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UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre: Progress report on 2006-2008 programme of work and proposal for a one-year extension**

I. Introduction

1. The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) was established in 1988 in Florence, Italy. Since then, it has benefited from the steady support of the Government of Italy, on the basis of an Agreement of Cooperation with UNICEF, subject to renewal every three years.
2. IRC works to strengthen the capacity of UNICEF, partner governments and institutions to respond to the evolving needs of children and to promote a strong global ethic for children. The Centre contributes to the intellectual leadership of UNICEF and supports organization-wide policies and actions for the implementation of the Millennium Agenda and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
3. Operating with academic freedom, IRC addresses knowledge gaps and examines emerging issues, thus strengthening the capacity of UNICEF to explore dimensions of its future agenda. It serves as an international knowledge centre for the effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in both industrialized and developing countries.
4. With its field-based and cross-regional comparative analysis, IRC informs UNICEF policy formulation; strengthens the role of UNICEF as a global advocate for children's rights; enhances the organization's capacity to conduct research and learn from programme experience; and supports programme development and capacity building.

* E/ICEF/2008/16.

** Submission of this document was delayed because of the need for external consultation.

5. The IRC 2006-2008 programme is framed by the Centre's mandate and accountabilities, the guidance provided by the IRC International Advisory Committee and the findings and recommendations of the 2004-2005 Evaluation on the IRC, which stressed the critical role of IRC research in informing the advocacy and policy work of UNICEF. The 2006-2008 programme has enhanced the role of IRC in the generation and brokering of knowledge, and strengthened IRC partnerships with organizations and research institutions in the various regions, with an emphasis on developing countries.

6. IRC research is carried out in consultation with other UNICEF offices and in collaboration with academic and policy institutions, as well as United Nations agencies, organizations and centers of expertise concerned with children.

7. The UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) 2006-2009 gives prominent attention to the generation, dissemination and use of knowledge, to inform the work of UNICEF and to influence policies and action for children worldwide, and highlights the centrality of the organization's global role as an authoritative and independent voice for children. IRC agenda is closely linked to the UNICEF MTSP focus areas and priorities, in particular focus areas 4 and 5.

8. Within the MTSP framework, research is a key strategy to provide global knowledge leadership for children, to strengthen the voice and credibility of UNICEF, and to enable the organization to convene partners and to help shape the future agenda for children. Research findings provide a strong and evolving evidence base informing policy advocacy and programme development and strengthening the technical and operational effectiveness of interventions crucial to achievements for children in the MTSP focus areas.

9. At its 2008 first regular session, the Executive Board approved the UNICEF biennial support budget for 2008-2009, which increased support to research and established the Office of Research to strengthen synergies with the UNICEF global programme agenda; provide leadership for the UNICEF strategic research agenda; and help disseminate and apply research findings. IRC remains a vital and central part of the organization's research function.

10. **A one-year extension of the IRC 2006-2008 programme is recommended, in order to ensure the alignment of the IRC programme with the UNICEF strategic planning process and the UNICEF biennial support budget for 2010-2011.** During this bridging year, IRC will continue to build upon its mandate and established areas of expertise, informed by the overall goals of its approved programme for 2006-2008 and lessons learnt during the current programme, while also benefiting from guidance provided by the Innocenti International Advisory Committee and consultations with key partners.

Key recommendations from the 2008 Innocenti International Advisory Committee

(a) Preserve IRC academic freedom and distinct agenda. In particular, safeguard the IRC research mandate to address questions of global relevance, to promote cross-regional analysis, with a particular focus on developing countries, to consider children's rights and the process of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to address innovative, emerging and sensitive issues that anticipate

the future research agenda of UNICEF and influence the international policy on children;

(b) Pursue relevant and cutting-edge research, promote the effective dissemination and use of research findings, and assess their impact on policy responses affecting children, in part by gaining statistical evidence and pursuing a multidisciplinary approach;

(c) Consolidate the convening and brokering role of IRC among UNICEF offices and National Committees, academic institutions and development partners;

(d) Continue to strengthen IRC partnerships, particularly with research and policy institutions in developing countries;

(e) Building on IRC experience, expand the research capacity within UNICEF;

(f) Ensure firm, multi-year, predictable and flexible funding for the further development of the IRC research agenda.

