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Summary of midterm reviews of country programmes

Latin America and Caribbean region

Summary

This regional summary of midterm reviews of country programmes conducted in 2009 was prepared in response to Executive Board decision 1995/8. The Executive Board is invited to comment on the report and provide guidance to the secretariat.

Introduction

1. The Latin America and Caribbean region continues to exhibit deep social and economic disparities, with large numbers of people suffering exclusion, including significant numbers of indigenous and Afro-descendent populations. The continued use of national averages by governments and international organizations to characterize progress toward the Millennium Development Goals gives the impression that the region is 'on track' to meet most of the Goals: overall poverty rates have decreased, the access of children to education has improved, gender gaps are tending to close, and child mortality rates are falling. This, however, ignores the basic principles of equity and universality, as national averages mask large disparities at various levels, such as between subnational entities, urban and rural areas, men and women, and by ethnicity. A focus on public policies to redress disparities and exclusion is a key strategy and feature of UNICEF country programmes in the region.

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2. This report summarizes eight midterm reviews (MTRs) conducted in Belize, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, Panama and Paraguay in 2009. These MTRs highlight the significant contributions by UNICEF and partners in addressing major challenges for children and women and for achieving the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) and the Millennium Development Goals. Important lessons are derived from the work on capacity development, addressing the rights of indigenous and excluded populations, and influencing policies at national and subnational levels.

Midterm reviews

Belize

3. **Introduction**. The MTR of the 2007-2011 programme of cooperation was conducted in partnership with the National Committee for Families and Children, utilizing the National Plan of Action (NPA) for Children and Adolescents as framework for the review. In addition, technical reviews were organized with stakeholders. The MTR process allowed partners to examine progress toward achieving programme results, with the intention of improving national policies and programmes for the benefit of children and women and facilitating mid-course adjustments to the programme.

4. **Update of the situation of children and women**. Development in Belize is characterized by disparities in terms of socio-economic, geographic and ethnic status. This situation — coupled with challenges in governance systems and national capacities, the effects of the current global economic crisis, and the country's vulnerability to natural disasters — significantly threatens the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. While Belize has made some progress towards achieving the Goals, the country is not on track for the Goals related to poverty reduction, education, gender and the environment. This is especially the case for the indigenous populations: for example, 69 per cent of the Mayan population lives in poverty, and while malnutrition affects 22 per cent of children nationally, it affects 44 per cent of indigenous children.

5. Belize still has one of the highest HIV infection rates in the region, and it is estimated that at least 14,000 children are vulnerable because of HIV in the family. The continuum of care almost ends at care and support services, as these are limited to a few organizations, mostly non-governmental, and do not cover all parts of the country.

6. In recent years, there has been a downward trend in school enrolment and in education quality and relevance. Challenges in education include addressing the linguistic diversity of students, expanding child-centred teaching approaches, improving the low levels of teacher training and increasing the participation of parents and communities, which is now limited. Also notable is the under-participation of boys, especially in secondary education, an issue for various countries in the Caribbean subregion.

7. **Progress and key results**. The MTR highlighted the challenges and slow progress in the achievement of the results of the NPA results and country programme.

8. The policy dialogue with the Ministry of Education and other key stakeholders on the relevance of education is gradually inciting institutional ownership and drive.

The piloting of positive discipline models in two districts has contributed to the momentum to end corporal punishment, a provision of the current Education and Training Bill. Progress was made in ensuring the availability of water and sanitation facilities in the Toledo District, one of the poorest districts of the country, with a significant indigenous population.

9. Systemic gains are becoming evident in the reduction of vertical transmission of HIV and comprehensive clinical management of cases of children with HIV. Adolescents and young people remain significantly at risk. Knowledge is not being translated into practice, 'adolescent-friendly' services remain localized, and systemic gains are a distant reality.

10. The establishment of the first-ever adolescent-friendly space in the South Side neighbourhood of Belize City is hailed as an innovation for positive adolescent development, accomplished through partnership with community-based organizations and technical inputs from UNICEF. The space is under consideration by the Government of Belize for replication in other neighbourhoods. Engagement with the Caribbean Community on adolescent development over the past two years has provided strong insight on the steps needed to further this agenda.

11. Investments in juvenile justice have seen some early gains in the area of mediation and rehabilitation through direct interventions by the Belize Family Court and the Ministry of Human Development. Not evident, however, is the successful prosecution of perpetrators of abuse and exploitation of children and adolescents and a reduction in violence levels, particularly in Belize City.

12. At the national level, concerted efforts of the Government, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and United Nations partners are contributing to improving social investment via the roll-out of a conditional cash transfers initiative. Though nascent, efforts are making headway in enhancing the capacity of national and subnational actors in policy planning, monitoring and implementation. This is particularly true for the Toledo District and South Side of Belize City, both of which are the focus of Government development efforts.

13. Supporting these efforts is the strengthening of the evidence base. This is partly attributable to the multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS), which continues to serve as the most comprehensive source of disaggregated data on children and women. The MICS has been instrumental in informing the reporting on national Millennium Development Goals and the national Situational Analysis on Gender.

