

Office of the Secretary of the UNICEF Executive Board
Template for delegations commenting on the draft country programme documents
2024 first regular session

Draft country programme document commenting period: 14 November to 4 December 2023 [18:00 hours Eastern Standard Time]

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

Delegation name: *Belgium*

Draft country programme document: **UNICEF - GUINEA**

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	The Programme covers a wide range of sectors in which other development actors are also involved. <u>Coordination with other actors is therefore very crucial</u> . As far as the Belgian development agency Enabel is concerned, there are links to be made with the expiring and new portfolio (including 'She decides') and with the projects for third parties (in particular 'état civil'). <u>How will UNICEF coordinate with other actors and avoid overlap?</u> The objective of using schools as an entry point for synergies across programmes is a very good point.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.• Enabel has been a critical stakeholder and a key UNICEF partner in the area of child protection. Regarding birth registration, a coordination mechanism is being established by the Government to ensure complementarity among actors and increased synergies. The national civil registration agency (Office national de l'état civil et de l'identification - ONECI), which is under the Ministry of Territorial

		<p>Administration and Decentralisation (MATD), has initiated a dialogue with partners working on birth registration to map interventions and avoid duplication. In this perspective, Enabel is expected to continue to operate in Kindia and Kankan regions, while UNICEF will focus on Boke, Labe and N'Zerekore regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNICEF is committed to maintaining communication with child protection actors, including GBV actors in Guinea. We actively participate in working groups for which UNICEF ensure the co-leadership and the leadership remains with the government (the National GBV Coordination and the Protection Consultation Framework for Children). These platforms serve as channels to keep UNICEF and other stakeholders informed about the ongoing initiatives as well as understand the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders to avoid duplication and increase coverage and synergies.• UNICEF is committed to fostering collaborative initiatives with UN agencies such as UNFPA (FGM JP) to avoid duplication of efforts. We strive to coordinate our interventions to ensure that we don't overlap in the same regions, thereby maximizing our respective comparative advantage as well as the utilization of funds while expanding our reach.• Furthermore, UNICEF chairs the Education Financial and Technical partners (Partenariat
--	--	---

		<p>Technique et Financier - PTF) group. In addition, UNICEF is the co-lead for the Education Sector and the leaderships remains with the Government, which facilitates regular dialogue among stakeholders. UNICEF is also an active contributing member of the health inter-agency coordination committee led by WHO.</p>
	<p>Focussing on certain priority zones is understandable but also involves a risk of exclusion. <i>Which are the intervention zones</i>, and how has this choice been made?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF appreciates the comment by the Belgian government on the importance of prioritization and risk exclusion. • UNICEF conducted an initial vulnerability mapping exercise using selected child rights-related indicators and triangulating available data, such as SMART surveys and DHS and MICS. Following this internal assessment, the prioritized geographical areas of implementation are Kankan and Labe, with a targeted focus on 67 communes. In addition, these geographic zones are identified in consultation with the government.
	<p>When it comes to digitalisation (e.g. paragraphs 21, 26, 36), accompanying measures (training, infrastructure, government budget) must also be considered to guarantee sustainability. In addition, before developing a new application, it is important to check whether there is an existing application that can be used and which other actors are developing or have developed digital initiatives in the same domain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF agrees on the importance of considering accompanying measures to sustainable digitalization. • Based on an assessment conducted in 2021, the government has developed a costed roadmap for the administrative and pedagogical digitization of the Ministry of Education (MoE). This includes the Learning Passport as a

		<p>learning platform to be implemented after assessing other existing learning initiatives/platforms. The roadmap is to be implemented by the government, but with contributions from its technical and financial partners. UNICEF is one of the critical technical partners for MoE in the rollout of the digitalization initiative in Guinea.</p>
	<p>In order to guarantee the sustainability of mechanisms for social protection (paragraphs 20, 25, 37, 38) and accessible justice (paragraph 30), it is important that government budget is available, so that such initiatives do not solely depend on funding of UNICEF and other development actors. Is there sufficient government budget for these initiatives and how does UNICEF plan to guarantee sustainability of these mechanisms? Will the "pilot initiative" (paragraph 38) be incorporated in the national health system?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF CO in Guinea appreciates the Belgium Govt comment related to sustainable mechanisms for social protection. • UNICEF invested in modelling intervention aiming at increasing children’s access to basic social services with the aim of showing evidence of their impact and promoting scaling up and sustainability as well as ownership by national counterparts. In this regard, the Government has made progress, particularly through the establishment of the National Agency for Economic and Social Inclusion (ANIES) and the Social Development and Indigence Fund (FDSI). These institutions are responsible for identifying and providing assistance to vulnerable households to alleviate poverty, as well as delivering health care services to those in need. • Furthermore, through the implementation of the new country programme, UNICEF will work with these institutions and continue to provide technical assistance so that they are equipped to

		<p>identify and integrate vulnerable children and adolescents promoting their access to quality social services, including education, health, nutrition, WASH and protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, at the local level, UNICEF will continue to support the mobilisation of domestic resources to enable communes to address the needs of children through their Annual Investment Plans (AIP). This is part of a sustainable approach to strengthening the social protection system at the decentralized level • The assessment of all these pilot initiatives is planned, with the potential for subsequent scaling-up through national/sectoral systems. • Finally, UNICEF intends to work in partnership with other stakeholders to strengthen the coordination mechanism through an inclusive, integrated, and responsive social protection strategy for the most vulnerable groups, including capacity-building for actors at all levels in planning, monitoring, and evaluating social actions.
	<p>The Programme rightly addresses the need for reliable data. In which situations does UNICEF work with own data by lack of existing data or are data lacking completely? How can we work to address that issue?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF acknowledges the comment by the Govt of Belgium related to data. • Social sectors data, and data related to children, is current insufficient outdated or inadequately disaggregated. This poses a significant challenge for evidence-based and equity-focused programming aimed at achieving the SDGs.