II. Reasons for extension of the Innocenti Research Centre programme

11. The UNICEF biennial budget 2008-2009 established financial support to IRC and to the organization's research function as a whole. During 2009, the future direction, focus and details of organizational arrangements for the research function in UNICEF will be further elaborated.

12. Meantime IRC will continue to support the global knowledge leadership of UNICEF for children and its commitment to strengthen research, promote the dissemination and implementation of research findings and improve synergies with the UNICEF global programme and policy advocacy agendas. During this bridging year, IRC will promote the development of further relevant research, particularly on emerging concerns for children.

III. Implementation of the 2006-2008 programme

13. During the 2006-2008 cycle, IRC pursued its work within the overall framework of the four goals of its programme, namely:

(a) Generation and communication of strategic and influential knowledge on issues affecting children and the realization of their rights;

(b) Promotion of the exchange and brokering of knowledge to support reflection, debate and cross-fertilization of experiences;

(c) Support to the advocacy and policy and programme development of UNICEF, within the context of the MTSP and the contribution of UNICEF to the Millennium Agenda;

(d) Securing and strengthening of the Centre's institutional and financial base.

14. The achievement of these goals has been guided by three interrelated strategies:

(a) Evidence-based analysis, drawing on quantitative and qualitative information, the application of appropriate methodologies, and the development of recommendations to assess and inform advocacy and policy action;

(b) Enhanced partnerships with research and policy institutions and development actors, globally and regionally, in developing and industrialized countries;

(c) Communication and leveraging of research findings and recommendations to support policy development and advocacy initiatives through strategic dissemination of studies and contribution to relevant events and fora.

Major achievements and challenges

15. In the implementation of the 2006-2008 programme, IRC work was framed by the guiding principles and focus areas of the MTSP and by the organization's commitment to advancing the implementation of the Millennium Agenda. During this cycle, IRC achieved important results, including the following:

(a) Generating innovative analysis on issues affecting children, including child poverty and child well-being and deprivation, through cross-disciplinary expertise and partnerships, establishing a multidimensional perspective that included the consideration of children's experiences. This approach became a catalyst of further research and policy developments, particularly within Africa and the social inclusion agenda of the European Union (EU);

(b) Communicating knowledge and influencing strategic processes to support the UNICEF mandate and the international agenda on children. Outcomes included contributions to the five-year review of the General Assembly Special Session on Children and the third World Congress on the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents; promoting of the implementation of international standards, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Protocols, and the new United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; further mainstreaming of children's rights, within the context of the Ibero-American Ombudsman Federation (FIO); and through the adoption of the 2007 EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child and the 2008 Communication "A Special Place for Children in EU External Action";

(c) Consolidating strategic partnerships to promote children's rights, with a particular emphasis on policy and academic networks and experts in the developing world, including the Childwatch International Research Network, the African Child Policy Forum and the Latin American network of ombuds for children; and to further strengthen collaboration with UNICEF headquarters, its regional and country offices and the National Committees, and with United Nations agencies and research institutions;

(d) Increasing IRC financial resources and diversifying donor funding in support of its research agenda.

16. At the same time, IRC faced a number of challenges: (a) the need to balance its small size and limited capacity with high and growing expectations for its research and knowledge brokering functions; (b) the need to consolidate its established expertise while adding new competencies to seize strategic opportunities and influence the policy agenda in favour of children; (c) the importance of safeguarding a long-term planning horizon for research and partnership development while remaining sensitive to strategic planning requirements; and (d) the need to secure firm, flexible and predictable funding for IRC functions and research programme.

A. Generation and communication of strategic and influential knowledge

17. Knowledge generation has been promoted through data-based analysis and research, addressing three thematic areas: (a) socio-economic policies and child poverty; (b) implementation of international standards on children's rights; and (c) protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation. Research findings were disseminated and their use promoted in support of the mission of UNICEF and of the international agenda on children. A dissemination strategy was developed with UNICEF Offices, National Committees and strategic partners, and IRC studies were issued in additional languages to widen their use in advocacy, social mobilization and policy debate. At the same time, the IRC website increased its relevance as a tool for research communication; online access to IRC studies expanded by twenty per cent over the past year.

Socio-economic policies and child poverty

18. The research conducted in this area aims to gather statistical evidence and increase understanding of the impact of socio-economic policies on children, including in the areas of child poverty and exclusion, mobilization of resources for children, and migration and children.

