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Executive Board
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Revised country programme document
El Salvador

Summary

The revised country programme document (CPD) for El Salvador is presented to the Executive Board for final approval. At the second regular session of 2006, the Board commented on the draft CPD and approved the aggregate indicative budget for the country programme. A summary results matrix is presented separately.

Decision 2002/4 also states that the present document will be approved by the Executive Board at the first regular session of 2007 on a no objection basis, unless at least five members have informed the secretariat in writing by 6 December 2006, of their wish to bring the country programme before the Board.

Basic data[†]
(2004 unless otherwise stated)

Child population (millions, under 18 years)	2.7
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	28
Underweight (% , moderate and severe, 2002-2003)	10
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births, 1993-2002)	170
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female, 2002/2003)	90/90
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (% , 2001/2002)	69
Use of improved drinking water sources (% , 2002)	82
Adult HIV prevalence rate (% , end 2003)	0.7
Child work (% , children 5-14 years old)	—
GNI per capita (US\$)	2 350
One-year-olds immunized with DPT3 (%)	90
One-year-olds immunized against measles (%)	93

[†] More comprehensive country data on children and women are available at www.unicef.org.

The situation of children and women

1. El Salvador is characterized by positive development and economic growth. According to the 2005 Millennium Development Goals report, all of the eight Goals are very probably achievable by 2015. However, the 2005 Common Country Assessment analysis indicated that needs persist in coverage of basic social services and the strengthening of institutional capacities. Though poverty averages have diminished, the reality for many Salvadoran families and children remains stark because of dramatic disparities in wealth distribution. Some 952,000 children and adolescents live in poverty.

2. Despite Government efforts, the country faces several challenges: (a) violence is a pervasive reality for Salvadoran children and their families, occurring within the family itself, schools and the community and impacting development, education, health, and rights; (b) economic disparities and exclusion from quality services and inadequate social investment hinder the full realization of children's rights, with a particular concern being the situation of indigenous and disabled children; (c) ongoing migration disintegrates families and leaves children vulnerable to abuse and exploitation; (d) epidemics such as dengue fever and diarrhoea are recurrent but potentially preventable through the provision of clean water, adequate sanitation and hygiene education; (e) these challenges are aggravated by natural disasters, which damage fragile local infrastructure and livelihoods; and (f) the growing menace of HIV/AIDS impacts children, adolescents and families.

3. With an area of 21,000 sq km and a population of 6.7 million, El Salvador is the most densely populated country in the Americas. Some 40 per cent of the population is below the age of 18, and 32 per cent of households are headed by women. Forty-three per cent of Salvadorans live in poverty, of which 52 per cent are children under 18. In 2002, the poorest 20 per cent of the population received only 2.7 per cent of total national income, while the richest 20 per cent received 56.9 per cent. Migrants to the United States and other countries comprise 30 per cent of the population. In a recent UNICEF-sponsored opinion poll,

70 per cent of those 12 to 17 years old said that they would like to leave the country. However, migration also injects important resources into the economy: in 2005 remittances amounted to 16 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

4. Ever-growing violence impacts women, children and adolescents. According to the Legal Medicine Institute, the 2004 homicide rate was 43.4 per 100,000 people, an epidemic by World Health Organization standards. Domestic and school violence has also increased, impacting economic development, quality of life and the consolidation of democratic governance. Seven out of 10 children report having received physical abuse in the home. In a recent survey, 43 per cent of youths between 18 and 25, and 40 per cent of adolescents surveyed, said gangs existed in their neighbourhoods. The respondents linked this reality with family disintegration.

5. The elimination of child labour for the 280,000 working children in the country, and the protection of children from abuse, exploitation and discrimination, are ongoing challenges. In 2005, there were a reported 1,170 adolescents in conflict with the law. Government response has ranged from the now-overturned 2004 Anti-Gang Law to the more balanced *Mano Amiga* (Friendly Hand) programme, which includes prevention and rehabilitation.

6. Between 1992 and 2003, social investment in health went from 1 per cent to 1.7 per cent of GDP, and in education from 1.7 per cent to 3.0 per cent of GDP. The Government strategy *Red Solidaria* (Solidarity Network) targets poverty reduction and improvement in health and education indicators in the poorest 100 municipalities in the country, building local co-responsibility in child and adolescent rights fulfilment.