14. **Resources used**. The programme started with an approved planning ceiling of $4,560,000, of which $3,060,000 was from regular resources and $1,500,000 from other resources. Resources were received from thematic and set-aside funds as well as from bilateral donors. Implementation rates remained high over the first years of the programme. In 2007, the Executive Board approved an increase in other resources to $3,500,000.

15. **Constraints and opportunities affecting progress**. The implementation of the National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents remains a significant challenge and directly influences progress toward achieving results of the country programme. The MTR showed that, at the national level, the majority of the interim targets of the National Plan of Action are not being achieved. Contributing factors include gaps in national and subnational capacity and coordination, as well as a need for further definition of clear and inclusive integrated policies.

16. **Adjustments made**. Following the recommendation in the MTR, the country programme will increase is focus on strengthening national and subnational capacities for evidence-based design of policies and programmes. At the same time it will strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the on-the-ground delivery of integrated child-friendly services in Toledo District and the South Side of Belize City. To this end, the country programme will emphasize developing effective and integrated service delivery models and support the development of child-centred policies within the context of a wider capacity development strategy for sustained results. Based on the MTR of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the proposal was made to extend the current programme cycle by one year.

Brazil

17. **Introduction**. UNICEF Brazil undertook the MTR of the 2007-2011 country programme in close coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Brazilian Agency for Cooperation. The review counted on the extensive participation of all stakeholders, and aimed to identify achievements and lessons learned across the five main components of the country programme in the Semi-arid region, the Amazon region and large urban centres. The MTR benefited from the Strategic Moment of Reflection held in Santiago, Chile in August 2009, where UNICEF staff from the Southern Cone countries, Brazil and Paraguay and external experts discussed medium- and long-term challenges for children, adolescents and women in the subregion.

18. **Update of the situation of children and women**. Despite the trend toward the reduction of poverty and inequalities from 2003 onwards, 28.7 per cent of the population lives in poverty, and 28 million out of the country's 60 million children are considered poor. Brazil is on track to reach Millennium Development Goal 1, but progress is uneven: children from the Amazon and North-east regions, mainly those from Afro-descendant and indigenous origin, are generally excluded.

19. The under-five mortality rate (U5MR) fell by more than 50 per cent from 1990 to 2008 (from 56 to 22 deaths per 1,000 live births), although neonatal mortality still accounts for about two thirds of the U5MR. Brazil continues to be an international leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS and provides support to other countries in the region and beyond. Rates of vertical transmission of HIV fell by half between 1993 and 2005 (to 8 per cent), but reached as high as 15 per cent in the north of the country because of regional disparities.

20. More children than ever are attending school, almost 97.6 per cent of children aged 7-14 years. However, approximately 680,000 children belonging to communities of Afro-descendents, indigenous children, and children with disabilities are still not attending school. Preschool and secondary school attendance remains a concern. Only 48 per cent of adolescents aged 15-17 attend secondary school; and only 30 per cent of that age group in rural areas. Children leave school for many reasons, including violence inflicted on them and teenage pregnancy, key aspects of poverty and inequality in Brazil.

21. Violence against adolescents is of increasing concern in Brazil. More than 8,000 children and adolescents aged 10-19 died by homicide in 2005. The majority of them were Afro-descendant adolescents from large urban centres.

22. **Progress and key results**. The main contribution and results of the programme are focused on reducing disparities within the country by reaching the poorest and most excluded populations. To this end, the programme is supporting public policy development at the national level and territorial 'platforms' of cooperation in the priority areas, where pacts for children and the UNICEF Seal of Approval for municipalities are the main strategies. Around 1,800 municipalities are enrolled in the Seal of Approval initiative. In the cities of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, 124 communities joined the Urban Platform initiative and the respective city mayors committed to reach 20 specific child-related targets. The efforts at the municipal level have contributed to positive results in the areas of nutrition, child mortality, prenatal care, birth registration, water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and primary education. Overall, participating municipalities have scored better than non-participating municipalities in improving child-related indicators.

23. To monitor Millennium Development Goals at the local level and to highlight in-country disparities, the creation of a web-based Millennium Development Goals portal was supported. Using DevInfo technology, this has facilitated the monitoring of information on key Goal-related indicators for all of the 5,565 Brazilian municipalities in a user-friendly way.

24. At the national level, an important achievement in expanding access to primary and secondary education was the constitutional amendment to ensure mandatory and free schooling for children and adolescents aged 4-17. Generating support for this amendment was a seminar organized in September 2008 in Buenos Aires by the country offices of Argentina, Brazil and Chile, which helped to jump-start the mobilization of social movements and the media.

25. The increased social and political participation of adolescents helped to include their perspective in the national debate on various issues. The theme of racial discrimination emerged for the first time in a national survey as one of the three major problems faced by adolescents. In the context of the Semi-Arid platform, the engagement of thousands of adolescents in 1,130 municipalities in 11 states on the themes of sports and citizenship, culture and racial identity and political participation generated thousands of communication tools, such as blogs, articles, radio programmes and cultural mappings.

26. Studies carried out by Brazilian experts have pointed to the progressive increase of the mortality rate among children and adolescents by violent death over the past 25 years. The National Consultation on Violence, promoted by UNICEF, stimulated discussion within society and the Government about the need for more effective actions to reduce violence against children and adolescents.