		<p>UNICEF is committed to continue supporting the capacity development of the relevant sectoral information systems to provide information about children's rights. These systems include (i) the health information system (DHIS-2), (ii) CPMIS+/Primer, (iii) the education management information system. UNICEF will continue its support, to consolidate the Child Protection Management Information System (CPMIS+/Primer), and will work with other actors, in particular UNESCO for education statistics and WHO for the DHIS-2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) produces most of the data for outcome and impact-level indicators from national household surveys and the general population census. UNICEF will continue to work with all partners investing in national statistic system for a coordinated approach to data production, dissemination and use. • In particular, UNICEF is committed to working with different stakeholders to support the Demographic and Health Survey (EDS) and or Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), the national nutrition surveys (SMART surveys), and will contribute to the general population and housing census (RGPH-4).
--	--	---

<p>Comments on specific aspects of the draft country programme documents</p>	<p>What is meant by “humanitarian support” in paragraph 19 and why is this kind of support for interventions from the past programme needed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF appreciates Belgium comment related to humanitarian support. • “Humanitarian support” refers to emergency response during a crisis and is part of UNICEF core accountabilities; in fragile settings such as Guinea, the likelihood of disease outbreaks and/or climate-related hazards is high and requires adequate preparedness and coordination. This includes emergency preparedness at local level through capacity development of partners and communities, quality and access of services, prepositioning of emergency kits. • Furthermore, this kind of support is needed based on lessons learnt from and shared during the national forum on “the management of multiple and simultaneous epidemics” organised from 16 to 18 November 2022 under the lead of the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene, with support from UNICEF and other Government’s partners.
	<p>The cross-cutting component "programme effectiveness`" (paragraphs 41-43) has the second largest budget, but information on it is very limited. How will this budget be used? Moreover, the results and resources framework annexed to the CPD does not contain any indicator or outcome in relation to this component.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF acknowledges the comments of the Belgium related to programme effectiveness. • The programme effectiveness outcome demonstrates the UNICEF commitment to accountable and effective management of programme components at all levels. To support these four programme components, the programme effectiveness component is structured around the following priority areas: (i)

		<p>Programme coordination; (ii) External communication; (iii) Management for results which includes data collection for monitoring & evaluation; (iv) Advocacy, partnership, and resource mobilization; (v) Other cross-cutting areas; and (vi) Operational support to programme delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcome is formulated as follows: The country programme is effectively designed, coordinated, managed, and supported to meet quality programming standards and achieve better results for children, especially the most vulnerable. There are indicators associated to each output of this cross-sectoral outcome. • Resources allocated to this output reflect the financial needs to cover the different subdomains.
	<p>The various initiatives mentioned to address gender disparities in the completion of secondary education (paragraph 25) are very important, but attention should also be paid to adapted infrastructure (e.g. separate sanitary facilities).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF agrees with the Belgium comment related to the adapted infrastructures in schools. • UNICEF recognizes the importance of ensuring access to water and sanitation in communities, schools and health-care facilities. This access, located within a safe distance and designed to ensure the safety and privacy of women and adolescent girls in need, is critical and contributes significantly to reducing gender and equity gaps. The implementation of WASH in school program will focus on the construction of gender separated latrines for boys and girls and

		<p>will include management of health and menstrual hygiene.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF remains committed to ensuring effective participation of all members of the school community (teachers, parents, children), as a key factor for ownership and inclusive management of WASH facilities.
	<p>In the case of risk management, it can be concluded that the planned mitigation measures are not very convincing and do not have a lot of added value. "Community-based resilience-building" is something that is provided anyway. "Prompt reaction in case additional funding is required" seems like a meaningless measure. In addition, there is no reference to political risks linked to the transition period. Climate risks and responses to them are not elaborated in much detail in the document, yet they are an important part of the programme according to paragraph 20.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF agrees with the Belgium comment related to risk management and welcomes the opportunity to provide additional information that could not be adequately covered in a document of 6000 words. • UNICEF acknowledges the inherent political risks associated with the ongoing political transition. UNICEF has developed an emergency preparedness and response plan for 2024 based on the lessons learned from the concurrent epidemics and socio-political unrest, particularly linked to the management of the transition, including elections and their outcomes. The emergency response and preparedness plans include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continuity of basic social services, – Advocacy for children's rights and procedures during the unrest context, – Disseminate messages related to risks of children's participation in political groups, – Advocacy for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse to ensure child safeguarding,

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In addition, UNICEF is committed to continue supporting the Government to ensure that sectoral emergency preparedness and response plans are updated, and necessary accompanying mechanisms are functional.• Regarding additional funding, UNICEF is committed to leverage and mobilize additional resources. A comprehensive resources mobilization strategy covering the 2024-2028 programme cycle has been developed.• In 2022, UNICEF conducted the Climate landscape analysis and impact of climate change on children in Guinea. The findings of this analysis have been considered to inform the Climate-resilient WASH programming and an adaptative climate change environment for children in the new Country Programme 2024-2028 for Guinea.• In addition, UNICEF has recently developed a global Climate Change action plan covering the period 2023-2030. Subsequent efforts will be made to implement this plan in Guinea.
--	--	---