7. During the last decade, the access of Salvadorans to pre-school education has increased from 22.4 per cent in 1992 to 42.5 per cent in 2003 and from 73 to 81 per cent for primary education. The average number of years of schooling increased from 4.1 in 1992 to 5.6 in 2003. These changes have been supported by the Government's National Education Plan 2021, which promotes primary and secondary educational access, effectiveness and competitiveness of students, especially within the global context. However, the rural-urban gap for educational access remains high. In 2004, urban students averaged 6.9 years of school, while rural students averaged only 3.7 years. In the same year, national desertion levels were 12 per cent and first-grade repetition 15.2 per cent; 17.7 per cent of women and 13 per cent of men lacked basic literacy skills.

8. The infant mortality rate decreased from 41 to 24 per 1,000 live births between 1993 and 2003. According to the National Family Health Survey 2002/03, maternal mortality in El Salvador is 170 per 100,000 live births, among the highest in Latin America; 60 per cent of these deaths occur in rural areas, mostly from preventable causes. Some 30 per cent of births occur among mothers under age 18. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance in a baseline study to verify these figures, identify causes, and establish a monitoring methodology.

9. In terms of potable water and sanitation, it is estimated that 90 per cent of surface waters in the country are contaminated and 15 per cent of rural homes lack sanitation services. Water-related diarrhoea and dengue fever reach "red alert" proportions yearly, particularly affecting the elderly and young. Progress has been made in improving the nutritional situation of children, largely due to the influx of remittances to poor families, but indices continue to be high: some 19 per cent of

children under age 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition, and iron deficiency has been found in 20 per cent of children between 12 and 59 months, with a 1.5 times higher prevalence in rural than urban areas.

10. HIV/AIDS has become a fundamental public health concern. The infection rate was registered as five cases per day in 2003 and at six cases per day in 2004. One of every five cases of HIV/AIDS now corresponds to young adults under age 24; 50 per cent of new cases occur in the population under 25. The male/female ratio is 1:1. The rate of children living with HIV/AIDS increased from 4.87 in 1995 to 6.35 per 100,000 in 2000.

11. Natural disasters are a constant threat to the population, large parts of which are made more vulnerable by ongoing poverty. Disaster impacts are exacerbated by natural resource degradation closely linked to subsistence farming practices. Late in 2005, Hurricane Stan and the eruption of the volcano Ilamatepec left 79 people dead, more than 70,000 in shelters, and around \$350 million in economic loss. This dual catastrophe was the worst disaster to hit Central America since Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and the earthquakes of 2001.

Key results and lessons learned from previous cooperation, 2002-2006

12. The work of UNICEF in 2002-2006 has made strong progress in the promotion and strengthening of a system for integrated child protection, which establishes mechanisms for the fulfilment, respect and protection of child and adolescent rights. Many results so far have concerned process — steps towards the longer-term establishment of this system.

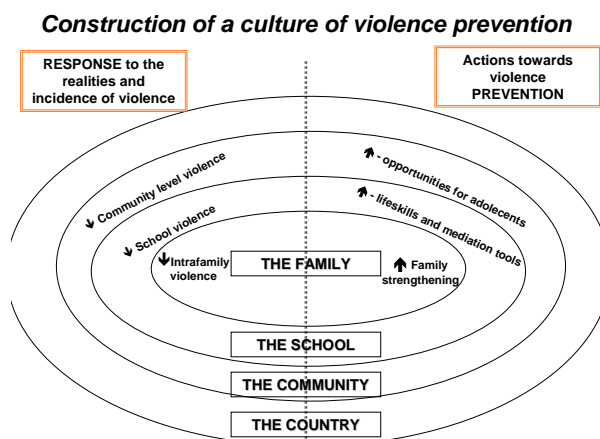
13. **Legislation and public policies** focused on developing a legal and political framework for the protection of child rights, institution-strengthening and the promotion of a multisectoral consensus towards these aims. The programme achieved several results: (a) the approval of a rights-based HIV/AIDS law; (b) attention paid to the rehabilitation of adolescents in conflict with the law through the Office for Juvenile Justice; (c) reforms to the Penal Code, with tougher sentences for those accused of sexual exploitation and trafficking; (d) the signing of a Code of Conduct for the Tourism Sector, defining standards for the protection of children from exploitation and abuse; (e) modification of the repressive Anti-Gang Law in favour of more moderate Outstretched/Friendly Hand programmes, which include violence prevention and rehabilitation. These results at the national level were reinforced and complemented by local-level actions through the programme on local systems for integrated child protection (described below), and vice versa.

