

**Template for delegations providing comments on the
country programme documents**
2020 First Regular Session

Delegation name: ____Norway_____

Draft country programme document: ____Mali 2020-2024_____

Delegations are kindly invited to use this template to share their comments on any of the draft CPDs being presented during the forthcoming Board session.

In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1, country programme documents (CPDs) 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 will be made public on the Executive Board website, and considered by the respective regional office, in close consultation with the country office and the concerned Government.

General comments	<p><u>Intersectoral programming</u></p> <p>We highly welcome the strong emphasis on intersectoral programming in the draft country program document (CPD). A consequence is however that the CPD provides limited information about each thematic areas. An additional summary budget table providing a breakdown of expenditure per thematic area could be useful to better understand the distribution of funding between sectors.</p> <p><u>Partnerships</u></p> <p>We appreciate UNICEFs plans to work with different UN actors in Mali, and the CPD’s reference to joint programs to address child marriage and FGM. However, the draft does not specify UNICEF’s specific mandate in relation to the mandates of other main UN actors. UNICEF could consider being more specific under each strategic intervention/outcome on which UN organizations to work with and their mandates in reaching the different outputs.</p> <p>There is little reference to humanitarian response in general and specifically how UNICEF will work with actors such as UNHCR and OCHA. UNICEF is also moving to working with vocational training and job creation as part of their work on the second decade. References to how UNICEF intends to work with the ILO in this regard would be welcome.</p> <p>UN Women is mentioned as a central UN partner only in strategic intervention 3 (the second decade). UN Women and their partners may be relevant for e.g. policy development and access to networks of women’s organisations and networks of importance to service delivery to several groups and especially to those “left behind”.</p>
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Leaving no one behind, human rights based approach

We support the drafted CPD's people- and community centered approaches to «leaving no one behind». This is essential in order to reach those that are currently not being reached. It is however unclear who among those left behind UNICEF specifically will target in Mali. What characterizes their multidimensional discrimination and needs? How will UNICEF identify them, and how will UNICEF operationalize approaches to have positive impact on their lives?

We would appreciate if children with disabilities were better reflected in both background and program priorities, as they represent one of the most marginalized groups.

The CPD gives a good gender analysis under the programme rationale section, but there is limited reference to how UNICEF will foster gender equality through the programmatic intervention, e.g. through gender-targeted actions. The results framework lacks a systematic use of sex-disaggregated data for all relevant indicators.

Peace and security

Mali is a priority country for *Women, Peace and Security (WPS)*. The draft has no reference to SCR 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) or SCR 2250 (regarding Youth, Peace and Security), nor to Mali's commitments (e.g. Mali's Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security). The CPD could better reflect how the programs intend to contribute to reduce, or to avoid increasing, conflicts in target areas.

A gender perspective on the safety of those who will deliver services and of the target groups is of high importance in order to reach planned results. The draft does not mention cooperation with the security sector, institutions or organizations contributing to security in UNICEF's operational work.

Paragraph 24 refers to conflict and risk analysis. This is of utmost importance in Mali, and analysis should include a gender perspective. We would welcome clear descriptions of how to operationalize a conflict and security perspective regarding the strategic interventions/outcomes. Descriptions of windows of opportunities and main challenges under each of the three strategic intervention/outcome would allow for more precise operationalization of partnerships and challenges/risks.

	<p>Attacks and military use of schools, as well as insecurities related to attending and teaching in schools, is a challenge in Mali, but not reflected in the CPD. Mali endorsed the Safe Schools declaration in 2018. A reference to how UNICEF will support the Government to operationalize the commitments in the Safe Schools Declaration could be beneficial.</p> <p><u>Sexual and reproductive health and rights</u></p> <p>The CPD refers to high levels of early marriages and sexual violence in Mali. SHRH, including HIV, is however not sufficiently discussed in the CPD. To promote gender equality, health and education it is crucial that UNICEF includes SRHR in its work with adolescents (10-18 years). Adolescent’s sexual and reproductive health services, including youth friendly health services and comprehensive sexuality education, should be included in UNICEFs work during the formative years (6-12 years) and the second decade (13-18 years). Inclusion would complement UNICEFs intersectoral programming in Mali.</p> <p><u>UNICEF’s normative mandate</u></p> <p>We welcome UNICEF’s human rights based approach to “leaving no-one behind”, targeting both duty bearers and rights holders, and the strong focus on supporting the government’s implementation of national policy frameworks. The CPD refers to supporting the government in the development of standards and policy frameworks to scale up models and accelerate progress towards SDGs. However, the draft does not refer to specific existing (or lacking) national policy frameworks. We find that the CPD could benefit from being clearer on which frameworks UNICEF will support, and from analyses of whether these frameworks need strengthening.</p> <p>Specific references to concrete actions in key thematic areas would also have facilitated understanding of how these actions will reinforce interventions planned at community level.</p>
<p>Comments on specific aspects of the country programme document</p>	<p><i>(Delegations providing comments may wish to include details, such as the page number X, paragraph number X, or annex (results and resources framework).</i></p> <p><u>Use of evaluations in programming</u></p> <p>In the previous period (2015-2019) there was a focus on organizational evaluations (cost-effectiveness assessments of UNICEF Mali, evaluations on UNICEF’s zonal offices model etc.). The CPD could have made clearer references to if and how the program efficiency section has been informed by the evaluations made in the previous period.</p>

