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Short-duration country programme document

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Summary

The short-duration draft country programme document for Bosnia and Herzegovina is presented to the Executive Board for discussion and approval. The Board is requested to approve the aggregate indicative budget of \$600,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$3,500,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2009.

The situation of children and women

1. The Dayton Peace Agreement signed in November 1995 ended a four-year war and initiated the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Agreement established a State with limited central power and comprising two entities — the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska — with a small area in the north, Brcko District, coming under international administration. Both entities have their own governments and civil structures: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is highly decentralized, with 10 cantonal governments, each with a large degree of autonomy; the Republika Srpska has one centralized government. The country has 13 governance units, 5 levels of administration and more than 150 Ministries.

* E/ICEF/2008/16.

2. The positive results in the areas of security and economic reform led to the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union in June 2008. This agreement confirms the commitment towards furthering reforms to strengthen institutions, governance, and economic transition, with concomitant recognition of the need to counter the vulnerabilities and household-level insecurities that are still present among a major part of the population.

3. There are three principal, interlinked causes of challenges in the social sector and in the fulfilment of the rights of children and women. The first is poverty. While Bosnia and Herzegovina is a lower-middle-income country that has experienced economic expansion in the past few years and has recorded growth in gross domestic product (GDP) averaging between 5 and 6 per cent, nearly one fifth of the population lives under the poverty line and a third lives just above it. Of the 680,000 poor people in the country, fewer than half receive social benefits. Poverty affects especially families with three or more children; two thirds of these households are poor, and the depth of their poverty is more severe than that of any other vulnerable group in the country. Unemployment rates are above 30 per cent. A considerable number of people work in the informal economy, and remittances provide over 20 per cent of the GDP. Unemployment disproportionately affects young people, 62.3 per cent of whom are without work.

4. The second cause is social exclusion. Roma children are not being registered at birth, and are denied many human rights as a result. Some 27 per cent of Roma live in poverty, and two thirds of school-age Roma children do not attend school. Furthermore, children and women have been shown to be particularly vulnerable to social exclusion. This was shown by a recent Child Rights Impact Assessment on the effect of increases in electricity prices, which found that the greater economic burden on families that result from increases significantly reduce the quality of, and access to, health, education and social protection services. Moreover, household strategies to attempt to cope with rising prices negatively impact on children's health; increase child labour; reduce children's access to information; and increase the work load of girls and women.

5. The third cause consists of functional gaps and weaknesses in systems providing basic social services. The pre-school attendance rate, at 6.4 per cent, is one of the lowest in the region. When comparing MICS 3 data from 2006 with MICS 2 data from 2000, some positive gains can be seen in education and health, such as the increase in net primary school attendance rate, from 94 per cent to 98.4 per cent, and immunization against measles, which increased from 25 to 75 per cent. However, other indicators reveal that the systems providing basic social services cannot achieve commensurate positive results or else have difficulty in countering negative trends. These indicators include the attendance rate for grade 1, which dropped from 94 per cent to 90.7 per cent, and the rate of complete immunization, which is only 61.2 per cent, with rates of polio coverage dropping to 79 per cent.

6. The key concerns highlighted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child include the need to address discrimination and segregation in the education system; the institutionalization of children; the rights of ethnic minority children; harmonization of the juvenile justice system with international standards; and the need to prioritize budgetary allocations to ensure that a minimum level of social and health protection for all children is guaranteed.

The country programme, 2009

Summary budget table

<i>Programme</i>	<i>(In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Regular resources</i>	<i>Other resources</i>	
Policy support	180	1 323	1 503
Inclusive basic health, education and child protection services	70	1 032	1 102
Participation for good governance	105	920	1 025
Cross-sectoral costs	245	225	470
Total	600	3 500	4 100

Reason for the one-year extension of the 2005-2008 country programme

7. The current country programme (2005-2008) is being proposed for extension in order to harmonize cycles with country programmes of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund.

Goals, strategies and relationship to national and international priorities

8. The overall goal of the short-duration programme is to support the fulfilment of the rights of children and women, and to support the inclusion of all children, young people and women in the provision of basic education, health and child protection services, increasing the genuine participation of these groups.

9. Implementation of the country programme will continue to further the achievement of national development goals and priorities. Whereas the Medium-Term Development Strategy expired at the end of 2007, the Directorate for Economic Planning is preparing the new Country Development and Social Inclusion Strategies for 2008-2013, in collaboration with national and international partners, including UNICEF.

10. The strategies to be employed directly relate to the profile of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a middle-income country that is 'pre-accession' to the European Union and has a decentralized administrative structure. The country programme will concentrate on the following strategies, documented as successful in the Country-Led Evaluation jointly commissioned by the Directorate of Economic Planning of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and UNICEF: (a) use a series of "windows" to strengthen evidence-based policy-making with both State and entity Ministries and to combine this approach with a focus on the equitable delivery of quality services, and opportunities for participation at the community level; (b) take a "systems approach" to enhance both the legislative and service environment, focusing on the social inclusion of particular groups of children. As part of this approach, functional reviews will be used to assess critical capacity and resource gaps in the social protection and inclusion system; and (c) in sectors where the government has sufficient capacity to implement activities (e.g. Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, iodine deficiency disorders control, mine risk education, and voluntary and confidential counselling and testing), provide technical assistance to

strengthen capacities for data collection and monitoring, and support alignment with international standards.

