



**UNLOCKING POTENTIAL,  
PROGRESSING TOGETHER:  
PLAN INTERNATIONAL EU  
OFFICE STRATEGY 2017-2022**





Photo: Plan International / Anne Ackermann

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**Plan International EU Office represents Plan International towards the European institutions and services and acts as a coordination and liaison hub on EU issues for Plan International.**

**This strategy represents Plan International EU Office's purpose and ambition for the period 2017-2022.**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Plan International strives for a just world that advances children's rights and equality for girls.**

Plan International's global strategy 2017-2022, *100 Million Reasons*, represents the first five years of a journey to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and to ensure no one is left behind. It will drive us forward with ambition, urgency and determination to ensure all children can enjoy their rights.

The European Union (EU) is one of the world's largest and most important development and humanitarian actors, and influencing its policies, programmes and diplomatic actions has the potential to positively affect the lives of hundreds of millions of children in developing countries.

Plan International EU Office therefore contributes to achieving the organisation's global strategy by influencing EU external action in favour of children's rights and equality for girls.

If we are to deliver the results we seek for children, business as usual approaches will not work. We will push the EU to do more, and do it better.

Our strategy 2017-2022, *Unlocking Potential, Progressing Together*, therefore takes into account the shifting context and trends where we feel we can make a difference and be a change-maker, and which are most likely to impact - positively or negatively - on our work at EU level to advance children's rights and equality for girls.

## **A reliable and credible partner**

To be successful, we must be recognised as a reliable and credible partner of choice for the EU in policy formulation and implementation, in development and humanitarian funding, and strategic communication. We will be bold and focused in our approach, differentiating ourselves to deliver impact.

We will build our distinctiveness as a leader in the global movement for girls. By focusing on carefully selected strategic priorities, we will increase our impact and influencing capacity as the go-to organisation on girls' rights and youth economic empowerment.

## **Working together**

We will raise our voice, and the voices of the children and communities we work with, as experts in the issues that affect them, combining evidence-based advocacy and influencing with bold, impactful campaigning and communications.

Our experience proves that when we join up our efforts, we achieve maximum impact. We will work with partners at all levels, both within the organisation and externally, driven by a dynamic, diversely skilled and empowered workforce.

## **Evolve and adapt**

Building on our history and strengths, our strategy ensures we are fit for purpose and will help us to deliver the results we seek for children in a changing world.

This strategy was designed in the framework of the current external environment and organisational setting. We will remain agile and open to possible changes and shifts in priorities. As such, this strategy is likely to evolve and adapt as needs and trends evolve over the coming five years.

We will hold ourselves accountable, reporting on our progress, successes and challenges over time.

## **Our five-year strategy consists of the following elements:**

- 1. Our purpose and ambition:** The reason our office exists, and the change we aim to contribute to.
- 2. Results for children:** The changes we will seek to achieve at EU-level, addressing the barriers which prevent children, particularly girls, realising their rights and fulfilling their potential.
- 3. Making it happen:** How we will work as an office over the next five years to ensure we become a partner of choice for the EU institutions and achieve our ambition.

# PLAN INTERNATIONAL EU OFFICE STRATEGY 2017-2022

CRC

CEDAW

## OUR PURPOSE AND AMBITION

We will strive to **advance children's rights and equality for girls** in the EU's external action.

Through our actions, we will contribute to ensuring **100 million girls learn, lead, decide and thrive.**

## RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

Based on Plan International's global outcome areas, we will focus on

**Contributing to a global girls' rights movement, strengthening girls' leadership and voice**

**Ensuring all children have the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to succeed**

**Securing more, better, pro-poor aid, with a focus on girls**

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

Evidence based influencing

Increasing our visibility

Internal coordination and collaboration

Strategic external partnerships

Dynamic, skilled, empowered workforce

Global Account Management

## GLOBAL OUTCOME AREAS

We want all children, and particularly girls, to:

### LEARN

Have the education and skills they need to succeed in work and life

### LEAD

Take action on the issues that matter to them

### DECIDE

Have control over their lives and bodies

### THRIVE

Grow up equally valued and cared for, free from discrimination, violence and fear

# OUR GLOBAL VISION

**Plan International strives for a just world that advances children's rights and equality for girls. Our ambition is that together, we take action so that 100 million girls learn, lead, decide and thrive.**

A series of major global commitments provide a conducive framework to pursue our global organisational ambitions.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which represents the most ambitious effort yet to reduce poverty, tackle inequality and injustice and protect the planet, sets the framework for Plan International's development and humanitarian work, in particular our efforts to achieve girls' rights and gender equality.

The Organisation's new global strategy 2017-2022, *100 Million Reasons*, represents the first five years of a journey to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and to ensure no one is left behind.

It is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which drive the Organisation towards its purpose.