27. **Resources used**. The total approved budget for 2007-2011 was $90 million, with $4,620,000 from regular resources and $85,380,000 from other resources. As of 2009, expenditures amounted to $46.8 million, with high overall implementation rates. Half of other resources come from individuals and the corporate sector, obtained through private sector fundraising; the other half came mostly from National Committees for UNICEF. United Nations joint programmes are an increasingly significant source of funding.

28. **Constraints and opportunities affecting progress**. Major areas requiring attention include: disparities at different levels; the need to improve the quality of primary education, and access to education for indigenous, Afro-descendents and

children with disabilities; the growing violence against adolescents; and the high rates of neonatal mortality. Thus, addressing the 'unfinished' agenda of the MTSP and Millennium Development Goals remains from a human-rights perspective, where 'progress for all' is the focus. The convening and advocating role of UNICEF as well as its normative actions, such as through the implementation of the Municipal Seal of Approval initiative, are widely recognized and will be instrumental in advancing the child rights agenda at national and subnational levels.

29. **Adjustments made**. No significant changes to the programme are required. The programme will maintain its successful mix of contributing to national policy-related work and supporting interventions and partnerships at state, municipal and community levels, through the programmatic platforms in the Semi-Arid, the Amazon and the urban centres and by supporting the 'Pacts' and 'Seal' strategies.

30. The programme will further emphasize several strategic areas of engagement for disparity reduction and reducing child poverty and will support a more in-depth analysis of the gaps related to sanitation. The programme will also focus on improving the quality and relevance of education and reducing the levels of violence (linked strongly to access and retention in schools). Reduction of social disparities in urban areas could be further promoted through expansion of the urban platform approach.

Dominican Republic

31. **Introduction**. The MTR of the 2007-2011 programme of cooperation was conducted with the extensive participation of Government, civil society and other United Nations partners. The MTR process provided an opportunity for reviewing progress toward achieving results of the programme while discussing the situation of children and women with all stakeholders.

32. **Update of the situation of children and women**. After a significant improvement in maternal and infant health up to 2005, the rate of progress stagnated. The maternal mortality ratio and the child mortality rate are still among the highest in Latin America and the Caribbean. Significant challenges remain in addressing the quality of young child and maternal health services as well as in ensuring adequate investment levels in health.

33. Only 9 per cent of children under six months old are exclusively breastfed. There is a continued need to address the adequate intake of micronutrients, including provision of vitamin A and iron supplements. Anaemia affects 37 per cent of women who gave birth in the country during the last year. On the other hand, the percentage of households consuming iodized salt has increased significantly (from 19 per cent in 2003-2008 to 43 per cent in 2009). Prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV has low coverage, and only 40 per cent of HIV-positive pregnant women receive medication to prevent transmission to their child.

34. While the net enrolment rate in primary education has reached 89 per cent, for secondary education it is only 50 per cent. The quality of education still needs further attention and public investment in education remains relatively low.

35. Many children remain without birth registration, partly because they are denied citizenship. Up to 38 per cent of children living in some of the poorest rural areas are not registered. Nevertheless, gradual progress is being made to address this. Many other issues in the protection of vulnerable groups need continued

attention. These include child labour, child trafficking, and juvenile justice as well as violence and attitudes towards violence.

36. **Progress and key results at midterm**. Progress was noted toward achieving the programme results. In the health sector, support was provided to the revival of the Child-Friendly Hospital Initiative while extensive advocacy and communication campaigns have made a significant contribution to the increase of iodized salt consumption in the country. An emergency response was made to several natural disasters.

37. The multi-agency evaluation of the National Programme on the Prevention of Vertical Transmission of HIV/AIDS indicated that it contributed to an increased awareness related to coverage, quality and efficiency. At the same time, progress was made in reducing stigma and discrimination against children and women with HIV/AIDS through continued advocacy and communication, while coverage of prevention and care services gradually increased over the years.

38. The Dominican Republic has made strides in child protection. The evaluation of the National Child Protection System, with technical assistance provided through the country programme, contributed to ensuring full implementation, while the capacities for implementation were also strengthened. The mapping of stakeholders in the area of child protection resulted in the definition of a single protocol for attending to children victims of abuse and sexual exploitation. Advocacy and communication regarding the importance of civil registration has improved knowledge on this topic.

39. The programme also contributed to enhancing the availability of quality statistical information and analysis on the situation of children and women and budget analysis through support to the national statistical system and the creation of a ‘child rights observatory’. The further implementation of the ‘Child-Friendly Municipality’ approach also contributed to mobilizing action on children’s rights at the local level.

40. **Resources used**. The approved budget for the programme was $13,505,000, of which $3,505,000 was from regular resources and $10,000,000 from other resources. Significant contributions were received for responding to natural disasters.

41. **Constraints and opportunities affecting progress**. The effects of the global financial crisis affected the sustaining and increasing of social investment. At the same time, the country was affected by several natural disasters and, after the official MTR, faced significant challenges in addressing the effects of the earthquake that struck Haiti in early 2010.

42. The Dominican Republic counts on a good and integrated legislative system as well as a 20-year development plan, which provides continued opportunities for advancing the child rights agenda. Many effective practices exist within the country on addressing children’s rights, including evaluation. Documentation of these practices will be instrumental for implementing such experiences nationwide.

