

**Office of the Secretary of the UNICEF Executive Board**

**Template for delegations commenting on the draft country programme documents**

**2022 annual session**

***Draft country programme document commenting period: 22 March to 11 April 2022***

Delegations are kindly invited to use this template to share their comments on the draft country programme document being presented to the Executive Board during the forthcoming session.

Delegation name: *Sweden*

Draft country programme document: *Syria draft CPD*

In accordance with Executive Board decision [2014/1](#), draft country programme documents are considered and approved in one session, on a no-objection basis. All comments received by the Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board before the deadline stated above will be posted on the Executive Board website, and considered by the requesting country, in close consultation with UNICEF.

	<b>Delegation's comments</b>	<b>Response(s)</b>
<b>General comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General impression is that UNICEF is making the right priorities considering the context in the country. It is largely a protracted crisis today where the need to rehabilitate basic services is of prime importance, not the least in the WASH-sector but also in education and health etc.</li></ul>	UNICEF appreciates the continuous generous support of Sweden and the overall comment on the CPD priorities.

<p><b>Comments on specific aspects of the draft country programme document</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the context analysis: In the 'Program rationale' part (e.g. para 1 and 2) there is no reference to the conflict and the role of the Syrian regime.</li> <li>• Possibilities to work throughout the country: would it be possible to describe more clearly the possibilities and conditions to work throughout the country? What are the challenges of reaching specific areas, how should the work be focused on reaching these areas?</li> <li>• Risk analysis: Given the complex conflict that characterizes the country, it would also be welcome if UNICEF could expand the risk analysis (page 10) to reflect challenges and possible measures to e.g. reach vulnerable groups in different parts of the country.</li> <li>• UNICEF is emphasizing that there needs to be sizeable investments in the rehabilitation of the water sector – the embassy has contributed to some of this work during the past year where UNICEF together with ICRC have the lead. Has UNICEF got any comments in relation to risks associated with the work on rehabilitation of infrastructure/basic services?</li> <li>• UNICEF’s special attention to the disability issues in the whole programme is important. We have also seen some of UNICEF’s work with disabled children in Syria during field visits and the impression of this work is very positive. Considering the immense problem with disability in Syria (it is one of the countries at the top of the list when it comes to proportion of disabled persons) this is very important work.</li> <li>• The nexus-approach with the connections between humanitarian- and resilience- work as well as social cohesion is emphasized in the document - UNICEF is well-placed to take this integrated approach which is vital in this context. The emphasis on data and evidence-based programming is also highly relevant in a context where data often is insufficient.</li> <li>• “Green response”: Very little is said about environmental work and climate mitigation in the document: We know that UNICEF to some extent has worked with installing solar panels in some</li> </ul>	<p>As part of the One UN, UNICEF contributed to a comprehensive UN socio-economic context analysis.</p> <p>Risk management description has been reviewed to better reflect UNICEF’s risk management system in paragraphs 48-51.</p> <p>There are in fact huge risks that might be created by not rehabilitating the WASH infrastructure in Syria. After years of conflict, access to safe water and sanitation has deteriorated significantly with 49 per cent of the population relying on alternative and often unsafe water sources to meet or complement their water needs and at least 70 per cent of the discharged sewage being untreated. This coverage drop is the result of physical damage and destruction but also deteriorating infrastructures such as water networks and sewage systems, as well as limitations in regular operational and maintenance services in water treatment stations. UNICEF’s strategy in Syria aims at reducing WASH service degradation that resulted from the physical destruction of WASH infrastructure and the reduced Operation and Maintenance of WASH facilities. As such, instead of ‘rebuilding’ WASH infrastructure and ‘promoting capacity building measures for utilities’, UNICEF focuses on conducting repairs on the critical parts of the water supply and sanitation systems/infrastructure and supporting their operation and maintenance (mainly through the provision of supplies, including water disinfectants). These interventions do not restore the WASH systems to their pre-conflict levels which can only be achieved through large scale reconstruction programmes. However, UNICEF is able, through these small-scale targeted interventions, to restore a minimum level of service for a high number of beneficiaries.</p> <p>Given the negative impacts climate change can have on the sustainability of WASH services and behaviours, UNICEF will pay special attention to climate resilience. This will involve understanding and managing risks resulting in the</p>
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	<p>WASH-project, but it would have been desirable with more attention to these issues in the document and to get some more information from UNICEF on these issues. This inter alia against the background of the water- and energy crisis in Syria and the climate effects on the country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health-related: A) The document mentions that UNICEF provide referrals in terms of MHPSS – considering the large needs for these services and the fact that it is an under-funded area, has UNICEF got own capacity in this area? B) Another area with huge problems in Syria and also largely under-funded, is the problems with drug abuse/addiction. This is not mentioned in the document and do UNICEF have any work in this area within its programming for adolescents?</li> </ul>	<p>protection of water resources, adaptation to increasing water scarcity and deteriorating water quality, and disaster-resilient water and sanitation technologies and systems. Special emphasis will be put on the use of renewable energies including the possibility of installation of solar panels at pumping stations. This will not only reduce the carbon footprint but also reduce operational costs through reducing reliance on fuel generators and the regular power grid. UNICEF will also conduct awareness campaigns on water conservation and collaborate with other stakeholders on improving integrated water resources management in the water scarce areas of the country.</p> <p>With regard to MHPSS, UNICEF provides structured MHPSS. Through its field presence with dedicated child protection officers, UNICEF has continuously built the capacity of its NGO partners for effective delivery of this critical service. Additionally, an MHPSS manual has been developed to address the specific Syrian context. UNICEF is also exploring sustainable and cost-effective pathways for delivering MHPSS through schools and health centres.</p> <p>While drug abuse and addiction are an issue WHO leads in country, UNICEF, through its adolescent programming, focuses on empowerment, prevention and raising awareness among young people about healthy lifestyles, such as anti-smoking and drug awareness.</p>
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