

**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: Senegal

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.

	<b>Delegation's comments</b>	<b>Response(s)</b>
<b>General comments</b>	<b>The delegation appreciates the regular contacts between the UNICEF country office and our Embassy in Dakar and welcomes all the consultations undertaken with the donors in the process of the formulation of the new country programme document.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNICEF appreciates the continued partnership with the Government and the Embassy of Belgium on the child rights agenda in Senegal. We are most grateful for the constructive comments provided throughout the development of UNICEF's new country programme for Senegal.</li> </ul>
<b>Comments on specific aspects of the draft country programme documents</b>	<i>We welcome the analysis by UNICEF to identify the main challenges to achieving the SDG, specifically related to the social sectors and in relation to children's rights. We believe however that part of the responsibility lays with the government commitment and (financial) investment in these sectors. How will UNICEF take up this challenge, especially with the projections of increased economic growth as a result of the gas and oil exploitation?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNICEF acknowledges and appreciates the comments on its draft country programme for 2024-28 from the Government of Belgium and welcomes the opportunity to provide additional information that could not be adequately covered in a document of 6000 words.</li> <li>UNICEF CO in Senegal recognizes the importance of sufficient investment in social sectors as one of the primary obligations of the government. For this reason, "public financing for children" is one of the</li> </ul>

