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Short-duration country programme document

Nicaragua

Summary

The short-duration draft country programme document for Nicaragua is presented to the Executive Board for discussion and approval. The Board is requested to approve the aggregate indicative budget of \$881,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$3,260,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the year 2007.

* E/ICEF/2006/18.

The situation of children and women

1. With a per capita gross domestic product of \$410, Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in the region. The World Bank's *World Development Indicators* (2005) reported that 82 per cent of Nicaraguans survive on less than \$2 a day, and 59 per cent survive on less than \$1 a day. Social expenditure increased from \$71 per person in 1999 to \$82 in 2004; however, health and education expenditures have stagnated at \$23.7 and \$22.2 per person, respectively. Child malnutrition remains a major concern, with 20.2 per cent of children affected by stunting and 9.6 per cent of children underweight. The net primary enrolment rate is very low, at 80.3 per cent. Completion rates for all school-age children are below 50 per cent but lack notable gender disparities. There has been improvement in access to potable water, from 66 per cent of the population in 1999 to 76 per cent in 2004, but serious urban-rural disparities (at 95 per cent-48 per cent) persist. Underreporting and low awareness of the HIV/AIDS threat are of great concern. Between 1987 (when the first case of HIV infection in Nicaragua was detected) and 2005, 1,835 cases were reported. Between 2000 and 2004, HIV/AIDS incidence among children under 14 years of age increased sixfold, while among adolescents it increased fourfold. Only 53 per cent of HIV/AIDS patients receive antiretroviral therapy. Nicaragua has the second highest rate of domestic violence in Latin America: around one in every three women reports physical abuse. According to the national consultation on violence, the number of registered domestic-violence cases increased by 8 per cent from 2002 to 2004.

The country programme, 2007

Summary budget table

	<i>(In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
	<i>Regular resources</i>	<i>Other resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
Public policies, legislation and special protection	200	730	930
Health and healthy environments	253	1 410	1 663
Basic education and citizenship	249	720	969
Cross-sectoral costs	179	400	579
Total	881	3 260	4 141

Reasons for this short-duration submission

2. The 2007 country programme is presented in coordination with the other agencies of the United Nations system to harmonize with the entry into office of the new Government administration in January 2007. The development of the Common Country Assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2008-2012 is under way this year, and in 2007, UNICEF will present the new country programme to the Executive Board.

Goals, key results and strategies/relationship to national and international priorities

3. Nicaragua is a pilot country for harmonization and alignment of aid effectiveness, as designated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee. A strong United Nations system partnership with donors supports national efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The Government has led the process with the donor community and sector institutions, producing the National Development Plan 2005-2015 as well as specific sector plans, including those on protection, health and education. These are the main framework for public budgeting and cooperation contributions. Within this context, the programme for 2007 will continue to focus on the design, implementation and monitoring of child-centred public policies and legislation in protection, health and education. These efforts will include strengthening the focus on the recommendations made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, following the submission of Nicaragua's report in 2004, concerning the need for greater investment in the following areas: reduction of disparities, discrimination and poverty; and confronting and eradicating violence. Support to programme implementation at the local level is prioritized in 34 of 152 municipalities in the northern part of the country and eastern Autonomous Regions. The 2005 mid-term review (MTR) endorsed the overall design and scope of the 2002-2006 programme of cooperation, while recommending several measures: further support for the sector-wide approach (SWAp) to development assistance and decentralization processes; increasing child participation; strengthening HIV/AIDS prevention; and including the eastern Autonomous Regions as priority areas. The focus on public policies is in line with focus area 5 of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) for 2006-2009: First Call for Children.

Programme components

4. The structure of the country programme will remain the same as that recommended in the MTR. The structure follows the MTSP at project level, and at the national level contributes to relevant national priorities, plans and SWAp processes, such as the National Health Plan, the National Education Plan, the National Child Protection Policy and the Millennium Development Goals.

5. In the **public policies, legislation and special protection programme**, following the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, support will be given to monitoring the situation of children and women, emphasizing gender, regional and ethnic disparities. Emphasis will also be given to supporting community and municipal defence centre networks in 2 of 17 departments to promote a national child protection system, with the aim of reducing vulnerabilities associated with lack of birth registration, violence, trafficking and sexual abuse. The **health and healthy environments** programme will aim to strengthen community capacities for self-care in mother and child health and in good practices concerning water, sanitation and hygiene. Coordination will be strengthened with local services and municipalities in 6 of 17 departments. The monitoring of basic health and sanitation indicators at national and decentralized levels will also be supported. The **basic education and citizenship programme** will help children and adolescents in vulnerable and indigenous areas to improve their learning achievements in 200 'Friendly and Healthy' schools established, and the Ministry of Education will expand the initiative, with UNICEF support, to 600

rural schools in 3 of the country's 17 departments. Another objective is to reduce the vulnerability of children and adolescents to HIV/AIDS in seven departments. Special attention will be paid to cultural adaptation to ensure quality education for indigenous and Afro-descendent children, and to incorporating strategies for the eradication of child labour and the protection of working adolescents. As recommended in the MTR, emphasis will continue to be placed on ensuring the full inclusion of a gender perspective in all programme components.

Major partnerships

6. The 2007 programme will continue the partnerships and alliances established in 2002-2006 and will expand relations with civil society organizations, community organizations and the private sector. UNICEF will continue to work closely with the World Food Programme and the International Labour Organization in education, nutrition and protection of working adolescents; with the World Health Organization/Pan American Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund in child and maternal health and HIV/AIDS; and with the United Nations Development Programme in protection, emergency preparedness and the monitoring of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

7. In the area of public policies, legislation and protection, in addition to having worked closely with Government institutions, UNICEF established particularly close relationships with several partners: the International Save the Children Alliance; a network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) specialized in advocacy, child protection and the prevention of sexual abuse, trafficking and sexual commercial exploitation of children, and care of victims; and the World Bank, in improving the monitoring of indicators.

8. In health, strong partnership will continue with the Ministry of Health and the participants in the sector roundtables (including the Government of Japan, the Government of the Netherlands, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the United States Agency for International Development and the World Bank), and with decentralized health systems, and local NGO and community organizations. In the area of healthy environments, in addition to the relevant Government authorities, strategies will be coordinated with participants in the sector roundtable, including the Danish International Development Agency, the Foundation of Netherlands Volunteers, KfW (*Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau*, Germany's State-owned development bank), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Central America, and the World Bank.

9. In education and citizenship for all, main partners include the Ministries of Education and Labour, NGO networks and the private sector. In HIV/AIDS and children, in addition to the cosponsors of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the Ministries of Health, Education and Family, strong partners include a vast network of national and local organizations, including the association of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

Monitoring, evaluation and programme management

10. The 2007 Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan complements and updates studies and evaluations conducted for the MTR and for the preparation of

the 2008-2012 country programme. The United Nations country team has identified the strengthening of the national statistics system as a priority area for joint work. UNICEF will continue to promote the monitoring and evaluation of local-level progress, with the participation of municipal authorities, as a step towards the creation of a social audit system. *DevInfo*, also adopted by the other United Nations agencies, is the agreed technical tool to monitor national and local progress made by the Government and public institutions in the Millennium Development Goals and related indicators.