Response from the UNICEF Regional/Country Office

UNICEF appreciates the comments made by the Government of Norway on the draft country programme of cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of Mali and the opportunity to offer additional information not captured in detail in the 6,000-word country programme document (CPD).

Intersectoral programming

Together with the Government and partners, UNICEF is developing rolling work plans, and will be able to share the budget breakdown per thematic areas once these are finalized.

Partnerships

UNICEF in Mali works with other UN actors as per their respective mandates and responsibilities in Mali, in line with the United Nations Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). Joint-programmes under the country programme will cover priority areas such as the elimination of gender-based violence, child marriage and female genital mutilation (e.g. Spotlight initiative), resilience and peace building (FAO, WHO, UNDP, UNFPA, IOM, UNESCO, WFP), and adolescent health (WHO, UNFPA). In the areas of child marriage and FGM specifically, the Annex to the Common Chapter of the respective Strategic Plans, 2018-2021 will remain the reference for the respective contributions of UNFPA, UNDP, UN-Women and UNICEF.

UNICEF is a member of the Humanitarian Country Team and implements the Humanitarian Response Plan for Mali under the overall coordination of OCHA. As the lead agency for the Education, WASH, Nutrition clusters and Child Protection Area of Responsibility, UNICEF will work with the Government and civil society organizations to strengthen capacities for coordination, disaster preparedness and response at both national and sub-national levels. Through the sub-cluster Child Protection, UNICEF will continue to work closely with UNHCR, who leads the Protection Cluster. In particular, UNICEF will strengthen its collaboration with UNHCR for children on the move and in child protection in emergencies, including in Internally Displaced Persons sites. UNICEF will also promote risk-informed programming for greater coherence between development and humanitarian interventions. In addition, to maintain access and service delivery to affected populations, UNICEF as a key humanitarian stakeholder will continue to strongly advocate for upholding the humanitarian principles and respect of humanitarian space and access.

In the new country programme, UNICEF in Mali will focus on adolescent's skills enhancement for better employability. UNICEF will work with the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training to improve use of existing facilities and programmes by adolescent girls and boys and better align education and training content with labour market needs. UNICEF will continue to lead the Local Education Group and co-coordinate, through the sub-group on vocational training in particular, with the ILO, including on their decent job-creation component.

UN-Women is a key partner of UNICEF under the Common Chapter, the UNSDCF and the Spot Light Initiative. Point 2 above provides details on areas of collaboration.

Leaving no one behind, human rights based approach

UNICEF will continue to work together with the Government and partners, including Cluster members in humanitarian situations and other UN agencies, to identify vulnerable and hard-to-reach children. As stated in para. 24, ‘results and geographical areas of intervention will be prioritized based on the Multiple Deprivation Overlapping analysis (MODA), the situation analysis, national and regional consultations and the evolution of the humanitarian and security situations’.

During the course of the Country Programme, UNICEF will support the Government to produce more frequent MODA and put in place a unified social register of social protection beneficiaries, to better prioritize households and children and define strategies responding to their needs.

At community level, UNICEF will strengthen the use of multisectoral baseline surveys to better identify the needs of the most vulnerable children and their families, target them, and prioritize multisectoral interventions accordingly. As part of its efforts to scaling up delivering as one, UNICEF is also strengthening its collaboration with UN agencies such as WFP and FAO for harmonized criteria in geographical selection and participating communities.

UNICEF will review existing information and support the Government to include data on children living with disabilities in national information systems, as the situation of this particular group of children and their rights is not yet well documented.