19. IRC studies on children in the region of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) and in industrialized nations have provided a framework of analysis and contributed to greater conceptual clarity on the situation of children growing up in poverty, while pointing to areas where IRC could play a distinct role in research, data collection and indicator development. The Centre was able to further consolidate its expertise by expanding its data analysis and brokering role within a network of reputed international experts and institutions.

20. Findings confirm that children who grow up in poverty are at a marked and lasting disadvantage. Suffering deprivation they have little access to social services, with profound implications for their survival, health, nutrition and overall development. Poverty has a cumulative impact on the evolving capacities of children, with an increasing likelihood that their future lives will be scarred by educational underachievement, poor health, low employment opportunities and long-term welfare dependence.

21. The *Innocenti Social Monitor*, the annual report of the UNICEF Regional Monitoring Project in Central and Eastern Europe (MONEE), was developed through analysis and discussions with the Bratislava Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, as well as a network of

experts on the region. The report, translated into Russian, is used by UNICEF offices in advocacy and policy discussions, including in the formulation of second-generation poverty reduction strategies.

22. The study highlights stark disparities among countries, and within them, revealing overall low levels of public expenditure on health and education in the region, and the concentration of child income poverty among certain groups of children, especially in countries with large child populations: within households with large numbers of children; in rural areas, where people's livelihoods are primarily based on subsistence agriculture and where there is limited access to affordable quality social services; and among ethnic minorities. Child poverty was found to be closely associated with high child mortality rates, and low preschool attendance and access to safe water. The *Social Monitor* called for public sector reforms to ensure children's access to quality basic social services, to support families in their childrearing responsibilities and to improve data on the situation of the most vulnerable groups of children.

Enhancing data and analysis to address children's emerging concerns

To assess the impact on children of socio-economic transition in the CEE/CIS region, the IRC has collected data from national statistical offices since 1992, and carried out research on policy alternatives to ensure the protection of children's rights (MONEE). Following significant political, economic and social changes, new concerns about children have emerged. Data collection efforts have reflected these changes, leading to new indicators and stimulating national statistical offices to seek data on child protection dimensions, such as inter-country adoption and alternatives to the institutionalization of children. Such information has framed research development (*Innocenti Social Monitor* and its associated TransMONEE database) and laid a foundation for evidence-based advocacy policy in the region.

23. The *Innocenti Report Card* has presented an innovative comparative analysis of child well-being in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries along six dimensions: material well-being; health and safety; education; peer and family relationships; behaviours and risks; and young people's own subjective sense of well-being. The incorporation of children's concerns and aspirations into the *Report Card* reflects IRC's priority to consider children not simply as an object of analysis but also as participants in research. The study stressed the importance of addressing child deprivation through integrated policies in support of families and children, and making children's immediate environment inclusive and protective.

24. The *Innocenti Report Card* generated significant interest among academic and policy institutions, including the International Society for Child Indicators and the International Policy Conference on Child Poverty in Africa, and within the context of the social inclusion agenda of the European Union. The ongoing research initiative on child well-being in Africa and the recent 2008 report *Child Poverty and Well-being in the EU* are significant illustrations of this process.

25. The report confirmed an overall lack of internationally comparable data on young children. To address this gap, IRC has promoted a research initiative with early childhood experts in governments, academia and international organizations, building on the work of UNICEF in the field, on OECD reports and the OECD Family database, and on data from the World Health Organization (WHO). The research initiative has developed indicators to assess the extent to which young children benefit from current knowledge in neuroscience on critical stages in child development and from evidence on the positive impact of quality early childhood services on performance and behaviour later in childhood. It aims to contribute knowledge that will stimulate national debates on the value of providing an early start in life-long learning and social engagement to every child, particularly among vulnerable groups. It proposes a set of benchmarks on quality early childhood services that are framed by the experience in advanced economies but can be adjusted to middle-income and developing countries.

26. IRC research on the impact of migration on children is tapping into underused data sources on migrant households (census and populations registers) to gain evidence and a deeper understanding of the magnitude and diversity of contexts within which children migrate, either with their families or on their own. Quantitative and qualitative analyses provide stronger visibility to the challenges and opportunities associated with child migration. The research, developed in partnership with a network of academics, highlights the child dimensions of migration and supports national debates on children's social inclusion and development.

Implementation of international standards on children

27. IRC continues to promote research in support of the Millennium Agenda and the MTSP guiding principles and focus areas by, *inter alia*, enhancing awareness and understanding of international standards on children's rights and influencing action to place children's concerns at the top of national and international agendas.

