for the project implementation should provide the needed justification in the submission to the Contract Review Committee (CRC)/ the Programme Cooperation Agreement Review Committee (PCARC) for final decision by the head of office. A waiver should only be considered after all options have been examined.

Section 9**Advocacy and Awareness Raising**

9.1 UNICEF commits to promoting accessibility and universal design as necessary provisions to achieve equity and inclusion for all.

9.2 While engaging with governments, partners and vendors on construction, UNICEF should advocate for the development, improvement and implementation of accessibility standards in built environment both in development and in humanitarian contexts. UNICEF should advocate for and promote awareness on accessibility of the built environment among partners and communities, in all programmes and initiatives involving construction. Where relevant, UNICEF should partner with disability organisations in this regard.

9.3 UNICEF should document, share and exchange knowledge and good practices on accessible construction within the organization and among sister agencies in the United Nations Common System, as well as with development partners.

Section 10**Final Provisions**

10.1 This directive enters into force immediately.

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DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PAGE

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| Document Summary | Accessibility is a precondition for children and adults with disabilities to live independently and participate fully and equally in society. This Executive Directive which has been developed by Programme Division and Supply Division builds on internal technical guidelines on accessibility of construction already in place and reinforces the implementation of current procedures. |
| Regulatory content the Document Replaces | N/A |
| Topics Covered | Accessibility, Universal Design, Construction, Procurement and Supply |
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| Reference / Links to Enabling Legislation and Background | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) |
| Links to Relevant Policy | CRPD Committee General Comment 2, Accessibility |
| Links to Relevant Procedure | UNICEF Supply Manual Chapter 06, Section 11 |
| Links to Relevant Guidance | UNICEF Supply Manual Chapter 06, Section 11, Annex 12: <i>Accessible Components for the Built Environment: Technical Guidelines embracing Universal Design</i> |
| Links to Relevant Training Materials | |
| Links to Other Knowledge & Information Resources | ISO 21542 - Accessibility and Usability of the Built Environment, available on request to the UNICEF Supply Division |

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| | Australian Government: Universal Design Principles for Australia's Aid Programme |
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