

Office of the Secretary of the UNICEF Executive Board

Template for delegations commenting on the draft country programme documents

2023 first regular session

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: *United States*

Draft country programme document: *Central African Republic*

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.

	Delegation's comments	Response(s)
General comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How does UNICEF plan to build WASH service capacity in national and local systems, to address the impacts of climate change, disaster risk, and environmental degradation?	<p>UNICEF acknowledges and appreciates the comments from the USA on its draft country programme for 2023-27 and welcomes the opportunity to provide additional information that could not be adequately covered in a 6000 words document.</p> <p>UNICEF welcomes the US government's comment on the capacity building of WASH services in national and local systems.</p> <p>Para 36, p.7 of the draft CPD highlights the importance of "equitable and sustainable access to essential water and sanitation services in rural and peri-urban areas, through the construction and upgrading of climate-resilient infrastructure for water supply."</p> <p>UNICEF will strengthen the national and local WASH systems and stakeholders' capacities to improve drought and flood risk preparedness and water resource preservation by:</p>

- What is UNICEF’s strategy for supporting its program priorities within rural communities under threat of violence and without access to government-supported systems?

- (i) improving knowledge and monitoring of water resources;
- (ii) developing climate change risk analysis at national, regional and local levels;
- (iii) identifying and implementing technical innovations/options to address WASH services vulnerabilities to climate change;
- (iv) involving, training and empowering communities in integrated water resource management at the local level.

UNICEF is committed to continuing its programme interventions in insecure, difficult-to-reach areas, including those without access to government-supported systems, in order to leave no one behind.

UNICEF will do so by:

- (i) providing humanitarian assistance through its Rapid Response Mechanism and multisectoral responses, including emergency cash transfers;
- (ii) developing a humanitarian access strategy, to enhance its capacity in access negotiations and increase outreach;
- (iii) building stronger partnerships with national and local NGOs and civil society organizations, to promote and strengthen community engagement for sustainable services in areas with limited access to government-supported systems;
- (iv) contributing, through conflict-sensitive interventions, to peace building and social-cohesion.

Specific references in the draft CPD 2023-2027 cover these points:

- para 14 (c) highlights community engagement and localization as a key strategy: “Foster community engagement, through localizing interventions and collaborating with community-based organizations for social and behavioural change, with adolescents, young people and women as agents of change and peace”.
- para. 15 states UNICEF’s commitment to effective and timely context-specific humanitarian assistance: “The programme will provide equitable, context-specific humanitarian assistance, supported by emergency preparedness – through the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We recommend that UNICEF’s health programming under the new CPD builds on gains made through COVID-19 prevention/response efforts in strengthening primary health care delivery. This can and should include continued support to health workers, building on investments in vaccine logistics to expand routine immunization, and WASH improvements in health facilities. 	<p>Rapid Response Mechanism and its humanitarian surveillance system – which will enable effective and timely multisectoral responses.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - para. 16 reinforces the need for stronger local and national partnerships: “By building on stronger local and national partnerships, the programme will improve community and system preparedness and resilience to shocks.’ - para 16 recognizes the specificities of working in remote communities under threat of violence and UNICEF’s role in social cohesion and peace building: “Conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive interventions will contribute to social cohesion.” - para 45 puts forward its strategy to reach remote areas: “UNICEF will support advocacy to secure humanitarian access and will improve emergency preparedness and response.” <p>UNICEF fully agrees on the importance to continue strengthening primary health care, building on gains made through COVID-19 prevention and response.</p> <p>Indeed, the response to COVID-19 has enabled the vaccination services of the Central African Republic to receive substantial support in terms of cold chain equipment. These equipments are not only used for vaccination against COVID-19 but also for routine immunization. These assets have also been incorporated in planning for future actions.</p> <p>UNICEF will continue to support the integration of the COVID-19 vaccination into routine Immunization, a strategy that has enabled the country to reach 40% coverage of the COVID vaccination, so far.</p> <p>In addition, WASH improvements in health facilities will remain a focus for UNICEF, under the proposed indicative output: “Schools and health facilities, including those in areas affected by humanitarian situations, have adequate and sustainable water and sanitation infrastructure and improved hygiene conditions’ of the draft country document Result Framework” (p.14).</p>
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The United States recommends using “gender-based violence” (GBV) terminology throughout to better capture multiple forms of GBV (i.e. sexual violence, child, early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation and cutting, etc), which are prevalent and experienced by children. Namely, on pages 3, 5, 6, and 7 (see below).