14. The country programme developed **local systems for integrated child protection** with good progress in four targeted municipalities. These systems aim to develop guarantees for child protection, the prevention of violence and other rights violations, and adequate responses for victims. The programme achieved several specific results: (a) seven municipalities, including the cities of San Salvador and Santa Tecla, developed public policies for child rights, and eight local defence councils (*defensorías*) now promote child rights at the community level; (b) formal and non-formal early childhood education curricula were redesigned, and inter-institutional coordination mechanisms in early education were strengthened; (c) in 34 municipalities, selected for their vulnerability to natural disasters and social risk, 53 toy-lending libraries were opened to improve early education and development and parenting skills; (d) a school readiness model was supported,

allowing accelerated learning for children not benefiting from early childhood development (ECD) services — this and the toy library model will be replicated nationally; (e) national mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) prevention efforts were supported, and HIV/AIDS prevention among adolescents, parents and teachers was strengthened through peer education; (f) formal and non-formal education quality was improved with the incorporation of life skills and conflict mediation methodologies in national programmes at primary and secondary levels, and the development of community models such as youth drop-in centres (*Casas de Encuentro*), offering safe spaces for participation and development; (g) access to local education programmes on water, environmental sanitation and hygiene (WASH) increased through the national adoption of “The House of Healthy Water” (*La Casa de Agua Saludable*) methodology; and (h) institutional and community capacities were strengthened in psychosocial rehabilitation of children and emergency preparedness and prevention.

Lessons learned

15. The phenomena of violence, migration and family disintegration are growing realities and must be addressed in an intersectoral, multilevel way, focusing on prevention of violence in the family, the school and the community. The family as a unit must be strengthened as the principal space for the exercise of child rights, and the wider circles or contexts of school and community must be developed as safe spaces for children and adolescents. At the same time, attention must be given to victims of violence and to young people who are drawn into a life of violence and want a way out.



16. Developing a system for integrated child protection is a long-term process requiring multisectoral, participatory efforts, a legal and institutional framework and the prioritization of children in the political agenda and in budgetary allocations at national and local levels. It must also include investment in local development and capacity-building, the promotion of child and adolescent participation in the construction of municipal public policies to guarantee child rights, and increased social investment at the national level. Good foundations for this work were established in the 2002-2006 programme and will be continued in the new country programme. Once established, the system will protect children and families at both

local and national levels, and offer services to guarantee fulfilment of, respect for and protection of their rights.

17. Education is a key solution to violence, poverty and migration. In a recent UNICEF-sponsored opinion poll, education was highlighted by almost all respondents as the way to overcome poverty and disparities and to realize new opportunities for girls and women. Even more, education can offer alternatives to children and adolescents so that they can remain in their country and have options beyond those involving entry into violence. This can happen through life-cycle-based educational programmes that include livelihood and life-skill programmes, reproductive health and prevention of HIV/AIDS, and strong pre-and primary education that gives young children a strong start and a safe place to develop. In response to this lesson learned, education will be highlighted for 2007-2011 action, building on existing leadership in the development of successful models for the entire sub-region.

18. The response to the 2005 emergencies involving Hurricane Stan and Iamatepec volcano was timely, but this was only because the country had been mobilized in a fortunately false alert for Pacific Hurricane Adrian earlier in the year. If Adrian had hit, it would have found national and international emergency response institutions woefully ill-prepared. All actors agreed to the necessity of strengthening coordination among governmental and non-governmental organizations responsible for humanitarian aid, prevention, preparedness and response well in advance of any future emergency. Within UNICEF, this will mean that emergency preparedness and response will be streamlined transversally into all programming elements.