43. **Adjustments made**. Greater emphasis will be placed on exploring and creating alliances within the education sector, as a key strategy is to strengthen UNICEF actions in the promotion of education for all. Some adjustments will be made to the strategies, including increasing efforts in strengthening government

capacities at national and local levels. Additional attention will be provided to ensure that human rights and gender equality are an integral part of all programme components.

El Salvador

44. **Introduction**. During the MTR process, the installation of a new Government provided the opportunity for presenting the programme to the new authorities. The MTR identified progress made and challenges and lessons learned. An in-depth analysis of the situation of children in the context of the political, economic and social trends of the country was part of the process.

45. **Update of the situation of children and women**. El Salvador has achieved improvements in social indicators, and the country will likely reach more than half of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. However, the impact of the global financial crisis can affect this trend. Social investment is crucial but has declined in the past several years.

46. The per capita gross domestic product (GDP), estimated at $3,610 in 2008, places El Salvador among the lower-middle-income countries. However, this GDP figure does not reflect the persisting inequalities and exclusion, aggravated by violence affecting children and women. Although systematic statistical information is lacking on violence and abuse of children, many cases are reported.

47. The Law for Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents was approved in 2009 and is an important achievement of El Salvador in adapting its legislation to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Significant efforts are needed to ensure its implementation.

48. Chronic malnutrition affects around 19 per cent of children under five, with much higher rates among the lowest wealth quintile. Furthermore, the prevalence of anaemia among children 12-59 months old has increased over the past five years, to 22.9 per cent in 2008. Anaemia particularly affects children 6-11 months old and its prevalence highlights an urgent need to improve nutritional practices in the transition period for infants from breastfeeding to ingesting solid food.

49. Although enrolment in primary education is almost universal, around 60 per cent of adolescents do not attend secondary school. Being out of school increases the risks of adolescents and young people being recruited by street gangs (*maras*). This is one of the main factors linked to increasing violence. The impact of the global financial crisis could worsen this situation, reversing gains in the coverage and quality of education and hampering the opportunities for adolescents and young people to achieve adequate social and economic integration into their communities.

50. **Progress and key results at midterm**. Progress was made in monitoring social expenditure on children. The MTR highlighted the need to strengthen strategies for a greater appropriation and engagement of national authorities to promote increased, equitable and effective social expenditure. Progress was also made in improving the statistical information on children and the Millennium Development Goals. In terms of legal and institutional reform, extensive advocacy efforts contributed to the adoption of the Bill for Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents. The challenge remains in supporting its application at national and subnational levels. Additional achievements include reforms in the Criminal Procedure Code, ensuring adequate legal guarantees and protection for children that

are victims of criminal acts, as well as increased capacity of the judiciary system in terms of addressing juvenile justice.

51. Progress has been made in increasing access to safe drinking water, improving information on the nutritional status of children, and strengthening breastfeeding as a strategy to fight malnutrition. In the fight against HIV/AIDS, progress was made in reducing vertical transmission of HIV/AIDS and in improving care for affected children. Research to assess the situation of children living with HIV/AIDS was carried out, providing guidance on how to support them.

52. Good results were achieved in the development of policies, tools and methodologies for integrated childhood development as well as strengthening of technical capacity and coordination among the stakeholders. The programme continued its efforts to reduce intra-familial violence in 26 municipalities with the highest incidences of violence. Moreover, the programme contributed to protecting children against sexual exploitation and trafficking by providing technical support in enhancing legislation and by establishing monitoring mechanisms on the extent of the issue and on the implementation of policies.

53. Significant contributions were made to achieve the goals of the National Education Plan 2021. The role of the State to regulate and supervise initial and preschool education has been strengthened, and through low-cost demonstration models a contribution was made to increasing coverage and quality of education. Regarding secondary education, advocacy for legislative reform to establish free secondary education contributed to the adoption of the ‘free education’ policy. The public budget for 2009 reflected allocations for the application of this policy.

54. **Resources used**. The approved budget for the programme was $10,000,000, of which $3,480,000 was from regular resources and $6,520,000 from other resources. Financial implementation rates have been high. The Executive Board approved an increase in the ceiling for other resources $10,820,000. Joint United Nations programmes, with resources from the MDG Achievement Fund (Spain-United Nations Development Programme), have become an increasing source of funding.

55. **Constraints and opportunities affecting progress**. The programme continued strengthening national and local capacities and made efforts to improve coordination in child-oriented action by civil society and government actors, but much more action is required in these areas. Opportunities, such as the Ibero-American Summit of Presidents in El Salvador, were taken to launch initiatives and articulate coordination in the creation of public policies or national programmes. Examples were the nationally integrated early childhood development policy proposal and the policy on free secondary education.

56. The country still faces challenges in ensuring availability of disaggregated and quality statistical data, the dearth of which causes difficulty in highlighting the significant disparities prevailing in the country. A joint United Nations effort was started to further strengthen statistical capacity.

57. **Adjustments made**. In general, the objectives and strategies established in the programme are still relevant and consistent with the new Government’s plans and programmes. UNICEF will continue its contribution to government efforts to address the effects of the global financial crisis, create social protection mechanisms, and ensure adequate social investment.