## OUR PURPOSE

**We strive for a just world that advances children's rights and equality for girls.**

We engage people and partners to:

- Empower children, young people and communities to make vital changes **that tackle the root causes of discrimination against girls**, exclusion and vulnerability
- **Drive change in practice and policy** at local, national and global levels through our reach, experience and knowledge of the realities children face
- Work with children and communities to **prepare for and respond to crises** and to overcome adversity
- Support the safe and successful **progression of children from birth to adulthood**

Based on its purpose and the commitment to leave no one behind, Plan International will focus its work on **four global outcome areas**. All children, particularly girls, must:

### LEARN

Have the education and skills they need to succeed in life and make a decent living.



### LEAD

Participate in and influence the social, economic and political decisions that matter to them.



### DECIDE

Have control over their lives and bodies, and make informed choices about identity, relationships, and if and when to have children.



### THRIVE

Grow up equally valued and cared for, free from discrimination, violence and fear.





# OUR PURPOSE AND AMBITION

## OUR PURPOSE

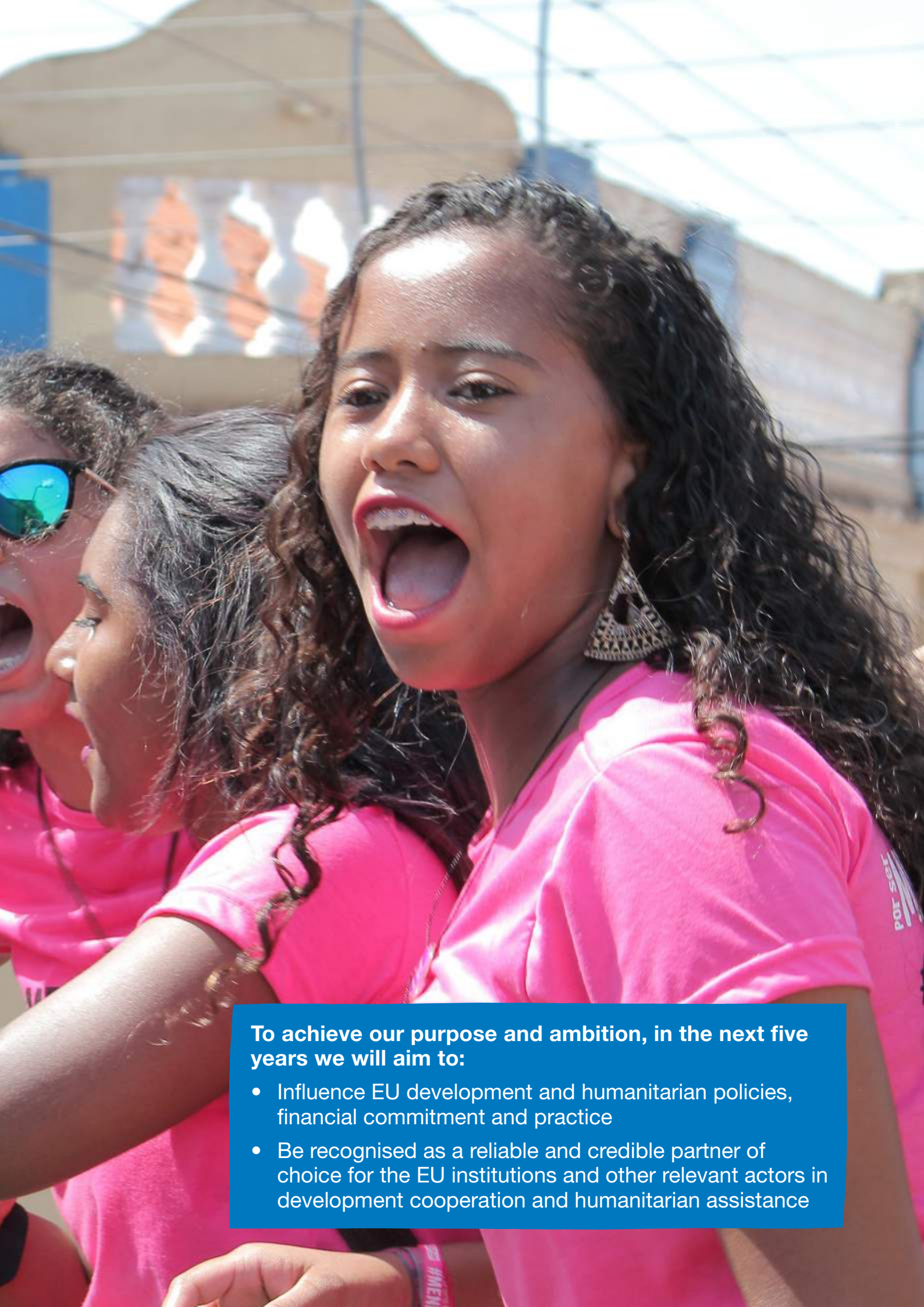
Plan International EU Office strives to advance children's rights and equality for girls in the EU's external action

## OUR AMBITION

Through our actions, we will contribute to ensuring 100 million girls learn, lead, decide and thrive.