The country programme, 2007-2011

Summary budget table

(In thousands of United States dollars)

<i>Programme</i>	<i>Regular resources</i>	<i>Other resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legal and institutional reform, and social investment in children	952	1 394	2 346
Development of local-level capacities and opportunities for the fulfilment of child rights	1 095	2 380	3 475
Promotion of a culture based on child rights and the prevention of violence	431	2 421	2 852
Cross-sectoral costs	1 002	325	1 327
Total	3 480	6 520	10 000

Preparation process

19. The country programme corresponds with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), approved and signed by the Government of El Salvador and heads of United Nations agencies in March 2006. The programme was developed in the context of the 2004-2009 Government plan *Pais Seguro* (Safe Country), and involved a participatory process of analysis and reflection that took into account the results and recommendations of the 2004 mid-term review, lessons learned, the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) and the Millennium Development Goals. It also reflects recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, including the need to develop a national system for child protection, and analysis of counterpart capacities.

Goals, key results and strategies

20. The programme's main goal is to promote and contribute to national efforts for the fulfilment of children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation, emphasizing the prevention of violence within the family, the school and the community. It aims to address the key problems faced by Salvadoran children through these means: (a) strengthened civil society capacities to mobilize the state and local governments in the promotion of public policy, investment and laws that guarantee child rights; (b) stronger family, school, and community capacities as safe spaces for the fulfilment of children's rights; (c) the commitment of families, schools and communities to child protection and violence prevention and the transformation of the current culture of violence into one of respect and peaceful coexistence; and (d) strengthened national and local capacities to respond efficiently to emergency situations.

21. The programme will promote the following **key results** with the involvement of Government and non-government counterparts, and in alliance with other United Nations and international cooperation agencies. Work at the municipal level will reinforce the strong base of social development being addressed through *Red Solidaria*, in phases, to reach the 100 poorest municipalities, which have a population of approximately 370,000 children and adolescents under age 20.

22. **Social investment in children and families.** The expected key results are that resource allocation and social investment in children and women have increased from 7.5 to 10 per cent of GDP and are focused on the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in the areas of health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education and protection. UNICEF will support Government commitments in this area.

23. **Legal and institutional reform for the integrated protection of children.** The expected key results are that (a) the country has an adequate legal framework for the protection of children, and institutions comprising the system for integrated child protection are working in a coordinated manner; (b) all children are opportunely registered at birth in the National Natural Persons Registry; (c) 80 per cent of children in conflict with the law, along with victims and witnesses, are legally protected and are served by family and social rehabilitation and reinsertion programmes.

24. **Basic service networks for child survival and development — local systems for child protection.** The expected key results are that (a) at least

80 per cent of the children and their families in the poorest municipalities are receiving improved quality health, nutrition, WASH and sanitary services, to reduce chronic malnutrition, infant mortality and maternal mortality; and (b) 95 per cent of pregnant women who are HIV positive are screened and are using the national programme for MTCT reduction, and 100 per cent of children identified as affected and infected by HIV/AIDS receive treatment and care.

25. Development of family capacities as the primary entity responsible for the protection of children. The expected key results are that 100,000 families in the 100 municipalities identified as poorest have improved child-rearing practices and reduced incidence of domestic violence.

26. The school as a space for learning and violence prevention. The expected key results are that (a) at least 64 per cent of children below age 6 in the 100 poorest municipalities are involved in quality school-readiness programmes; (b) 96 per cent of school-age children are enrolled in school, and there is emphasis on reaching excluded girls, children with disabilities, and rural and indigenous children with quality educational opportunities; (c) at least 80 per cent of schooled children successfully complete grade 5; and (d) 100 per cent of 180 schools in the 26 municipalities identified as the most violent have reduced manifestations of violence within the school and in the surrounding community. These results reflect national targets in the Education Plan 2021, to which UNICEF actions contribute.

27. Promotion of participation, solidarity and safe communities leading to violence prevention. The expected key results are that (a) children and adolescents in *Red Solidaria* municipalities are participating in community actions that positively influence their lives; (b) a life skills curriculum is developed, emphasizing sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, and is mainstreamed into 100 per cent of primary and middle schools and into other participation and learning spaces in targeted municipalities; and (c) children affected by emergencies are receiving services responding to their needs, including psychosocial recovery.