58. The programme will also increase efforts in strengthening national and subnational capacities in line with ongoing decentralization efforts. Work at the subnational level will continue to emphasize the achievement of tangible results for children and women in 26 selected municipalities. This work will include enhancing capacities for preparedness, response and protection of children in the context of emergencies. Extensive efforts will be made to further address the prevention and protection of children against violence, abuse and exploitation. At the national level, the programme will continue to contribute to enhanced coordination between civil society organizations and the Government, while also supporting development of policies.

Honduras

59. **Introduction**. The MTR took place in a year of a major political crisis. However, the MTR process still included significant participation from relevant stakeholders, including children and adolescents. Extensive discussions took place with the Secretariat for International Cooperation of the Government of Honduras.

60. **Update of the situation of children and women**. Honduras remains among the poorest countries in the region, with 36 per cent of the population still living in poverty. The impact of the global financial crisis, aggravated by the implications of the political crisis in 2009, has worsened the situation. Nevertheless, social spending has increased over the past years. The country is characterized by wide disparities, with significant challenges faced by indigenous children and women and those living in remote areas.

61. Child mortality has decreased over the past decade, but remains relatively high, and the country is not on track for achieving the relevant Millennium Development Goal. Progress in the reduction of maternal mortality (currently 93 deaths per 100,000 live births) is slow. Honduras continues facing high levels of malnutrition. For example, the percentage of children with chronic malnutrition has sharply decreased, but remains at 27 per cent. While the country is on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals related to water and sanitation, coverage is still 84 per cent and 66 per cent, respectively, and marked by large geographical disparities.

62. While the Government has made progress in providing children with opportunities for attending primary school, net enrolment is 79 per cent, and this percentage is much lower for children attending secondary school. Boys tend to drop out of secondary school before completing it.

63. Various forms of violence continue to affect many children and women, especially adolescents, both in urban and rural areas. Honduras remains highly vulnerable to natural disasters such as hurricanes and floods.

64. **Progress and key results at midterm**. With technical and logistical support through the programme, immunization levels remained above 90 per cent, and a national strategy for maternal mortality reduction was formulated. Nutritional surveillance in selected regions as well as pilot projects in indigenous communities provided valuable information for the formulation of policies and response. The programme significantly contributed to efforts in the prevention of transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child, increasing coverage to 100,000 pregnant women

and expanding coverage of HIV testing of pregnant women for potential treatment and support.

65. Water and sanitation systems were constructed or improved in 56 municipalities in the poorest parts of the country, often in conjunction with interventions in hygiene education as part of the child-friendly school initiative. At the same time, support was provided at the national level in the preparation of norms for water quality. The child-friendly school initiative gained significant momentum through its adoption in 2,700 schools across the country. Progress was made in ensuring the implementation of Intercultural Bilingual Education in regions with high percentages of indigenous and Afro-descendent populations.

66. Capacities were strengthened in the child protection sector, particularly in relation to efforts aimed at reduction of violence. This included the roll-out of a community-based violence prevention model in areas where street gangs are operating. Capacities of law enforcers and employees within the judiciary system were also enhanced for dealing with children in conflict with the law.

67. **Resources used**. The country programme of cooperation for 2007-11 started with an approved planning ceiling of $14,240,000, of which $4,495,000 was from regular resources and $9,745,000 from other resources. By the end of 2009, nearly $12,000,000 was received from a wide range of donors. This included a significant amount of funding for addressing natural disasters. Implementation rates remained high over the first years of the programme.

68. **Constraints and opportunities affecting progress**. Budget constraints continue to affect progress in fulfilling the rights of children and women, though the country has increased investment in the social sector. Enhancing governance systems in the education sector, as well as improving the availability of quality information, will require additional attention in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness. On the other hand, the ongoing decentralization process provides opportunities to further strengthen municipal capacities for adequately addressing child rights and for social budget allocation at the local level. The vulnerability to natural disasters has also posed a continuous challenge in achieving programme results.

69. **Adjustments made**. No major changes were made to the programme based on the MTR. Increased attention will be provided in addressing the rights of children and women at the municipal level, especially in the areas with the lowest development indicators. Support will be provided in enhancing coordination among ministries, institutions and the donor community. The programme will increase efforts in the generation of statistics and analysis on the situation of children and women for influencing policies and action at the national and local levels.

Jamaica

70. **Introduction**. The MTR was a participatory process involving implementing and strategic programme partners, including United Nations agencies and bilateral organizations. The process also benefitted from shared leadership of the Government of Jamaica. The MTR aimed at measuring progress in achieving results while analysing emerging issues affecting children and women in the country.

71. **Update of the situation of children and women**. Jamaica has a very young population, about 33 per cent of which is under the age of 18. A higher percentage

of the rural population is young and the households more likely to be larger, female-headed, and poor. The economy is facing challenges as the debt-to-GDP ratio is the fourth highest in the world, while rates of inflation have averaged almost 17 per cent in 2008 and 2009.

72. Between 2006 and October of 2009, more than 5,612 people were murdered in Jamaica. Violence inflicts direct and indirect damage on Jamaican children. Emergency room statistics show that in 2007 and 2008, over 11,000 cases of sexual assault, stab wounds, gunshots or blunt force injuries were treated among children up to 19 years old.

