



Executive Committee Meeting – Minutes

Thursday 23 March

Summary of the outcomes of the meeting

Chair's Welcome

The Chair:

- Welcomed participants to the call. Thanked everyone for the successful HLFC and congratulated Graham Lang on being appointed Deputy Director for ECW.
- Recalled the last ExCom teleconference that took place in November and briefly summarized points of discussion and outcomes:
 - Annual Work Plan and Budget for 2023 approved
 - FER reserve replenished with \$17.5m
- Outlined the agenda for the meeting as follows:
 1. Executive Director's Update
 2. ExCom Succession
 3. HLFC Follow-up: What Does the Result Mean for ECW Programming and Operations
 - (i) Programme overview, including pipelines and allocations to funding windows
 - (ii) Operational overview, including implementation of the Staffing Plan [decision-making point to approve some rearrangements]
 - (iii) Resource Mobilization overview, explaining how RM will be a continuous activity for ECW
 4. HLSG Agenda
 5. CSO representation update
 6. Preparation of in-person ExCom meeting in Norway
 7. AoB and Conclusion
- Reminded participants that an updated agenda and background documents were shared with ExCom on 17 March.

1- Director's Update

Yasmine Sherif, ECW Executive Director, provided the ExCom with a general update and made the following points:

- Congratulated and thanked all ExCom members for the success of the High-Level Financing Conference.
- Recognized the new strategic donors making pledges at HLFC.
- Reflected on the speed with which ECW has grown – and that this would not have been possible without the shared vision, commitment, and leadership of ExCom.
- Noted that ECW has secured 55% of the funding needed for the new Strategic Plan within the first 45 days of the Strategic Period. Mobilization is constant and ongoing but ECW feels confident about reaching its overall ambition.
- Noted that in 2022 ECW went through an intense period of evaluations, audits and planning for the 2023 – 2026 Strategic period.

- Explained that progress on the new Strategic Plan is already underway in 2023. For example, ECW's new Gender Policy & Accountability Framework and the accompanying Implementation Guide have been launched, recruitment is on-going for the Senior Climate Consultant to help advance the commitments on Climate, and work is underway to strengthen and deepen the ECW model through the updates being made to the MYRP and Acceleration Facility processes. Looking ahead, ECW will be continuing resource mobilization efforts to go above and beyond the \$1.5bn target in order to deliver for those left furthest behind.
- Thanked ExCom for their solid support, guidance and generosity.

The Chair opened the floor for questions and comments:

- The **ICRC** congratulated everyone involved in the HLFC. They asked if there will be further analysis of the pledges.
- The **FCDO** noted that it was great to see new donors coming in, and ask if there is an engagement plan, and anything ExCom can do to help.

In response to the above questions and comments, the following responses were provided:

- Both the pledging analysis and the engagement planning are ongoing, and an update will be shared later in the agenda by Michael Corlin (Chief of Finance and Operations) and Nasser Faqih (Chief of Resource Mobilization & Partnerships).
- All funding announced is against the new strategic plan.
- **UNICEF FSO** shared that they are following up with donors to sign agreements related to the pledges. The information is sent to Michael on a periodic basis and as funds are deposited in the UNICEF ECW Account.

2- ExCom Succession

The Chair:

- Informed ExCom that the UK have completed their term as ExCom Chair and will be rotating out of the role.
- Explained that those interested in taking this on should share their Expression of Interest with the Secretariat, with a view to appointing the new chair in May at the in-person ExCom meeting.
- Reminded ExCom of the process and timeline to elect the next Chair and noted that the function is described in the Operational Manual. In particular:
 - The ExCom chair is appointed for 2 years, renewable once.
 - Whilst the Chair has been filled by donors in the past, there are no limitations to applying.
 - The Chair should be a very senior organizational/governmental representative, and it is an organizational commitment requiring solid seniority, time, effort and an organizational/governmental support team.
- ExCom members can reach out to discuss the role with the Chair if they would like to hear more about what it involves.
- Interested ExCom members should submit their nomination to the Secretariat, the Chair of ExCom and the Executive Director.

The Chair opened the floor for questions and comments:

- The **Executive Director** highlighted that it is a significant commitment and carries a lot of responsibility. Seniority and experience are important, and Chairs have always been at Ambassador and Senior Director level.
- **Canada** asked about the plan to have co-chairs, rather than chair and vice chair - could this be an

opportunity for enhanced southern representation?

- The **FCDO** commented that they have really enjoyed the role of Chair, including, for example, collaborating with the Secretariat and Norway on three evaluations, the COVID-19 response, and the new strategic plan. They explained that it is an organizational responsibility, with multiple colleagues engaging -- each week FCDO colleagues speak with members of the Secretariat, and meet once a month with the Vice Chair and ECW to discuss operations and deliverables. It is particularly important to step up before the ExCom meetings. Experience and commitment are key.