28. **Raising awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child** and its two Optional Protocols amongst academic institutions, international organizations, policy makers and development partners remained an important dimension of the programme. Significant initiatives were also promoted regarding the implementation of other international standards on children, including on child protection.

29. The 18th anniversary of the Convention, the five-year review of the Special Session on Children and the current preparations for the World Congress on the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents provided strategic opportunities to develop studies and advocacy materials, and to participate in high-level policy discussions on the protection of children's rights, including the third Intergovernmental Conference on Making Europe and Central Asia Fit for Children, held in Palencia (Spain) in 2006; the high-level consultation, held in San Rossore (Italy) in 2007; and the meeting of the Global Network of Independent Institutions for Children's Rights, held in New York in December 2007. Numerous international events organized with partners, such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Independent Expert on the United Nations Study on Violence against Children, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Childwatch International, the African Child Policy Forum and the Council of Europe, further illustrate this process.

30. IRC hosted strategic **study visits** of high-level national delegations and partners on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international standards on children, including delegations from Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, China, Spain and Sweden. Similarly, IRC was associated with country-level UNICEF initiatives on children's rights to advance legislative and institutional reforms in Central Asia, Latin America and South Asia.

31. The Centre pursued analysis on topics of relevance for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, such as "Caring for Children Affected by HIV and AIDS" in support of the MTSP focus area 3; and on "Promoting the Rights of Children with Disabilities" in support of focus area 4, and in support of UNICEF advocacy and policy work on the ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

32. IRC further advanced its research on the **implementation of the general measures of the Convention on the Rights of the Child**, with emphasis on law reform, the development of independent national institutions for children, participation of children in decision-making processes and monitoring progress on implementation.

33. The study *Law Reform and Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (see box below) presents an in-depth analysis of legal reforms in 52 countries that have reported at least twice to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The study captures innovative initiatives, anticipates opportunities for replication and scaling-up, and has been used as a significant reference for national legal reforms, as in South Africa, within the context of the national conference "Getting South Africa ready for the implementation of the Children's Act".

Law Reform and Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

A strong national legal foundation, guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child is instrumental to safeguarding children's rights and ensuring that children are protected from violence, abuse and exploitation. The IRC study *Law Reform and Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child* confirms the substantial and often far-reaching legislative changes introduced in all regions, upon ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including new constitutional provisions, enactment of children's codes and reform of sectoral legislation.

The study acknowledges common areas of focus, as well as prevailing gaps; it recognizes widespread weak enforcement but also identifies national mechanisms set up to oversee and advance implementation; it takes account of the role of ombuds offices in the promotion of law reform and the innovative role of civil society in recommending legislative change, as well as the significant cases of children's participation in legislative developments.

The study underscores the relevance of legislation for all areas that affect children's lives, such as laws establishing a "live birth" definition, making immunization and iodized salt mandatory, ensuring paid parental leave and universal access to health services by children, prohibiting

child maltreatment, requiring minimum training for professionals dealing with children and providing special and nondiscriminatory school support for children belonging to minorities.

The study provides evidence on the measurable impact of law reform in safeguarding children's rights: new legislation on criminal justice system reform has resulted in a drastic reduction in the numbers of children deprived of liberty in Canada and Russia, as well as in Latin America; it has ended the use of whipping as a sanction in thousands of criminal cases involving juveniles in South Africa; has led to a 20-per cent decrease in cases of female genital mutilation/cutting in Egypt; and has visibly boosted the number of households using iodized salt in Nepal.

34. IRC cooperates closely with the **Committee on the Rights of the Child**, which is regularly associated with expert discussions and research initiatives promoted by and with the Centre, including IRC research on the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

35. The work of the Committee provides a significant reference for IRC analysis, including its Concluding Observations and General Comments, as well as the recommendations arising from the Thematic Discussion. This is illustrated by IRC research on the Committee's General Comment No. 5 (General Measures of Implementation the Convention on the Rights of the Child) and the study on law reform and implementation the Convention on the Rights of the Child (see box above), as well as the analysis conducted by the Centre on child poverty and on early childhood education and care. IRC supported the development of the General Comment on article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular through its analysis on the right to be heard in legal and administrative proceedings.