28. The programme will employ several strategies: (a) the generation and promotion of disaggregated information, and advocacy for a sustained increase in social investment to improve the situation of children and promote the universal fulfilment of child rights; (b) institution-strengthening at national and local levels to support the harmonization of the legal framework and public policies with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to efficiently manage social programmes aimed at children and to respond to emergencies; (c) the promotion of a culture of respect, tolerance, and violence prevention, emphasizing the family, school and community; (d) the promotion of social mobilization and citizen participation; and (e) the strengthening of the family as the primary space to ensure the protection of children, and the development of models to ensure adequate child-rearing practices in the home.

29. The programme will include a cross-cutting focus on gender equality as outlined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; disparity reduction related to disabilities, ethnicity and geographic situation; the promotion of local capacity-building; and decentralization. A results-based, life-cycle approach also cuts across programmes. Emergency preparedness and response capacities will be mainstreamed and based on the UNICEF Core Corporate Commitments for Children, and coordinated through the United Nations Emergency Technical Team, local organizations and the Honduran Red Cross.

Relationship to national priorities and the UNDAF

30. The Government's national plan for 2004-2009, *Pais Seguro*, outlines commitments to social development, and improving the quality of life through better access to health, education and citizen safety. Government plans also emphasize education as a mainstay of development through Education Plan 2021, which aims to make quality education available to all Salvadorans by 2021, and the national programme *Red Solidaria*. The 2007-2011 country programme is in fully consistent with these priorities and Government programmes in health, nutrition, water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS prevention, and the protection of children affected by emergencies.

31. The programme also corresponds with the UNDAF, reflecting 43 of its 81 expected results and its four priority areas: (a) human and social capital; (b) environment and risk/emergency management; (c) democratic governance; and (d) economic development and fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Relationship to international priorities

32. The programme aligns with the MTSP focus areas and with regional priorities, including violence prevention, HIV/AIDS, chronic malnutrition, disparities and social exclusion. It also reflects work towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals in partnership with sister agencies. The programme is rights-based, founded on the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Comments from the Committee on the Rights of the Child served as a strategic base for programme design.

Programme components

33. The programme aims to develop a national context for the promotion of child and adolescent rights and the prevention of violence in the spheres of family, school and community, through three integrated programmes. The first develops the legal, political and institutional framework for the guarantee of and investment in child and adolescent rights. The second works to develop a similar context at the local level, strengthening community and family capacities for child protection and development, and working with programmes such as *Red Solidaria* to promote effective municipal networks of basic services to ensure child health, nutrition and development, and the prevention of violence in the family. The third programme broadens this focus to the spheres of school and community/wider society, building capacities for violence prevention, participation and education for children and adolescents, which will impact all of Salvadoran society. Cross-cutting to all programme components is the vision of violence prevention, encapsulated in MTSP focus area 4, and an emphasis on the life cycle of the child.

34. **Legal and institutional reform, and social investment in children** seeks an increase in social investment to improve the quality of life of Salvadoran children and their families, and the development of a legal, political and institutional context for the guarantee of child rights through a system for integrated child protection, reflecting MTSP focus area 5. It will aim to increase *social investment in children and families* at national and local levels through advocacy, information-generation, and the development of citizen initiatives to monitor and evaluate the use of public investment for children, based on learning from successes in other countries. It will also work towards *legal and institutional reform for the integrated protection of children*, aiming to promote the development of cohesive national legislation

encompassing all aspects of child protection, reforms for the creation of a system for integrated child protection, the strengthening of capacities to provide legal protection and effective rehabilitation, and family and social reinsertion programmes for children in conflict with the law and/or at high social risk. This will require the fostering of multilevel alliances encouraging awareness of the rights of children and adolescents as well as a demand for the protection of, and investment in, those rights.

35. Development of local-level capacities and opportunities for the fulfilment of child rights focuses on the development of local systems for child protection through public policies for child rights at the municipal level, the development of *basic service networks for child survival and development*, and the development of *the capacities of the family so that it effectively serves as the primary unit responsible for child protection*. These actions will be carried out through the empowerment of local and national institutions, re-orienting their focus towards family-centred interventions. Actions will reach the 100 poorest municipalities of *Red Solidaria* to reduce under-5 and maternal mortality, integrate health and education services into local service networks and develop municipal and family capacities for co-responsibility, development, rights protection and violence prevention, and adequate response mechanisms for victims of and participants in violence. At the same time, work will be done to strengthen parental responsibility and family capacities to provide integrated care for children, especially during early childhood, and to prevent intra-family violence. HIV/AIDS prevention will also be included, focusing on MTCT, orphaned children and birth registration. This programme responds to MTSP focus areas 1 through 3.