11. The key results targeted for 2009 have been based on the conclusions of the mid-term review of the country programme, as well as results from recent surveys, studies and assessments, including MICS 3 and the Child Rights Impact Assessment, and trends resulting from TransMonee data analysis. A major input into the Review was the Country-Led Evaluation.

Programme components

12. In this country programme, the results and partnerships developed over many years — and for which UNICEF played a brokering role among sectors as well as between government and civil society — have been consolidated and increasingly focused on intersectoral policy development and collaboration among the health, education, child protection and governance sectors. In 2009, this work will be continued, contributing to the strengthening of the social protection and inclusion system through functional reviews of the budgetary and legislative systems as they relate to children; and to the modelling of intersectoral referral systems at the community and service delivery levels.

Policy support

13. The country programme will strengthen evidence-based policy making with relevant, appropriate data and good models at the community level. Data from MICS 3, DevInfo and the Child Rights Impact Assessment will continue to be used to increase the availability of socioeconomic data on children and child rights violations, including for use by the Child Rights Council and the Directorate of Economic Planning.

14. Technical assistance will be provided for the development of national integrated early childhood development policies; the implementation of an action plan for children without parental care; the strategy related to juvenile justice; and the 2008 framework law on pre-schools; as well as the revision of the National HIV/AIDS Strategy. The findings of a recent mine risk education evaluation will be used to develop an exit strategy for UNICEF support that will be consolidated with the new national Mine Action Strategy and related legal framework.

Inclusive basic and child protection services

15. The midterm review found that the approach used for child protection reform had developed appropriate models to address governance issues at the local level. One specific approach taken was participatory planning with municipalities, which created greater momentum and ownership at local levels and informed higher-level policy-making. In 2009, these models will be replicated and used as the basis to create child-friendly schools and communities.

16. Efforts will be made to strengthen the capacity of government and non-governmental organization professionals to identify and monitor vulnerable children, especially those at risk of violence, abuse and neglect, and to refer them to appropriate services as well as to provide services based on national standards and guidelines for children. Capacity-building for juvenile justice response will complement ongoing advocacy and donor coordination roles. Programming will

intensify a focus on Roma issues by building on better parenting initiatives involving the development of integrated parent-child centres and the strengthening of systemic approaches to improving birth registration of Roma children. At least six cantons/regions will promote an integrated early childhood development model that will expand access to care and services and ensure that socially excluded families with young children receive care that impacts positively on young child survival, growth and development.

17. Government efforts to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS will be supported through measures to ensure that young people, including the most at-risk adolescents, acquire adequate knowledge and skills to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS, and that the availability and use of data related to such adolescents is increased for appropriate service delivery.

Participation for good governance

18. The joint Country-Led Evaluation found that participatory approaches in education, mine risk management, and in support of community governance for children that involve policy makers and communities, were particularly effective tools for influencing practice. Approaches to be refined and replicated in 2009 include furthering partnerships with communities to increase their capacity to gather data and monitor implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child through the use of DevInfo and via formal linkages to the Directorate of Economic Planning and the Council for Children.

19. Results from a study on ethnically segregated schools and a comprehensive evaluation of the Child-Friendly Schools project will be used to support the national education reform process, to enhance the understanding of cultural diversity and to further the promotion of peace and tolerance in multi-ethnic communities. National capacity to implement the child-friendly schools approach will be strengthened and scaled up, including through broader intersectoral partnerships in communities. Also strengthened and scaled up will be life skills-based education and health-related risk reduction in both elementary and secondary schools nationwide.

20. The country programme will aim to will consolidate its support to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre to further increase capacities for Mine Risk Management in communities experiencing high and medium impact; increase the participation of young people in the design, implementation and monitoring of community-based risk reduction; and mainstream mine risk education components into the education system, with the content more broadly covering risk prevention, including small arms and light weapons, and promoting safety and countering violence among children.

21. The cross-sectoral component will cover costs for salaries and travel of cross-sectoral staff, security and training, and some operational costs, including those of the Banja Luka sub-office.

Major partnerships

22. Many international agencies are working collaboratively to support the Government's efforts to address the issue of social inclusion, which United Nations agencies have identified as one of three priority areas for the future United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The European Community, along with the

Department for International Development of the United Kingdom and with the Government of Norway, will continue to support the country programme in strengthening the social protection and inclusion systems for children.

23. The programme of cooperation will follow the Country-Led Evaluation recommendation to work with the Directorate of Economic Planning and the Statistical Agency to adopt a more systemic approach to defining roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation at all government levels, with an aim to strengthen accountability and feedback for improved social services.

24. A strong role will continue to be played by UNICEF in United Nations inter-agency work and joint programming initiatives. This will include implementing activities supported by the Spanish-United Nations Development Programme Millennium Development Goals Fund; serving as Chair of the United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS and DevInfo Working Group; and serving as co-Chair of the United Nations Communication Group.

Monitoring, evaluation and programme management

25. The country programme results matrix has been revised to more accurately reflect ongoing activities, to include expected results in focus area 5 of the medium-term strategic plan, and to make adjustments for the additional year. The country programme involved some repositioning: for example, direct support to voluntary and confidential counselling and testing will be discontinued, as these services are being funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

26. Monitoring of ongoing activities will continue according to baselines and planned results. The DevInfo roll-out will be scaled up and linked to various intersectoral, community-based interventions.

27. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will assure the review and monitoring of the country programme, which will be managed in collaboration with the Government at State, entity and cantonal levels.