36. IRC collaborates closely with other **United Nation human rights mechanisms**, including with the Independent Expert on the Question of Human Rights and Extreme Poverty, and within the context of the follow-up to the United Nations Study on Violence against Children. IRC analysis contributes to the Council of Europe programme "Building a Europe for and with Children", and informed the development of *Eliminating Violence against Children*, a handbook for parliamentarians jointly produced by UNICEF and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

37. The current research on violence against children focuses on developments in law reform and on knowledge gaps and data collection. Efforts are underway to assess strengths and weaknesses of existing measurement instruments and to address challenges concerning the lack of agreed definitions and of disaggregated data by age, gender, settings and study population.

38. Prompted by a lack of systematic data on children within the context of sport, play and violence, IRC initiated research on "the right to play safe", addressing the protection of children involved in school-based, community and elite sport. Preliminary findings note the importance of sport in the lives of children and suggest the need for more robust child protection systems at national, sub-national and community levels to prevent sport-related violence, abuse and exploitation. The study is being used as a reference for the work of the Committee on the Rights of

the Child on sport and play and for the development of guidelines for teachers and sporting coaches in schools and communities.

Protection of children from violence, exploitation and abuse

39. IRC research on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international standards addresses further strategic dimensions of children's protection from violence, abuse and exploitation.

40. **Child trafficking** remained an essential component of the IRC programme. The incidence of trafficking across regions reaffirms the importance of the global mandate of UNICEF for children, and demonstrates that evidence is necessary to inform advocacy, policy development and social mobilization in support of children's rights. Studies in Africa, South Asia and Europe have helped to describe emerging dimensions of this phenomenon, giving visibility to child protection concerns and supporting policy change.

41. The research in South Asia has been conducted in close collaboration with UNICEF offices, government officials and other partners in the region. Through a comprehensive review of laws and policy responses, it has enhanced understanding of the dynamics and complexities of child trafficking; it has shed light on cross border as well as internal trafficking; and it has promoted increasing opportunities for collaboration and mutual learning.

42. Case studies have helped to mobilize political support to prevent and combat trafficking of children. They have shed light on child exploitation concerns associated with trafficking and challenged the perception that child trafficking is promoted only for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The studies also emphasized the instrumental role of prevention in protecting children and avoiding the risk of "retrafficking"; moreover, prevention promotes social change, shifting from passive acceptance to a genuine sense of empowerment and investment in the protection of children's rights, among which the right to education plays a critical role. The case studies have shown the decisive contribution of community-based efforts in promoting a shared sense of responsibility for child protection from all forms of exploitation, raising awareness of risks, encouraging social mobilization and leading to lasting behaviour change.

43. For UNICEF, the development of this research has generated new opportunities for advocacy, and for an increasingly strategic focus on programmatic interventions, as well as for expanding partnerships with organizations in the region. The initiative reaffirms IRC commitment to research in developing countries and to the replication of methodological approaches and lessons learnt in other regions in support of global advocacy efforts. Moreover, the analysis has been crucial for IRC work on "children and migration", constituting a point of strong convergence of research areas at the Centre.

The World Congress on the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents

UNICEF is a partner to the third World Congress on the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, to be held in Brazil, and the Centre's research and expertise support this process. IRC research on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Pornography, law reform, and the exploitation of children through trafficking and in travel and tourism addresses core components of the agenda of the Congress. IRC hosted the first Thematic Expert Consultation, which provided a forum for discussion on the five themes of the Congress and for reflection on further research dimensions. Building on the synergies of United Nations agencies and other partners, the recommendations address commercial sexual exploitation and emerging challenges; legal frameworks and enforcement; education, training and awareness-raising; integrated and cross-sectoral policy; corporate social responsibility; and international cooperation.

44. **The protection of children from armed conflict** remained a focus of IRC research, with attention given to questions concerning crimes committed against children in times of conflict, and the participation of children in transitional justice systems, including truth and reconciliation commissions. This initiative aims to generate knowledge and provide evidence through the review of experiences, good practices and lessons learnt from the involvement of child victims and witnesses in international and national courts and justice-seeking mechanisms.

45. Working with a network of academics and international experts and practitioners, in close cooperation with other UNICEF offices, IRC promotes cross-disciplinary knowledge-sharing and policy debate on the protection of children and adolescents within the context of their participation in post-conflict justice systems, as well as on the development of child-friendly procedures. The initiative informs the development of policy and programme responses by UNICEF and its partners, and has been strategic in assisting UNICEF country offices in their support to Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and in promoting reconciliation, violence prevention and the consolidation of the rule of law. The research has provided a solid basis for IRC contribution to the process of the ten-year review of the Machel Report, and to the cooperation of UNICEF with the Secretary General's Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict.