73. Jamaican children enjoy high access levels to school up to lower secondary education. Attendance of boys in primary schools and beyond is lower than that of girls, which is a pattern in several countries in the Caribbean. Enhancing the quality and relevance of education remains a challenge.

74. The national HIV prevalence rate is estimated at 1.6 per cent. Around 27,000 Jamaicans are living with HIV/AIDS and half of them might not know they are infected. In total, 97 per cent of infants born to HIV-positive mothers received antiretroviral drugs and 84 per cent of HIV-positive pregnant women received voluntary counselling, testing and antiretrovirals to reduce the chances of transmission of HIV to their infants. This has contributed to a reduction of mother-to-child transmission of HIV to below 5 per cent.

75. Challenges remain in health and nutrition. For example, exclusive breastfeeding rates continue to decline, and only 15 per cent of infants less than six months old are exclusively breastfed. Immunization rates continue to lag behind the national goal of 95 per cent, while the country continues to have a relatively high maternal mortality ratio.

76. **Progress and key results at midterm**. Continuous efforts in generating, analysing and disseminating statistics, for example, through support for MICS and DevInfo, as well as research in selected themes, increased awareness and improved evidence-based advocacy and programming.

77. UNICEF and partners continued to draw attention to new and challenging issues that are critical to fulfilling the rights of the child. These include corporal punishment and the need for child participation and social investment.

78. Significant progress has been made in strengthening legislation and policies in areas such as caring for children exposed to HIV, banning corporal punishment in schools, helping children protect themselves against violence, child abuse and exploitation, and addressing the rights of children with disabilities. Moreover, support to strengthening institutional capacities, such as the Office of the Children's Advocate and the Office of the Children's Registry, has resulted in improved mechanisms for the protection of rights.

79. Progress has been made in supporting the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS and plans and policies related to managing HIV/AIDS in schools, with the life skills-based Health and Family Life Education curriculum implemented in 667 primary and secondary schools. Over 45,000 adolescent boys and girls were

reached by the innovative Bashment "Bashy" Bus Mobile HIV Prevention Clinic[1] and Voluntary, Confidential Counselling and Testing Services. HIV prevention education and skills were also provided to children and adolescents through Youth Information Centres.

80. Efforts to develop national frameworks for Safe Motherhood and Infant and Young Child Feeding and assess and certify the baby-friendliness of hospitals are benefiting over 43,000 children born each year as well as their mothers. The National Strategic Plan for Safe Motherhood is being implemented in 345 of the island's 372 hospitals and health centres.

81. Legislation and strategic plans, such as the National Plan of Action for Child Justice, will benefit children who come in conflict with the law. The Ministry of Education instruction to schools to discontinue corporal punishment has had a national impact. In addition, almost 12,000 children benefited from a range of services including alternative approaches to punishment, improved parental practices, conflict resolution services, and educational programmes for out-of-school children.

82. The Programme supports implementation of the National Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Development, 2008-2013. Based on established norms, a total of 111 Early Childhood Institutions were granted permits to operate, while 347 teachers and parents were empowered to work with children with learning disabilities. Moreover, support was provided in the preparation of a National Plan of Action and Monitoring and Evaluation framework for Screening, Referral and Early Intervention and the development of a National Parenting Policy.

83. **Resources used**. The country programme of cooperation for 2007-2011 started with an approved planning ceiling of $13,289,000, of which $3,165,000 was from regular resources and $10,124,000 from other resources. Resources were received from thematic and set-aside funds as well as from some bilateral donors and National Committees for UNICEF. Implementation rates remained high over the first years of the programme.

84. **Constraints and opportunities affecting progress**. The first years of the programme underscored the importance of coordinated efforts in programme implementation, both at national and local levels. Despite the priority given to the preparation of child-related legislation, policies and strategic plans, the pace of their development and approval remains a challenge and affects achievement of planned results. The MTR highlighted the importance of continued attention in building technical capacity and in advocating for the availability of adequate human resources for dealing with child-related issues.

85. Continued advocacy is required for attention to groups of children who are overlooked and underserved. In addition, attention will be given in addressing gender-focused programming, with special emphasis on violence prevention, HIV/AIDS, education and increased access to social services for female-headed households. Further construction of a comprehensive child protection system will require additional attention.

[1] In Jamaica, the word "Bashment" means party. This bus, which is also called Bashy Bus for short, offers a party with a difference. It is a mobile HIV prevention service which is geared towards adolescents in inner cities and rural communities in selected parishes. Source: Novia Condell, UNICEF Jamaica. www.timetodrawtheline.org/blogs.

86. **Adjustments made**. In general, the objectives and strategies established in the programme are still relevant and consistent with the Government's plans and programmes. However, more emphasis will need to be put on capacity-building at the various levels in Government and among other stakeholders to address child rights. At the same time, new partnerships and alliances, for example with renowned Jamaican athletes, will be contributing to achieve the expected results of the country programme.

Panama

87. **Introduction**. The MTR in Panama was conducted during an electoral year, providing opportunity for interaction with the new authorities. In addition to consultations with the Government, the MTR counted on extensive participation of civil society.