UNICEF acknowledges the USA’s recommendation to include GBV in the mentioned paras and understands the importance of gender-sensitive approaches across all areas of interventions.

As mentioned in the document, interventions will focus on prevention and protection of children- especially girls - from sexual abuse and exploitation which are types of GBV.

The priority area of interventions are provided below, as stated in para 18, p5:

“UNICEF will scale up gender-sensitive approaches, focusing on girls’ education, maternal health, reduction in gender-based violence and in sexual exploitation and abuse, and involvement of women and girls in community action.”

<p>Comments on specific aspects of the draft country programme document</p>	<p><i>(Delegations providing comments may wish to include details, such as the page number, paragraph number, or page of the annexed results and resources framework.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Page 4, para 14: “14. Building on the previous programme, and using an evidence-based approach, the programme will use the following key strategies: (a) Improve linkages between humanitarian, development and peace interventions, using the triple nexus approach, guided by the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will these strategies, specifically improving linkages between humanitarian, development, and peace interventions, be in coordination with the Central African Republic authorities? - On p.3, #7, the United States recommends: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Editing the following sentence per the general comment above: "Gender-based violence is a serious protection 	<p>UNICEF’s nexus approach is informed and aligned with the government-led Sustainable Solutions Strategy, supported by the related collective outcomes of the UNSDCF.</p> <p>UNICEF will contribute to the UN collective efforts and ensure that the triple nexus approach is mainstreamed in the national and local development plans.</p> <p>In addition, UNICEF will work with national and local sectoral authorities and strengthen their capacity to improve emergency preparedness and response, social cohesion, and resilience building.</p> <p>UNICEF agrees with the recommendation of the Government of the United States to add, at the beginning of p.3, para.7, an introductory statement that <u>“gender-based violence is a serious protection concern for children”</u>.</p>
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concern for children. **This includes sexual violence, female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C) and child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM)...**"

- Adding the following: "In the Central African Republic, 22% of girls and women (aged 15-49) have undergone FGM and 61% of women (aged 20-24 years) were married or in an informal union before age 18" (Source: [UNICEF](#)).

- On p.5, #18, the United States recommends using the term "gender-based violence" rather than "sexual violence" per the general comment above.

Given that space is limited in the country programme document, paragraph. 7 will remain focused on highlighting the situation of children related to gender-based violence and its components.

UNICEF acknowledges the suggestion of the USA; however, the word limit for CPDs does not allow the inclusion of additional words to the draft document.

UNICEF's approach to FGM and child marriage includes rigorous and quality evidence; understanding and addressing the social norms that are gender discriminatory, which contribute to the persistence of FGM and child marriage to foster prevention; and social and behaviour change approaches, as stated in para 41, p8:

"Interventions will be informed by action research into social norms and practices that act as barriers to the protection of children's rights and to gender equality."

Also, Para 7, p3 of the document highlights the prevalence of child marriage. UNICEF's strategic interventions to prevent and respond to all forms of GBV, including child marriage and FGM will be part of the programme implementation plans.

UNICEF acknowledges the suggestion of the USA. However, as mentioned in the document, the programme, will focus on the GBV sub-themes of prevention and protection of children - especially girls - from sexual abuse and exploitation.,

help girls avoid early marriage, where laws exist forbidding it.

- "There will be greater synergies with the education and health sectors to ensure registration of births, and prevention and response to **gender-based violence, including child, early and forced marriage.**"