**To achieve our purpose and ambition, in the next five years we will aim to:**

- Influence EU development and humanitarian policies, financial commitment and practice
- Be recognised as a reliable and credible partner of choice for the EU institutions and other relevant actors in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance

# RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

Influencing EU policies, practice and funding has the potential to positively affect the lives of hundreds of millions of children in developing countries. We seek to achieve changes at EU-level which address the barriers preventing children, particularly girls, realising their rights and fulfilling their potential. We will concentrate on the areas in which we can bring significant added-value at EU-level with the aim of advancing children's rights and equality for girls.

## 1. Contributing to a global girls' rights movement, strengthening girls' leadership and voice

Combining evidence-based advocacy with bold, impactful campaigning and communications, we will contribute to Plan International's global movement for girls' rights. In addition to supporting equality for girls in all the policy, advocacy, communications and funding work of our office, we will work in three key areas that specifically aim to contribute to transformative change for girls.

### Girls' leadership

Over the course of this strategy, we aim to secure EU support and investment in girls' leadership, modelled on Plan International's proven experience in this area at country level. In the European context, we will broaden this to encompass and promote girls' empowerment. We will focus on the need to improve girls' life skills, so that they can stand on an equal footing with boys.

We aim to ensure that the EU supports girls so that they can then share the knowledge and experience they have gained with others: with other girls and women, with boys and men, with leaders in their local communities, at local authority level and at national level. By doing so, we will contribute to re-balancing traditional power relations and challenging discriminatory social norms and to empowering girls and young women to take action on issues that

matter to them and to shape the decisions that affect their lives.

### Girls' rights networks

We will continue to work in collaboration with other organisations and networks to raise gender equality up the EU's agenda. Together with our partners and Plan International Country Offices, we will monitor the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan 2016-2020. We will maintain our leading role in the organisation and institutionalisation of the European Week of Action for Girls, a joint initiative which aims to ensure that girls' empowerment is promoted and their rights are protected and fulfilled in the EU's external action, through adequate policies, funding and programmes.

Together with partners, we will also work to break down barriers to gender equality both within and across the sector, including EU institutions, and create a network of gender champions among senior leaders working in Brussels.

### Girls' voices

We respect young people's call of "nothing about us, without us", and aim to strengthen all young people's voices in the issues that affect them. We will particularly aim to raise girls' voices, providing a platform for girls around the world to share their stories, ideas and hopes about issues affecting them, and connecting their lived realities with the policy changes needed so that girls everywhere can realise their rights and fulfil their potential. Through these voices, we will seek to influence the EU's external action by providing a channel for young people to participate meaningfully in the decisions which affect them.

**"WE WILL EMPOWER GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN TO SHAPE THE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEIR LIVES."**



## 2. Ensuring all children have the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to succeed

Without access to quality education and completion of the full secondary cycle, the transition to adulthood and access to the labour market will be challenging for many young people. Inclusive education and skills are the cornerstones of children's rights, and lay the foundations for sustainable development.

Yet worldwide, more than 600 million 15-24 year olds – mostly girls and young women – are not in education, employment or training, and are at greater risk of entering unstable, low-paid jobs or having no work at all. The EU has responded to this crisis by placing increased emphasis on youth employment and access to decent jobs.

As a global organisation, Plan International has over 40 years of experience implementing youth economic empowerment programmes. We will bring this body of experience to the EU, in particular regarding collaboration with the private sector, to provide young people with the skills they need and open up decent job opportunities.

By creating a meaningful piece of work in the EU dedicated to youth economic empowerment in development and humanitarian contexts, we will support young people, in particular girls and young women, to gain the education and skills they need to succeed in life and make a decent living.

Despite the importance of education in emergencies and the momentum it has gained over recent years, with natural and man-made crises and conflicts increasing year-on-year, the past decade has seen a concentration of

**“INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SKILLS LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.”**

out-of-school children in crisis- and conflict-affected countries. Today, 75 million children aged 3-18 are denied their right to education in 35 such countries. This has both short- and long-term consequences for children and their communities. Ensuring children are able to stay in school during an emergency not only provides them with immediate life-saving information, it increases their likelihood of securing decent jobs and participating fully in society in the future.

We will therefore push the EU to show continued leadership in ensuring children in conflict and emergency settings are educated in safety, and hold the EU to account on its financial commitments to education in emergencies. Plan International's disaster risk management strategy, coupled with the organisation's proven experience in Education and Child Protection in Emergencies, positions us strongly in this regard.