In response to the above questions and comments, the following responses were provided:

- ECW is open to different permutations of chair/co-chair. The more balanced and inclusive we can be the better.
- Michael Corlin informed ExCom that the ECW Secretariat will invite Expressions of Interest for ExCom Chair and provide a deadline for sending expressions. He also noted that the Organisational Evaluation conducted last year and the 2022 Internal Audit both recommended revisions to the ECW governance structure. These suggestions will be considered in the update of the Operational Manual which will begin in the coming months.

3- HLFC Follow-up: What Does the Result Mean for ECW Programming, Operations and Resource Mobilization

Graham Lang, Deputy Director, presented the programming overview (See PowerPoint presentation for further details):

- Provided an overview of ECW’s approach to programming, in line with the outcomes of the HLFC and the commitments in the Strategic Plan. Recognized that the presentation is a simplified overview of a complex process, but highlights the key messages.
 - According to the Strategic Plan, if fully funded with a budget of at least \$1.5bn, the break down by window would be \$985m for the MYRP, \$380m for the FER and \$40m for the AF. As ECW is still mobilizing resources towards that \$1.5bn, the secretariat are currently working on a 70% basis. I.e. proposing \$690m, for the MYRPs, \$266m for the FERs and \$28m for the AF.
 - This model helps ECW to manage risk, without reducing our ambition. These commitments are aligned to the ratios set out in the Strategic Plan, but take into account cash flows in and disbursements out. It allows ECW to remain ambitious without over committing itself for funds that are still to be mobilized.
 - Overall for 2023, ECW is aiming for a disbursement of \$246m across the three windows, whilst maintaining the ratios agreed in the Strategic Plan. For the MYRPs, ECW has already disbursed \$30m, and expects to disburse \$173m by the end of 2023. For the FERs, ECW has disbursed \$18m already, and expects to disburse \$66m by end of the year. Lastly for the AF, \$250K has been disbursed so far for AF and ECE expects up to \$7m to be disbursed by the end of the year.
 - These allocations are based on a comprehensive methodology developed by Christian and his team. This robust and systematic approach has the ability to adapt as the funding situation develops..

Michael Corlin, Chief of Finance and Operations, delivered an operational overview, including implementation of the staffing plan (See PowerPoint presentation for further details):

- Reminded ExCom that last year, ExCom approved a staffing plan moving from 28 positions in 2022 to 46, to oversee the implementation of the Strategic Plan (i.e. 18 new positions).
 - 2 of these positions were activated in June and have been filled (the Deputy Director and Communications Manager).

- In November 2022 ECW agreed to approach the staffing plan in phases, and agreed the recruitment of 7 new positions/contractual changes (2 EIE Managers, Evaluation Manager, Monitoring Manager, M&E Officer, Risk Officer, Senior Administrative Executive) - these will be filled by mid-2023. ECW is also exploring how it will fill the AF Manager role.
- In terms of budget expenditure, ECW foresees an under-expenditure on staffing costs of 15% due to the unforeseen delays in recruitment. It does not anticipate under-expenditure on other items.
- ECW is keen to now activate the second phase of the staffing plan, and to move forward with 5-6 new positions from the Staffing Plan. ECW will share relevant documentation with ExCom in due course. This will bring staff costs to \$9.6m in 2023 (still \$1.1m under due to the delays in recruitment).
- Updated ExCom on the overall financial overview for the strategic period.
 - Currently, the cash in and available funds for the Strategic Period are \$829 m. Therefore there is a funding gap of \$671m to reach the portfolio balance of 1.5bn set out in the SP.
 - If ECW activates these new positions, the operational costs for the year will be \$15.3m (16.4 budgeted), and next year \$17.8m.
 - In line with Graham’s presentation, ECW is looking at approximately \$250m in programme expenditure and will retain the 7% target for operational costs.
- Reiterated that the Secretariat will be in touch with ExCom soon with more detail about the second phase of the staffing plan.