36. Empowerment through education: promotion of a culture of child rights and violence prevention works in the other two principal life-cycle contexts — the school, and the wider community/society — aiming to develop opportunities for education and participation, violence prevention and the empowerment of children and adolescents as makers of positive change. Building on the objectives and strategies of the programme for the development of local-level capacities and opportunities for the fulfilment of child rights, described above, this programme reflects MTSP focus areas 2, 3 and 4, focusing on *the school as a space for learning and prevention of violence* and the *promotion of participation, cooperation and safe communities* to facilitate the creation of a culture of violence prevention in Salvadoran society. The programme will promote positive learning opportunities for children, emphasizing rural and excluded children, so that they successfully complete a quality basic education and find alternatives to violence. Life skills will be mainstreamed into curricula for grades 1 to 9, emphasizing sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS and conflict/violence prevention. Flexible education modalities will support students' return to school after emergencies. Other actions will concentrate on violence prevention in the formal and non-formal educational setting, supporting activities promoting positive behaviours in teachers, parents and students at 180 schools in 26 of the municipalities identified by the Ministry of Education as being the "most violent". Community-based models will be developed for drawing out-of-school children and adolescents into safe spaces for learning and development, conflict mediation, and HIV/AIDS prevention. The participation of children and adolescents will be promoted, and education and information campaigns developed, to promote a societal culture of violence prevention.

37. Cross-sectoral costs include technical assistance and a portion of the operating costs related to programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Regular resources will be used to finance technical assistance in the programme on legal and institutional reform and social investment; develop capacities at the local level; and cover operational costs. A part of operational and technical costs for education and child development will be financed with other resources.

Major partnerships

38. The main Government counterparts will include the Executive Branch, the Technical Secretariat for the Presidency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Legislative Assembly, the Supreme Court, the Ombudsoffice for Human Rights, and the Ministry of the Treasury. Programmatic counterparts will include the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance, the Ministry of Governance, the National Public Security Council, the Secretariat for Youth Affairs, the Salvadoran Institute for Children and Adolescents, the General Directorate of Statistics and Census, the Salvadoran Institute for Women, the Corporation of Municipalities of El Salvador, and the Salvadoran Institute for Municipal Development, together with the General Directorate of Immigration and Foreign Services, the National Civil Police and the Social Investment Fund.

39. UNICEF and other United Nations agencies will engage in joint programming on UNDAF priorities of combating violence, promoting social investment and confronting poverty and disparities. UNICEF will also work with other agencies in health, nutrition and food security, adolescent sexual and reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention, WASH, democratic governance, local development, gender, child labour, and education. Emergency preparedness will be coordinated through the United Nations Emergency Team. UNICEF will continue to coordinate with multi- and bi-lateral cooperation agencies and to participate in donor discussion tables. Alliances will be strengthened with other organizations, including World Vision, Save the Children, Plan International, Catholic and Evangelical churches, the media, the private sector, universities, and community-based associations. Sub-regional work will be pursued with the Central American Integration System and other regional coordination bodies.

Monitoring, evaluation and programme management

40. An integrated monitoring and evaluation plan will be developed, encompassing studies to be conducted as well as monitoring methods and results expected, in line with UNDAF monitoring tools. The monitoring of programmatic and financial implementation will be done through quarterly reviews, field visits for supervision and support, operational surveys, and routine reporting. Operational coordination will be led by the country management team, under the leadership of the Representative. Specific attention will be given to the gathering of multilevel data on the situation of violence and its impacts on children and adolescents and their families, with a view to identifying root causes of violence and steps to overcome it, in collaboration with United Nations sister agencies.

41. National and local institutions will be supported in the generation of statistics disaggregated by gender, geographic area and ethnicity, particularly at the local level, where information systems and tools such as sentinel sites will be developed. Where national data is limited, the programme will support baseline studies and impact evaluations, again analysing the causes and impacts of violence.