

Office of the Secretary of the UNICEF Executive Board
Template for delegations commenting on the draft country programme documents
2023 second regular session

Draft country programme document commenting period: 13 June to 3 July 2023 [18:00 EST]

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: **BELGIUM**

Draft country programme document: **BENIN**

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">• Belgium welcomes the joint presentation of the different CPDs (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP) to the donor community in April. This exercise, which took place at the initiative of the UN Resident Coordinator, is a good example of the One UN Approach so important to us. The three agencies having chosen to work in synergy on their programs, is a good sign of a common effort to ensure greater efficiency to achieve the SDGs.• Belgium is also grateful for the many references made about the coherence with the UNSDCF 2023-2026 for Benin. At the same time, Belgium feels there is still room for improvement in order to reach the full potential of the UNDS reform: it is unclear to what extent prior consultation took place among the different agencies during the development of the CPDs; it appears that all three agencies used different data sources for their analysis; and we would welcome more uniformity in the development of the theories of change, result frameworks and disaggregated indicators.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral informal exchanges with Belgian delegation/Belgian implementation agency Enabel might have been reinforced during the formulation phase. Such exchanges are essential to us as a core donor and we would like to encourage UNICEF to develop such proactive dialogues with Belgium. • Belgium would appreciate the sharing of information about monitoring, learning and evaluation findings from the previous and next CPD's, which we consider helpful from a transparency, accountability and information-exchange point of view. • In a country with 75% of the population being children or teenagers, half of which suffering major deprivation in their basic needs (increasing prevalence of stunting, poor nutrition, high levels of child labor and child marriage) UNICEF's program is more than welcome. 	
<p>Comments on specific aspects of the draft country programme documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget. An overall budget of 112,3MUSD is foreseen of which 33,8M from regular resources and 78,5M from other resources. We note that the proportion of anticipated core resources turns out to be significantly low. As an important core donor, Belgium would like to understand better the reasoning behind this approach. Given the current international budgetary context, such a heavy dependence on additional fundraising through other resources also raises the question on how realistic the proposed budget actually is, how competition for scarce resources between UN agencies will be avoided, and on what basis possible program adjustment will take place in the event of funding gaps. • Programme priorities. Belgium takes good note of the priorities chosen in the CPD programme, with a special appreciation for protection against violence and abuse, especially for girls, and social protection, which are priorities of Belgian development cooperation as well, with actions planned in these fields in the next Belgian country programme. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timing and geographic distribution: Belgium takes good note of the geographic distribution of the programme (Alibori, Atacora, Borgou, Donga, Zou, Couffo), some of these zones being an intervention zone of Enabel (Zou, Donga, Borgou). Belgium notes that the programme will be shorter than usual. It would be appreciated if the reasoning behind that choice could be shared.• Therefore, Belgium would like to emphasize the importance of a continued strengthening of its work with the development partners, CSOs and other third party stakeholders, including our own implementation agency Enabel, in the search for more synergies and mutual impact.	
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