Nasser Faqih, Chief of Resource Mobilization & Partnerships, delivered the Resource Mobilization overview, explaining how RM will be a continuous activity for ECW (See PowerPoint presentation for further details):

- Reminded ExCom that despite the excellent progress, the target for ECW has not yet been met, and there is still work to do to mobilize the \$1.5 billion target. ECW need to mobilize at least \$670m during the 2023 – 2026 strategic plan cycle. It will take all of us remaining engaged and the ECW Secretariat is excited to work with you on this.
- The next 18-24 months will be critical in closing this gap – if ECW can make sure the plan is fully funded in first half of the strategic period, it will allow us to make multi-year, predictable finance available in country.
- Noted that there are four priority areas to ECW’s Resource Mobilization moving forward:
 - Increasing existing institutional donor funding
 - Securing new institutional donor funding
 - Increasing funding from the private sector, foundations and philanthropy
 - Mobilizing more funding for the ECW mission outside of the Trust Fund (including improving how donors are systematically engaged in supporting our work in country)
- Explained that the implementing approach for these RM efforts will include: strengthening partnerships with CSOs, parliamentarians, government stakeholders and influencers, increasing capacity of stakeholder engagement and influence in critical institutional donor markets, increasing capacity for engaging the private sector, engaging with multilateral processes, and planning a high-profile moment in 2024 to showcase new commitments.

The Chair thanked the secretariat for the presentations and opened the floor for questions and comments:

- The **FCDO** asked the Secretariat to let ExCom know if they can support with influencing any new donors.
- The **GPE** praised the RM efforts in such a challenging fundraising environment. They raised a question about the \$200m gap between the projections shared by ECW and the existing funding. How has ECW factored in securing that \$200m at a minimum to be able to fund at that 70%? And what will that mean in terms allocation sizes and the number of MYRPs that can be funded

and with what timeframes? GPE teams are also ready to work with ECW on joint advocacy and fundraising efforts in markets where it makes sense.

- The **BMZ** also praised the tremendous resource mobilization effort to date. Germany are keen to encourage multi-year contributions to support predictability, and appreciate the focus on creatively exploring private sector partnerships. They welcomed the ideas presented.
- The **FCDO** asked how ECW is approaching the pipeline of programmes, while also reviewing the MYRP portfolio as committed to in the new SP. When will that review process begin? And are there any plans to have staff in the education team closer to the regions they cover?

In response to the above questions and comments, the following responses were provided:

- ECW is planning towards the 70% scenario, but it has not committed all of that funding – ECW has some maneuverability so that it won’t over extend. The distribution of the MYRPs helps, as they are not all coming at once. But ECW is committed to achieving the \$1.5bn and needs to be ready to respond. ECW is trying to ensure the model is as balanced as possible.
- ECW began the MYRP portfolio management work in Q4 2022, and it’s well underway. The ToR focusing on renewals is being finalized and will be shared with the ETRG and GRG in the coming weeks. ECW plans to apply to the approach to a few of the MYRPs up for renewal this year.

The Chair:

- Noted that the ECW secretariat will request a non-objection from ExCom to activate the second phase of the staffing plan as outlined in Michael’s presentation.

4- High Level Steering Group Agenda

The Chair next handed the floor to the ECW Executive Director to present the HLSG agenda:

Time	Agenda	Comments
10:25 am	Dialing-in	
10:30 am	Welcome	Chair of HLSG
10:35 am	Presentation on Girls’ Education in Afghanistan.	UNICEF
10:45 am	Update from ECW Executive Director	ECW Executive Director
10:50 am	#222MillionDreamsCampaign and the High-Level Financing Conference.	Chair of HLSG Plenary discussion
11:20 am	Endorsement of 2022 Organizational Evaluation and its Management Response	Chair of HLSG Plenary Discussion and endorsement
11:40 am	Close of meeting	Chair of HLSG

Yasmine Sherif, ECW Executive Director, provided a short update on the upcoming HLSG meeting:

- The HLSG meeting will take place on 17th April at 10.30 EST. The call will be online and will last 1hr15mins. Invitations have been sent.
- ExCom have received the draft agenda, which will include an update on girls education in Afghanistan, an open plenary discussion on HLFC, and endorsement of the Organizational Evaluation. ExCom members to let the Secretariat know if there are any agenda items to add.
- ExCom members invited to contact the ECW Secretariat to secure their HLSG members an opportunity to talk. It is easier if the Secretariat know ahead of time.
- ExCom members also invited to reach out to the Secretariat to discuss joining future missions with Yasmine (e.g. South Sudan, Pakistan and Nigeria).

5- CSO Representation Update

The Chair:

- Recognized that ExCom has requested that the TORs for electing CSO representatives to ExCom should be updated.
- Noted that ExCom has issued a non-objection to extending CSO representatives on ExCom while the TORs for electing CSO representatives are under review.
- Handed over to **Marco Grazia** from World Vision to present on process.