UNICEF will support the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Families and Children to promote gender equality and the empowerment of adolescent girls, including engaging men and boys. For each outcome of the Country Programme based on the life cycle approach, priorities were defined based on the 2018 situation analysis with a gender perspective, in line with UNICEF global Gender Action Plan 2018-2021. Areas of interventions will include: gender-equitable health and nutrition services, gender-responsive WASH, quality education for girls and boys in a protective and safe environment, and prevention of and response to violence against girls and boys, including GBV, child marriage and female genital mutilation. Supporting gender-responsive policies, strategies, plans and budgets and women's/girls' participation for greater accountability will be at the core of UNICEF work to strengthen the enabling environment.

UNICEF has conducted a situation analysis with the Government, with a gender lens as part of its CPD preparation. Indicators have been disaggregated whenever possible (including for the indicator on children attending early childhood education programme in the proposed new language on page 13). Sex-disaggregation could not be included for indicators which relate to overall system improvement or when there is no reliable sex-disaggregated baseline available (e.g. for children out of school, children in humanitarian situation accessing primary education, social protection beneficiaries, poverty). UNICEF will continue to support national information systems and surveys for improved disaggregated data.

Peace and security

UNICEF will work on social cohesion for peace building and resilience as a member of the UN Gender Task Force, sub-cluster on gender-based violence, in particular through the outcomes 3 and 4 of the CPD (see para. 34 and 37). UNICEF will contribute to the implementation of the UN SCR 1325 and 2250 by promoting the capacity building of women and youth organizations to enable them to advocate and promote children’s rights. Women and youth at national, sub-national and community level will be involved in key programmes aiming to build sustainable peace such as conflict prevention and resolution, protection of children from violence and long-term reintegration.

MINUSMA and UNICEF co-chair the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) in-country Taskforce activated in 2013 in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1612 for the monitoring and reporting of the six grave violations committed against children in armed conflict. UNICEF is also an active member of the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements (MARA) on conflict-related gender-based violence and the Gender Task Force with MINUSMA and the UNCT.

UNICEF concurs with the importance of a gender perspective on the safety of staff and partners, including front line workers, and target groups. UNICEF works with all UN security management system (SMS) actors and complies with the UN SMS specific policies on women. UNICEF and its partners uphold the 'do no harm' principle. With the recent recruitment of a full-time dedicated staff on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), based on the approved action plan, UNICEF will reinforce its PSEA, including among implementing partners.

The new country programme document was developed based on a situation analysis which included a risk analysis with a gender perspective which focused on armed conflicts as one of the main risks. Detailed strategies under each outcome are being developed which include windows of opportunities, challenges, risks and mitigation actions, including with partners and which will inform the development of rolling work plans with its partners. Conflict analysis will be updated by the UN system in 2020 and inform our adaptive programming.

Following the endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration by Mali in 2018, partners jointly developed a 'roadmap for its implementation'. UNICEF will continue to advocate for the Safe Schools Declaration, support the Government in its implementation, and lead the Education cluster's monitoring.

Reference to the Safe Schools Declaration has been added under para. 31 of the CPD.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

UNICEF will contribute to the advancement of gender equality, in the framework of the national Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development (CREDD), the Health and Social Development Programme (PRODESS), the 10-year Education Programme (PRODEC2) and the Woman, Child and Family Empowerment Development Programme (PRODAFFE I). The CPD interventions to promote gender equality and adolescent well-being, including through youth-friendly health services (promoting adolescent nutrition, maternal health and prevention of mother-to-child transmission) are contributions to this the national frameworks. As part of the UNSDCF, collaboration with other UN agencies will be guided by the Annex to the Common Chapter of the Strategic Plans 2018-2021.

UNICEF's normative mandate

UNICEF will contribute along with other partners to several national sectoral policies such as the PRODESS, the PRODEC2, and the Water and Sanitation Programme 2016–2030 (PROSEA 2). These documents are also embedded in the Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development (CREDD). UNICEF contribution will include continued support to the national authorities for their implementation, revision and development of related strategies and plans, and strengthening of national systems for monitoring of their implementation at national and local levels. Strategies under each outcome and baseline and targets for indicators have been set accordingly.

Specific references to detailed interventions at community-level will be included in the rolling work plans developed with the Government and partners. While working at service delivery and community level, UNICEF will also work with actors at the national level to build and reinforce systems for sustainability and ownership of these interventions by the government and other actors.

Use of evaluations in programming

While the country programme document only mentions a limited set of evaluations and studies which informed its development, the overall body of the recommendations and lessons learned from evaluations conducted during the previous country programme cycle contributed to shaping the new CPD, to strengthen impact, effectiveness and efficiency. The assessment of UNICEF zone office model and its cost-effectiveness, completed in 2017, informed the adoption of a more integrated approach.