46. Building upon this process, IRC supported the development of a child-friendly version of the United Nations Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Witnesses and Victims of Crime, jointly issued by UNICEF and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and launched in Vienna in April 2007.

B. Knowledge exchange and brokering

47. In the course of the implementation of the programme, IRC has given emphasis to knowledge exchange and brokering in support of global development discussions and national action to advance the realization of children's rights, and as a contribution to the implementation of the MTSP, particularly in focus areas 4 and 5.

48. By expanding strategic partnerships and leveraging intellectual expertise, IRC has consolidated its internal expertise and cross-disciplinary work, while widening opportunities to support policy discussions at the global, regional and national levels. IRC has gained increasing recognition as a forum bringing together academics, policy makers, field workers and experts on children, marked by a high participation of United Nations partners, including UNDP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Labour Organization, WHO, the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

49. IRC organized and promoted expert discussions on children's issues in association with academic networks and research institutions, policy makers, development actors and child rights experts, enhancing the capacity of existing networks and benefiting from partners' expertise. Strategic consultations were conducted on a variety of topics, including the implementation of international standards, with a particular focus on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, on child poverty and well-being, early childhood education and care, child migration, child trafficking, transitional justice and harmful traditional practices. Technical consultations were hosted on household and multi-country thematic surveys, which helped to strengthen IRC's partnerships with other data collection agencies and research institutions.

50. Particular attention was given to the strengthening of partnerships with academics and experts, and policy institutions in developing countries. The collaboration with the Childwatch International Research Network has gradually led to the development of knowledge generation and brokering activities with research networks in developing countries. The Caribbean Research Conference on Child Rights, co-organized with UNICEF Jamaica in October 2007, and the launch of the Lancet Series on Early Child Development with the University of West Indies illustrate this process.

51. IRC has consolidated its partnership with the **African Child Policy Forum**, a pan-African policy advocacy organization. This cooperation opens enhanced avenues to develop research with experts and institutions across the continent, and to improve knowledge on the situation of African children, promote policy advocacy initiatives and strengthen capacity to address children's concerns within the region. Within this partnership, IRC is contributing to two significant processes: a research initiative on child well-being and deprivation in Africa, launched as a follow-up to the 2008 International Policy Conference on the African Child, held in Addis Ababa; and the development of a journal on African child policy.

52. IRC collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union has been further pursued, allowing its data analysis, research and publications to be used in support of parliamentary action for the development of legislative and social policy reforms, and in advocacy initiatives on child protection. IRC research findings and studies

provided a basis for regional seminars for parliaments in South Asia and in the East Asia and the Pacific region, and have contributed to the development of the *Handbook for Parliamentarians on Eliminating Violence against Children*. IRC also supported parliamentary initiatives at the national level, together with the Indian Parliamentary Forum on Children and the Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training.

53. Collaboration with parliamentarians on the protection of children's rights was also strengthened within Europe. In this regard, the partnership with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe led to the use of IRC analysis in the development of reports and the promotion of policy action on children and AIDS, children with disabilities, child participation and the protection of children from violence. Similarly, the increasing engagement with the European Parliament has opened avenues to influence policy debates on such topics as children in development cooperation, birth registration, armed conflict and violence against children.

54. IRC has also built important partnerships with **independent human rights institutions for children**, often through their global and regional networks; in 2007, it supported the establishment of a new network in Latin America. As stressed by the Special Session on Children, these institutions play an important role in promoting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Their number has spread across regions, and they constitute a decisive source of data, information and expert advice for IRC research on children, while helping to disseminate and promote the use of IRC research findings.

55. IRC promotion of these institutions is being carried out, in collaboration with UNICEF offices and National Committees, in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America. The initiative opens avenues for cross-fertilization of experiences and helps to identify opportunities to influence normative developments and policy making on behalf of children. The research further helps to increase UNICEF capacity in establishing and strengthening these mechanisms and consolidating partnerships for policy advocacy on children's rights.