Marco Grazia from World Vision presented an overview of a paper on ECW governance prepared by the CSO constituency:

- Explained that the paper has been developed by the CSO constituency in collaboration with the national NGO and youth representatives, within the working group convened by Canada. This forms part of the efforts to elevate southern voices in ECW governance. This is a zero draft requiring further consultation e.g. with the teachers group, other stakeholders recommended by ExCom.
- Explained that the goal is give southern actors a more proportionate voice, greater agency and more balanced engagement (including implementing partners, affected populations, and recipient governments).
- Noted that the paper makes four main recommendations (and goes beyond reformulating the CSO ToR only). These recommendations include:
 - A full constituency model
 - Localizing ECW discourse
 - Dedicated support and investment
 - Making systemic changes
- Noted that the paper recognizes that these recommendations come at a cost, and note that we need to retain ECW's lead structure and flexibility while becoming more inclusive. The paper identifies a remaining question -- is ECW a fund or a partnership?
- Explained that the group identified the operational manual update as the key opportunity for these changes.
- Noted that for the CSO ToR specifically, they have made specific recommendations. For example, increasing the number of CSO representatives (keep existing four groups but adding an additional youth from the south, adding 4 NNGO representatives to cover the regions, maintain 1 INGO and 1 teacher representative) and reviewing the role of CSO constituency and the role of the CSO representatives.
- Identified next steps to take this beyond the zero draft. The group hope to receive feedback on the paper from the Secretariat and ExCom, to identify other key stakeholders and extend the consultative process, and then to reconvene in Norway with an updated paper for discussion.

The Chair thanked Marco for the update and opened the floor for any questions or comments.

- **Norway** thanked Marco and the CSO constituency and looked forward to revisiting this issue in May. They requested to see the paper as soon as possible so they can review the detail.
- **Michael** commented that this goes beyond the election of the CSO reps, and noted that the operational manual update is the appropriate process for reflecting on the wider reform piece. Lillehammer is a good opportunity to consider this process going forward.
- The **Executive Director** commented that we should avoid becoming overly bureaucratic, and must maintain our unique ways of working and our efficiencies in line with our mandate and history. Noted that there are already good examples of the close relationship with national partners that may not yet be captured e.g travelling with Ministers, developing both FERs and MYRPs directly with Ministers, and that there are also important learnings from the HLCF where young people, teachers and CSOs were

very actively involved.

In response to the above questions and comments, the following responses were provided:

- The paper will be shared with ExCom, who may send reflections to Canada and the CSO constituencies to update the zero-draft ahead of the update of the Operational Manual
- The goal is not to bureaucratize but to simplify and amplify southern voices and empowering female leadership. The objective is to prepare for elections, rather than reforming the already functioning set-up.

6- Update on the Preparation of the ExCom Meeting in Norway, 30-31 May 2023

Merete Lundemo, Norway, provided an update on the plans for the in-person ExCom meeting in May:

- Shared that they are looking forward to welcoming ExCom to Lillehammer in May.
- Reminded ExCom to book their accommodation as soon as possible as the block booking is timebound – an invitation from the ECW Secretariat with logistical details will follow shortly.
- Confirmed that virtual participation will be possible.
- Reviewed the emerging agenda and noted that:
 - There will be an optional seminar on Climate and EIEPC on Tuesday 30th for those who arrive in time. This is being organized in close collaboration with Civil Society and will focus on the climate commitments in the Strategic Plan.
 - On the evening of Tuesday 30th there will be a dinner attended by the Norwegian Minister for International Development
 - Wednesday 31st May will be the formal ExCom meeting. In addition, there will be opportunities to work in groups, as there are several big rooms, cottages etc. There will also be a dinner.
 - There is an option to have additional conversations on Thursday 1 June. The ECW Secretariat is preparing a list of thematic subjects to discuss in parallel sessions on 1 June.
- Informed ExCom that the Agenda for the ExCom meeting and the third day will be shared after Easter

The Chair opened the floor for questions and comments:

- The **FCDO** commented that they are looking forward to Lillehammer, and particularly the discussions on climate and education. They are looking forward to providing input on the agenda and would like to see more on results and reporting as well as a few other issues.

The Chair:

- Thanked **Norway** for the update and thanked ExCom for their input. Reminds ExCom that the ECW Secretariat can cover in-person participation costs for representatives from programme countries. If this is relevant, please contact the secretariat.

Chair's Summary and Close:

The Chair:

- Thanked the ExCom and the Secretariat for today's discussion and for their valuable inputs.
- Noted that the ECW Secretariat will send a request for non-objection to implement the second phase of the staffing plan approved in August 2022.
- Noted that the ECW Secretariat will send invitation to ExCom members to share their expression of interest to serve as ExCom Chair
- Congratulated ExCom and the ECW Secretariat on a strong start to the 2023 – 2026 Strategic Period.