

ANNEX 1: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ASIA-PACIFIC MONITORING AND EVALUATION COMMUNITY ON STRENGTHENING THE M&E FUNCTION IN UNICEF

We the 30 participants of the UNICEF Asia-Pacific Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Meeting, coming together in Kuala Lumpur from 30 March to 03 April 2009, responsible for monitoring and evaluation of UNICEF programmes of cooperation in 22 country offices across 2 regions, covering over 50% of the globe's population, do hereby endorse this document with an aim to strengthen the organizational M&E function.

We note with appreciation the positive developments that have taken place within UNICEF recently as a result of the various Organizational Improvement initiatives. In particular, the findings of the Organizational Review, which recommend, inter alia, that UNICEF positions itself as a global knowledge leader for children, manage for performance and realign structures and systems to deliver quality results. We agree that these strategic shifts will enable UNICEF to more appropriately address its mandate for children in a refined aid environment, as articulated in the MTSP II, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and the Accra Agenda for Action. Such shifts renew the call for **strengthened and strategically focused programme monitoring and evaluation**. We therefore take this opportunity to elucidate a few areas that deserve heightened attention:

There is a gap in strategic guidance for the "M&E officer" role within country offices that is being brought to light by the flourishing of "social policy", "advocacy", "partnership", "knowledge management", and other MTSP FA5-oriented posts. UNICEF needs to clearly define the respective roles, responsibilities, and authorities of such posts to ensure that the synergy of them will effectively contribute to national development goals and policies. Titles and job descriptions should be harmonized and aligned with strategic shifts. Knowledge management is a special area of concern, as this is an organization-wide and therefore cross-sectoral imperative that cannot be handled solely in the traditional programme monitoring and evaluation role.

The new UNICEF Evaluation Policy clearly states that there is a need for evaluation to be more country-led. As UNICEF has a mandate to contribute to national capacity development for evaluation, it needs to improve on its historical approach to project-oriented and donor-mandated evaluations. **Evaluations need to be carried out in partnership** with governments, research institutions and other relevant local actors to enhance national learning about development results for children. In this light, UNICEF also needs to enhance systematization of policies and institutionalization of management response to evaluation recommendations.

The Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) needs to be reviewed. Currently the IMEP is often viewed as only a calendar or wish-list of annual activities. In light of the organizational strategic shifts towards knowledge leadership on children, **the IMEP should be recast as an indispensable tool for strategically planning M&E actions and results**. Good practices and guidelines should be issued by the organization.

An overall Monitoring Policy is needed as a framework to guide all efforts oriented around collection, analysis and use of data. **Sound knowledge leadership and focus on results for children requires that UNICEF continues advocating for implementation of quality household surveys** and other data collection activities that provide evidence on the situation of children and their mothers in all contexts. UNICEF needs to be actively involved in the entire process of instrument design, data collection, reporting and dissemination, focusing on data that supports sound evidence-based decision making. Emphasis on sub-national data revealing disparities in attainment of child rights should be an integral part of this approach. MICS is one tool that has quality contents that could be integrated into existing national household survey schedules. **MICS strategic intent should explicitly advocate for data use by governments in decision making on children's issues**.

As part of efforts to support awareness of the need for quality data on the situation of children in all contexts, UNICEF has to be at the forefront of UN and development partner efforts to **strengthen national capacity in statistical literacy**. The organization needs to raise the profile of indicator data, including how it is measured, calculated, stored, reported, disseminated and analyzed. Data is absolutely necessary in order for UNICEF to push its development agenda for children, which cannot demonstrate relevance without showing statistically significant change in key indicator values. DevInfo is one of many tools that exist on this front, yet should receive special attention due to its unique history of UN support. Guidance should be issued by the organization that places DevInfo within this context, clearly defining and delineating its role and strategic intent. The inter-agency global DevInfo steering committee would benefit from increased participation of country and regional levels with direct experience in DevInfo implementation.

Through this Document, the UNICEF Asia-Pacific M&E community hereby reiterates its interest in having an active role in discussions to move forward the monitoring and evaluation agenda. We hence propose to join senior UNICEF management in all appropriate fora.