C. Support to advocacy, policy and programme development of UNICEF

56. Through its research and data analysis IRC has made continuing contributions to the global advocacy, policies and strategies of UNICEF, in cooperation with other parts of the organization. In this respect, it has supported the organization-wide actions for the implementation of the Millennium Agenda, including achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and contributed to the implementation of the MTSP, particularly focus areas 4 and 5.

57. As noted above, IRC research contributed to the UNICEF role in significant international developments, including the five-year review of the General Assembly Special Session on Children, the follow-up to the United Nations Study on Violence against Children, and the preparations for the World Congress on Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, to be in Brazil.

58. IRC supported the development of new knowledge and policy advocacy at the global and regional levels in a range of child protection areas. Through expert meetings and participation in global consultations, IRC provided significant background research, technical perspectives and specific inputs for the development of the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy. IRC work on law reform, child trafficking, children with disabilities and transitional justice illustrate this process.

59. The findings of *Changing a Harmful Social Convention: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting*, published as part of the Innocenti Digest series, have contributed to the UNICEF knowledge base, and have been used by IRC to develop greater understanding and awareness of harmful practices and to influence policy reflections for their abandonment. Through its participation in the UNICEF Task Force on Harmful Practices (established by the Executive Director in January 2006) and its close collaboration with the Child Protection Section at UNICEF headquarters and with relevant regional and country offices, as well as its consolidated partnership with leading academic institutions, IRC has supported the elaboration of a programming approach aimed at promoting large-scale social transformation that benefits children and women. IRC is also associated with a UNICEF multi-country study to document and analyze experiences that have been externally evaluated and considered successful in communities abandoning the cultural practices of female genital cutting and child marriage.

60. IRC has contributed to the implementation and review of MTSP focus area 5, in part through its participation in global consultations with a thematic focus. IRC research on issues such as child poverty, children and migration, and resource allocation for children provided support to global work in this area, including consultations organized by UNICEF on social protection and budgeting for children.

61. In cooperation with relevant UNICEF offices, IRC also contributed to the implementation of other MTSP focus areas, collaborating on questions concerning mortality analysis; child accidents and injury in Asia; child nutrition and HIV and AIDS. Moreover, IRC promoted a policy review in the emerging area of climate change impact on children, which was presented at the May 2008 Ministerial Meeting convened by the Greek Chairmanship of the Human Security Network. The Centre provides input to the further development of UNICEF strategies on this issue.

62. Another area of IRC contribution has been the promotion of cross-regional research in support of policy advocacy and capacity building. This has been undertaken in close partnership with UNICEF regional and country offices and through expanded networking with regional policy and research institutions, and has led to significant field-level inputs into IRC research. This collaboration was pursued in South Asia and the CEE/CIS region on child trafficking and sexual exploitation of children; in the CEE/CIS region also on the monitoring of the situation of children in transition countries, as well as on law reform, adoption, juvenile justice and infant mortality measurement; in the African regions on HIV/AIDS, female genital mutilation/cutting and transitional justice; and in all regions on the implementation of the general measures of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to support advocacy, policy debate and reforms at the national level.

63. IRC supported global advocacy in industrialized countries in cooperation with the UNICEF Office on Private Fundraising and Partnerships and the National

Committees. Results included the development of the Innocenti Report Cards on child poverty, child well-being and early childhood education, and initiatives in support of the five-year review of the Special Session on Children, the World Congress on Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, follow-up to the United Nations Study on Violence against Children and the protection of children from trafficking, sexual exploitation and armed conflict, as well as the promotion of child-friendly cities.

D. Securing and strengthening the IRC institutional and financial base

64. IRC has pursued its close collaboration with the Istituto degli Innocenti with a particular focus on the development of collaborative research initiatives, through the jointly managed Innocenti Library, whose resources were further expanded to increase its use by scholars worldwide and its visibility within Italy, and in connection with the role of the Istituto degli Innocenti as the secretariat of the European Network of Children's Observatories. Similarly, cooperation was promoted in advocacy and information activities, and in study visits of government and academic delegations.

65. Partnership with the Region of Tuscany has been further consolidated, including through the jointly organized San Rossore meeting (see above) and the preparation of Italian versions of key IRC studies with support by the region. In 2006, the Regional Council of Tuscany presented UNICEF with its highest award in recognition of the commitment of the organization to the cause of children.