88. **Update of the situation of children and women**. With the concentration of economic growth in the urban areas, Panama continues to exhibit large disparities in development, especially affecting indigenous and rural populations. In total, the proportion of the population living on less than $1 per day has decreased to 13 per cent, but this reaches as high as 58 per cent in the indigenous areas. Around 10 per cent of all Panamanian children suffer from chronic malnutrition, while the figure is 63 per cent for indigenous children. Similar disparities affect most other social indicators. However, good overall progress could be noted in primary school attendance, the reduction of child mortality and in efforts to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS.

89. Development challenges in the rural and indigenous areas are much different from those of the urban areas and are affected by increasing levels of violence. While data demonstrate that many of the perpetrators of violence are older than 18 years of age, public opinion is that adolescents are the core of the problem. This has led to extensive political discussions for lowering the age of criminal responsibility.

90. **Progress and key results at midterm**. In collaboration with a wide range of partners, including the United Nations system, the country programme made progress in addressing child malnutrition, contributing to the formulation of the national strategy to combat malnutrition. Moreover, increased attention was given to salt iodization, and specific nutrition interventions were supported in indigenous communities. Assistance was provided in the implementation of a nationwide nutrition census among school children. Support to a study on the cost of babies not being breastfed, which demonstrated significant additional health system costs, helped in advancing the promotion of breastfeeding and reinforcing the breastfeeding code.

91. The Ministry of Education benefited from capacity-building in budget management as well as in planning, monitoring and evaluation of education programmes. Moreover, indigenous children in remote rural areas benefited from increased coverage of intercultural bilingual education.

92. Based on the results of a study, support was provided to the preparation of a National Plan for Prevention of Vertical Transmission of HIV/AIDS. Capacity in the provision of care and support services to persons living with HIV/AIDS was also improved, while prevention activities continued to focus on young people's sexual behaviour.

93. Technical assistance was provided to the formulation and implementation of policies related to migration and international adoption. A study on juvenile justice was implemented, emphasizing the importance of establishing adequate procedures and approaches to deal with adolescents in conflict with the law. Several initiatives of non-governmental organizations continued receiving support in addressing child labour, sexual exploitation and adolescents in marginalized urban areas.

94. **Resources used**. The country programme of cooperation for 2007-2011 started with an approved planning ceiling of $5,200,000, of which $2,000,000 was from regular resources and $3,200,000 from other resources. Implementation rates remained high over the first year of the programme. The Executive Board in June 2009 approved the increase of other resources by $1,100,000 to a total of $4,300,000.

95. **Constraints and opportunities affecting progress**. The foreseen decentralization process provides very good opportunities for the programme to influence policy decisions at the local level and advocate for increased attention to children and women. At the same time, limited implementation capacity of programme partners at the subnational level has hampered implementation. Such capacities could be further strengthened as part of support to the decentralization process.

96. **Adjustments made**. The programme will continue to achieve results as initially planned. However, increased attention will be given to working in urban areas, with a particular focus on adolescents, and to addressing the rights of indigenous populations living in remote rural parts of the country. The programme will strengthen efforts in the generation of disaggregated quality statistics and knowledge from studies and evaluations, with the objective of providing more evidence for policy advocacy and action.

Paraguay

97. **Introduction**. The MTR in Paraguay counted on the participation of a broad range of actors aiming at assessing progress towards achieving the results of the programme of cooperation. As part of the process, an update of the situation assessment and analysis on children and women was prepared. The MTR also benefited from the Strategic Moment of Reflection held in Santiago, Chile in August 2009, where UNICEF staff from the Southern Cone Countries, and selected external experts, discussed medium- and long-term challenges for children, adolescents and women in the subregion.

98. **Update of the situation of children and women**. Progress has been observed in the situation of children and women. However, large disparities remain within the country, and thousands of indigenous children face challenges in accessing basic social services. For example, chronic malnutrition affects 18 per cent of all children under five years old and 29.2 per cent of the indigenous children. Moreover, 93 per cent of indigenous children still lack access to safe drinking water. While the average number of years completed in school (among the population aged 15 and older) is eight years in the general population, it is only three years among the indigenous population. In many of these instances, challenges remain in ensuring that implementation of national programmes and policies are responsive to cultural diversity.

99. According to official estimates, 13,744 persons below 49 years of age are living with HIV, with 88 per cent of all new infections among those 15 to 24 years old. Access to rapid HIV testing for pregnant women increased dramatically, from 4 per cent in 2005 to 74 per cent in 2008.

100. Many children under age one still do not have a birth certificate, even though changes in legislation have made birth registration easier. This circumstance makes it difficult to provide children with adequate protection and makes them vulnerable to sale, illegal adoption and human trafficking. In Paraguay, 20 per cent of children 10-17 years old are economically active, and 62 per cent of them are engaged in hazardous occupations. Sexual exploitation of children and trafficking in children are particularly common in the border regions. Violence against women remains a concern.

101. Social investment in children has risen steadily over the past years. In 2008, 24 per cent of the budget was earmarked for investment in children. Also, specific attention was given to the most disadvantaged families by increasing the number of families benefiting from conditional cash transfer programmes.

102. **Progress and key results at midterm**. As a result of a joint effort involving civil society organizations, indigenous peoples and the Ministry of Health, a Health Policy for Indigenous Peoples was officially approved and given an increased budget allocation. In addition, addressing nutrition, including exclusive breastfeeding, has gained more attention. The cold chain for the Expanded Programme on Immunization was reinforced through the provision of equipment and materials to heighten public awareness and logistical support to reach rural communities.