We will strengthen Plan International's reputation as a reliable partner by showcasing our experience and expertise in this field, and raising the voices of children who have benefitted from our interventions.

## 3. Securing more, better, pro-poor aid, with a focus on girls

While the EU (European Commission and EU Member States) remains the world's largest donor, pressure on the development and humanitarian aid budget has never been greater. Despite the increasing needs, donors, including the EU, are reducing and refocusing their aid budgets, with some European Member States pushing strongly against robust and pro-poor official development assistance. Traditional development and humanitarian aid is being repurposed to deal with new and emerging priorities. Together with our partners, we will push back against these trends, safeguarding the quantity, quality and root objectives of EU official development assistance.

We will strive to ensure the EU allocates sufficient resources to meet its commitments to sustainable development and poverty reduction and the realisation of children's rights.

In particular, we will push for annual and multiannual EU budgets which are age-sensitive and gender transformative, including the creation or maintenance of dedicated budget to support youth economic empowerment, education, skills and vocational training in particular, in the Multiannual Financial Framework starting in 2021.

# MAKING IT HAPPEN

**In order to achieve the results we seek for children, we must ensure we are a reliable partner of choice for the EU institutions.**

## **Evidence and communities-based influencing**

We must raise our voice, and the voices of the children we work with, as experts in the issues that affect them, combining evidence-based advocacy and influencing with bold, impactful campaigning and communications.

According to the EU's own treaties, one of its principle objectives is the promotion and realisation of human rights, including children's rights, around the world. This is reinforced by the CRC and CEDAW which have been signed by all Member States.

When we see deficiencies and contradictions in EU policies, practice and programmes in which we have expertise and which negatively impact upon children's rights, we will speak out. By providing a critical analysis of the EU's proposals, together with our allies when appropriate, we can push for the changes we want to see.

## **Increasing our visibility**

If we are to be considered the go-to organisation in our chosen outcome areas, both the EU institutions and civil society partners must know, understand and respect Plan International's work.

We will increase our visibility across strategic platforms, and scale-up our campaign work – in collaboration with Plan International's National and Country Offices, peer organisations and institutions as appropriate – in support of our purpose and ambition.

## **Coordination and collaboration within Plan International**

Plan International EU Office acts as a liaison and coordination hub on EU issues for the global organisation, but most particularly for the Plan Europe network. Plan Europe is a regional network within Plan International which links all European National Organisations and our International Headquarters.

Our experience proves that when we join up our efforts, we achieve maximum impact, particularly in terms of funding, providing tangible results for the whole organisation and contributing to our goal of advancing children's rights and equality for girls.

**“WE WILL ENHANCE OUR CREDIBILITY AND LEGITIMACY BY REFLECTING THE VOICES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THEMSELVES”**

By reinforcing our coordination and collaboration with Plan International's Liaison Offices to the United Nations and African Union, we aim to promote the exchange of best practices, as well as influencing the EU's role in UN fora and its strategic partnership with Africa.

Plan International has a global workforce with the skills and capacity necessary to deliver transformative programmes, evidence-based advocacy and influencing and bold communications and campaigns. We will build on this expertise and resources to reinforce our calls to the EU, in particular by drawing on our experts in the global south, ensuring their opinions are fed into the EU decision-making process.

## **Strategic external partnerships**

Strong external partnerships are crucial to enable us to achieve our purpose and ambition. We will work to establish more strategic partnerships across the EU institutions, engaging Plan International's European Offices in our efforts where appropriate

By partnering with other organisations and allies, including UN Agencies and the private sector, we will be able to strengthen our voice in support of children's rights and ensure coordinated action at EU level.

We will strengthen our position and reputation by having a stronger presence, leadership and influencing role in thematic networks and coalitions.

We will therefore create strategic alliances with partners where it advances our goals and collaborate with all levels of Plan International to build our reputation and results with the EU.



# GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

Plan International EU Office represents Plan International towards the European institutions and services, and acts as a coordination and liaison hub on EU issues for the organisation.

The work of our office is overseen by a board composed of the National Directors or Chief Executive Officers of Plan International's European National Organisations, plus International Headquarters. The board meets twice a year, and is responsible for approving the budget and workplan of the office.

Plan International EU Office receives funding from Plan International's European National Organisations and International Headquarters, in proportion to their annual income.



## Plan International's European National Organisations

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## ABOUT PLAN INTERNATIONAL

Plan International EU Office represents Plan International towards the European institutions and services, and acts as a coordination and liaison hub on EU issues for the organisation.

We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls in the EU's external action.

Through our actions, we will contribute to ensuring 100 million girls learn, lead, decide and thrive.

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