66. IRC has also enhanced its cooperation with the Italian National Committee, as well as with Italian non-governmental organizations on advocacy initiatives. The IRC programme benefited from the strong partnership established over the years with Italian Universities, including in Bologna, Florence, Padua, Pisa and Turin, as well as with other United Nations organizations based in Italy.

Funding and staffing

67. In its decision 2005/14, the Executive Board approved the IRC programme 2006-2008 with a ceiling of \$17,000,000 for other resources (OR). To date, the programme has received \$16,600,000 in OR, which includes support from the Government of Italy for its core activities and for strengthening IRC cooperation with the Istituto degli Innocenti.

68. During this three-year cycle, IRC has significantly broadened and further diversified its donor base, with financial support from the Government of Sweden and other important contributions from the Governments of France, Germany, Greece, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland, and from the European Commission. Support to specific studies has been provided by National Committees and through cooperation with UNICEF offices.

69. The UNICEF biennial budget 2008-2009 anticipates financial support to IRC and to the research function in UNICEF as a whole. In the 2008 renewal of the Agreement of Cooperation with UNICEF, the Government of Italy pledged to provide a minimum of 5,430,000 Euros to support IRC core capacity and operational costs for the period 2009-2011. The IRC will continue to make

concerted efforts to broaden and further diversify its donor base and secure firm funding through enhanced partnerships with Governments, international organizations, foundations and other donors, as well as with UNICEF National Committees, and by exploring potential new sources of research funding.

70. In the light of the recommended one-year extension of the current IRC programme, it is anticipated that additional OR amounting to \$7,000,000 will be needed to ensure that IRC core functions and research activities receive necessary funding in 2009. Therefore, an overall increase of \$7,000,000 in the OR ceiling is requested, for a total OR ceiling of \$24,000,000 for the period 2006-2009.

71. The IRC structure will remain the same for 2009, organized into three units managing the main areas of IRC research, with key contributions and major cross-cutting support provided by the communication and operations sections. The current overall staffing profile will be maintained while IRC continues to make use of additional expert support and other temporary options to ensure that technical and human resource needs are met.

IV. Draft decision

72. It is *recommended* that the Executive Board adopt the following draft decision:

The Executive Board,

1. *Recalling* its decision 2005/14, authorizing the extension of the programme of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre for three years (2006-2008),

2. *Further recalling* its decision 2008/2, approving the UNICEF biennial support budget for 2008-2009 and enhancing support to the research function in UNICEF,

3. *Having reviewed* the progress report on the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre and the proposed focus of its activities for 2009 (E/ICEF/2008/23),

4. *Welcomes* the framework for further work for 2009, as contained in E/ICEF/2008/23;

5. *Authorizes* the extension of the IRC's programme until the end of 2009 to ensure its alignment with the UNICEF strategic planning process, the programme of work for the Office of Research, and with the UNICEF biennial support budget for 2010-2011;

6. *Further authorizes* an increase in the other resources ceiling of \$7 million, for a total other resources ceiling of \$24 million for the period 2006-2009;

7. *Invites* all donors to contribute to the Centre's programme activities in order to meet the full cost of expenditures foreseen for the implementation of its programme for 2009.

Annex

Estimated breakdown of expenditures (2006-2009)

(In thousands of United States dollars)					
	Approved budget as per decision 2005/14			Additional budget ^{a/}	Total
	2006	2007	2008	2009	
Programme costs					
Research in current and emerging programme areas, monitoring, policy analysis, expert workshops, networking, research management ^{b/}	4 000	4 000	4 000	5 000	17 000
Advocacy and communication, publications, documentation and website	600	600	600	810	2 610
Collaboration with <i>Istituto degli Innocenti</i>	330	330	340	350	1 350
Subtotal	4 930	4 930	4 940	6 160	20 960
Operating costs					
Support staff costs	370	375	390	450	1 585
General operating costs (information technology, communications, supplies, maintenance, equipment)	330	360	375	390	1 455
Subtotal	700	735	765	840	3 040
Total	5 630	5 665	5 705	7 000	24 000^{c/}

Notes

- a/ The Government of Italy has pledged 5.430.000 Euros for 2009-2011. The remainder will be sought from other donors, including additional contributions from the Government of Italy.
- b/ The posts of IRC Director and Chief of Operations, and their respective travel costs, are funded from the support budget of regular resources, as approved in the UNICEF biennial support budget for 2008-2009.
- c/ Less 1 per cent approved rate of recovery of UNICEF incremental operating cost for other resources funded projects.