103. In the area of water and sanitation, support was provided to develop rain harvest systems in the Chaco region. This modality, increasing access to water in disperse and mostly indigenous communities, has now been adopted by the national authorities, with financial resources assigned.

104. The national HIV/AIDS programme received significant support in its efforts to improve access by pregnant women to the HIV rapid test, which increased from less than 4 per cent in 2005 to 56 per cent in 2008. As a result, the percentage of HIV infection among children born to HIV-positive mothers declined from 37.5 per cent in 2005 to 5 per cent in 2008. Moreover, South-South collaboration with the Government of Brazil contributed significantly to the availability of antiretroviral drugs.

105. The Ministry of Education was supported in reinforcing its General Office for Indigenous Education, which included significant efforts in capacity-building, using experiences from across the region. Further advocacy efforts, such as through the organization of the Second National Conference on Indigenous Education, contributed significantly to the definition of an all-inclusive policy on education. In order to address high school dropout among monolingual Guaraní children, the Bilingual Education Programme (Guaraní-Spanish) was reinforced through the preparation of bilingual education materials and strengthening of teachers' capacities. In addition, the quality of the language and mathematics curricula in primary schools was enhanced.

106. Extensive support was provided to strengthening the National Department for Children and Adolescents (SNAA), and public funding for this department

increased. Municipal Offices for the Rights of Children and Adolescents were supported in 83 per cent of the country's municipalities. Families, as well as children and adolescents, can turn to the Municipal Offices when their rights have been violated.

107. A cross-institutional commission made up of governmental, civilian and international cooperation agencies has been created and has supported large-scale coordinated campaigns to encourage birth registration. More staff was hired in the Ministry of Justice and Labour for increasing registration coverage.

108. Support was provided to the Abrazo Programme for children living and working on the street. This initiative now serves 2,000 children up to age 14 from 865 families in the major cities. It provides comprehensive care and attention to children and their families, such as access to health care, school support and other benefits. The programme includes financial support made available to families through a strategy based on conditional cash transfers. In addition, SNNA has set up a unit to serve indigenous children and adolescents, and has initiated programmes to provide care and attention suited to the indigenous population.

109. The Joint Programme, 'Investing in People', implemented together with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund, has contributed to raising the portion of the national budget earmarked for social spending. The Social Information and Management System, part of the 'Investing in people' programme, monitors social sector indicators and determines the impact of public resources on living conditions. The system also selects beneficiaries of a conditional cash transfer programme, which now covers around 100,000 families.

110. **Resources used**. A total of $9,892,000 was approved for the 2007-2011 programme of cooperation. By the end of December 2009, $5,507,925 of that amount had been spent, including $2,037,414 from regular resources and $3,470,511 from other resources.

111. **Constraints and opportunities affecting progress**. The effects of the global financial crisis have contributed to increasing urban poverty and to the continued vulnerability of the excluded groups, particularly the indigenous population. This poses significant challenges to the Government and requires continued attention in programme implementation. The new authorities are placing more emphasis on the development of the social sector, providing good opportunities for moving forward in addressing the rights of children and women. Nevertheless, staff capacities and Government budgets for the social sector remain a challenge both at the national and subnational levels.

112. **Adjustments made**. The MTR concluded that most strategies outlined in the programme remain relevant. However, increased attention will be given to enhancing national and subnational capacities to address children's rights. Such efforts, together with increased advocacy on selected topics, will further contribute to transforming commitments into actual public policies, plans and programmes. For this purpose, new partnerships will be developed while existing partnerships will be reinforced. Increased emphasis will be placed on working with universities and academic institutions for capacity-building and for knowledge generation. Moreover, opportunities for further South-South collaboration will be explored.

113. The programme will continue to promote and protect the rights of children and adolescents who are excluded from the mainstream of society, mostly indigenous

and Afro-descendent children. As a cross-cutting strategy, the programme will continue to focus on cultural diversity. Increased attention will be paid to adolescent development while gender parity will be further mainstreamed.

Conclusion

114. The eight MTRs discussed in this report demonstrate the importance of UNICEF cooperation in countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, ensuring that the rights of children and women are clearly reflected in policies and actions at the national and local levels.

115. The majority of programmes of cooperation in the region combine influencing policies at the national level with ensuring tangible results for children at the subnational level, often in the poorest regions and municipalities, and addressing the rights of the most excluded, including indigenous populations. Therefore, continued support to creating subnational capacities remains a crucial component for country programmes. Using its convening power, bringing the stakeholders into the development process, UNICEF also contributes to intersectoral coordination and cooperation at all decision-making levels and among development partners, including United Nations agencies.

116. The eight MTRs also highlight the importance of targeted strategies aimed at adequately addressing specific population groups in each country. In several countries, such strategies address the cultural specificity of indigenous and Afro-descendent populations.

117. While the eight MTR countries made significant progress in aligning their legislative and policy frameworks with the Convention of the Rights of the Child, they face major challenges implementing these frameworks and policies in an integrated and sustainable way.

118. In conclusion, the programmes and strategies being implemented are contributing to addressing disparities within the countries and supporting achievement, with equity, of the goals and targets of the MTSP and the Millennium Development Goals, making these a reality for all children and women.