	<p><i>Belgium also welcomes the study undertaken to identify the risks of climate change for children, and we noted the high vulnerability of the country in this regard. Can UNICEF elaborate on the strategies that will be taken up to address this specific challenge?</i></p>	<p>key priorities of the UNICEF Country programme. UNICEF will intensify its efforts to influence, advocate, and propose efficient ways to enhance investments in social sectors – which is core to sustainable development and reaching the SDGs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More specifically, UNICEF CO in Senegal will continue to support strengthening linkages between planning, programming, budgeting, and the monitoring-evaluation of public policies at national and decentralized levels. We will invest in producing evidence to support advocacy on financing issues, building planning and budgeting capacities, and strengthening strategic alliances to fund public finance reforms and remove bottlenecks in the execution of social sector budgets in collaboration with other UN agencies in line with the UNSDCF.</li> <li>• Furthermore, one key strategy will be to engage communities in holding public authorities accountable at national and local levels for resources allocated to social sectors that benefit girls and boys.</li> <li>• UNICEF appreciates Belgium’s comment on the risks of climate change for children. We are grateful for the leadership of the Government of Belgium on climate change issues in Senegal and the sub-region. We would be pleased to deepen our collaboration</li> </ul>
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		<p>and partnership with the Government of Belgium in this area of work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to stepping up our investments in systematically producing data and evidence on the impact of climate change and environmental degradation on child rights, UNICEF CO strategy on Climate Change for Senegal, will address the challenges through a three-pronged approach:       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Equip the country office to embed climate action and sustainability into all its programmes, operations, advocacy, partnerships, and risk reduction initiatives. The country office has already strengthened staff capacity and skills and established a specific position to lead the work in this area.</li> <li>2. Support the national policies and budgets – with a focus on health, wash, social protection, and education – to address the impact of climate change on children and support efforts ensuring that services are resilient to climate change. Specific entry points on which we have already been actively engaged include mitigating the impact of pollution on child’s health, adaptative water, hygiene, sanitation services, and environmental education and investment in green schools.</li> <li>3. Mobilize adolescents and young people, and their very active networks, to actively engage and participate in community level actions towards environmental protection and adapting to climate change. These “Young Champions for the Planet” will receive increased support for accessing</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
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	<p><i>The document states that the coverage of vaccination is decreasing. At the same time Senegal is investing to develop his pharmaceutical industry for local vaccine production. What are the causes today of the decrease of vaccine coverage and what is UNICEF's policy regarding potential purchase of locally produced vaccines in the future?</i></p>	<p>information and resources to combat climate change and influence decision-making at all levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key interventions will be elaborated in a more detailed Work Plans starting in 2024.</li>   <li>• UNICEF shares the concern over the decrease in vaccine coverage in Senegal. However, there is an overall decline in global administration of first and third doses of diphtheria, tetanus toxoid and pertussis vaccine (DTP1 and DPT3), resulting in about 18 million zero-dose children and over 25 million unvaccinated or under-vaccinated children, which is 6 million higher than before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019.</li>   <li>• In Senegal, according to estimated data, DTP3 declined from 100% in 2019 to 93% in 2022. Vaccine hesitancy is more likely noticed for the COVID-19 vaccine. At the operational level, the same health agents/workers are responsible for routine immunization, including COVID-19, and surveillance.</li>   <li>• As the largest vaccine procurer in the world, UNICEF CO has already procured a yellow fever vaccine produced in Senegal and contributes to influencing markets to ensure sustainable access to essential supplies for children. UNICEF Supply Division serves as a centre of expertise and knowledge on essential supplies for children and supply chains and builds capacities of national</li> </ul>
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	<p><i>UNICEF is already working with the Senegalese government to identify alternative ways for increasing the education level of the population, amongst others by integration of the daara educational system into the traditional system (with the necessary guarantees for quality and protection). Given the alarming and stagnating education indicators in the country, did UNICEF identify other innovative or alternative approaches to address this issue that has a major impact on the development of the country and the perspectives for the youth as a whole?</i></p>	<p>governments. Our Global Supply Division provides expertise to us in our engagement with the Government and partners' efforts to build the national capacity for vaccine and medicine production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF acknowledges the importance of innovative and alternative approaches to address the alarming education indicators in the country and their impact on youth.</li> <li>• UNICEF CO in Senegal will support the Government towards its commitment to the Transforming Education Summit to preserve the education sector budget and to intensify the on-going process that aims to diversify educational offers, including through digital technology, in order to ensure that all the children and young people of Senegal can benefit from a quality education.</li> <li>• In addition, UNICEF CO in Senegal will prioritize out-of-school children through alternative and catch-up learning opportunities or training to ease their transition to adult life. Also, UNICEF will prioritize the introduction of pedagogical innovations, such as education for sustainable development and values, as well as digital schooling.</li> <li>• UNICEF CO in Senegal will support preventive approaches to increase early learning interventions</li> </ul>
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	<p><i>Finally, we welcome the integration of social protection in the programme document. We are convinced that the present policy by the government of direct cash transfers to some vulnerable groups presents a punctual solution to mitigate the consequences of the recent shocks but are no sustainable solution for the population. The set up of a social security system for Senegal, adapted to the context and with differentiation according to vulnerability, is very much needed. Belgium is already actively supporting the</i></p>	<p>for vulnerable boys and girls to ensure on-time enrolment and strong foundations to prevent dropout.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative approaches with multi-sectoral support to daaras, specifically to preschool-aged children in this traditional system, will be integrated as an innovative approach between the Ministry of Education and local government to offer localized interventions and evidence.</li> <li>• Furthermore, UNICEF CO in Senegal will foster public-private-youth partnerships focused on young people’s needs, expand training opportunities for adolescents and support the scaling-up of models that promote life skills and employability, prioritizing adolescent girls. The programme will also strengthen alliances youth coalitions, particularly within the framework of the Generation Unlimited partnership and the engagement of youth as agents of change. This will be further elaborated in the detailed workplan in 2024.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF agrees with Belgium’s comment on the social security system for Senegal and welcomes cooperation with Belgium on this vital initiative.</li> <li>• UNICEF CO in Senegal fully supports the government in their vision for a more coherent and robust social protection system aimed at providing social security for the population of Senegal,</li> </ul>
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	<p><i>government on this issue and would welcome cooperation with UNICEF on this, particularly in the framework of the Global Accelerator.</i></p>	<p>considering different vulnerable groups and modalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF CO in Senegal is a strong government partner in ensuring social protection is gender- and child-sensitive, responds to the needs of people living with disability, enhances resilience and is increasing shock-responsiveness.</li> <li>• UNICEF, through its role as the lead Agency for coordinating the development partners’ group on social protection (together with the EU) – strategically contributes to the analysis of the fiscal space/public financing schemes for social protection together with the ILO. UNICEF has also been a central player in the evolving process to implement the Global Accelerator in Senegal. It is committed to deepening and scaling up its contributions under the UN RC leadership and with other Agencies to ensure that Senegal is one of the “Pathfinder countries” and benefits from and contributes to the strategic framework that the Global Accelerator provides.</li> <li>• In this context, we are most grateful to Belgium’s government leadership in supporting the Global Accelerator’s implementation in Senegal. UNICEF CO in Senegal is willing and looking forward to its collaboration with the Government of Belgium.</li> </ul>
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