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*For information*

## **Field visit to Chad by members of the Executive Board, 2-8 April 2006**

### **I. Introduction**

#### **A. Objectives of the visit**

1. UNICEF Executive Board members from Algeria, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Norway, the Russian Federation and the United States of America visited the Republic of Chad from 2 to 8 April 2006. The main purposes of the visit were to observe UNICEF field operations and the work of the United Nations country team in order to understand the relationship of the UNICEF country programme to national development priorities, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and bilateral development assistance; to provide insight into the implementation of UNICEF policies and strategies at field level; and to discuss the impact of the results of UNICEF programmes with the Government and non-government counterparts at national, local and community levels.

2. The visit was an opportunity for the Executive Board to obtain a first-hand view of UNICEF operations in a humanitarian crisis. The delegation had the chance to observe how UNICEF is implementing its medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) priorities in an extremely challenging environment. At the time of the visit, there was additional unrest linked to the upcoming presidential election of 3 May.

#### **B. Structure of the visit**

3. The programme of the visit included meetings with Government officials, representatives from United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and bilateral donors in addition to UNICEF staff, both in the capital, N'Djamena, and in the city of Abéché and refugee camps in the east of the country. The Executive Board members met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Economic Planning and Cooperation, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education.

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\* E/ICEF/2006/18.

4. The delegation travelled to Abéché, primarily to visit camps catering to refugees from Darfur, Sudan. The visit included three refugee camps: Gaga, Oure Cassoni and Iridimi, which were managed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with UNICEF assuming oversight of activities of, and providing guidance to, its implementing partners in the two clusters of water and sanitation and education. In the refugee camps, members of the Executive Board had the opportunity to observe operations coordinated by UNICEF and its partners. In Abéché, meetings were held with UNICEF staff, representatives from other United Nations agencies and NGOs.

5. In N'Djamena, the Executive Board members met with representatives from the Youth Parliament and visited a health clinic that had almost completed a polio campaign. The delegation also participated as observers in meetings that took place in schools, where teachers and parents' committees met to discuss the campaign to sensitize teachers in emergency situations.

6. The delegation met with the Resident Coordinator, heads of agencies and bilateral donors.

## **II. Background**

### **A. Political and social context of country visited**

7. Chad has a population of approximately 9.3 million and is the fifth largest country in Africa. Some 54 per cent of the population lives on less than a dollar a day, and the per capita gross national product is \$250. The illiteracy rate was 74.5 per cent in 2003. With access to clean drinking water at 34 per cent, Chad ranks second-lowest among the world's countries in this area of social services, and the lowest in the West and Central Africa region. An even smaller percentage of the population - 4 per cent - has access to satisfactory sanitation facilities, according to the 2004 Demographic and Health Survey.

8. In addition to deep poverty, difficulties in implementing poverty-reduction measures, and capacity constraints, Chad has been affected by the political situation in neighbouring countries. Since 2003, the country has received 220,000 refugees from Darfur and 12,000 from the Central African Republic. While currently there is no large flow of new refugees, the situation is highly unstable. An additional burden has been created by some 35,000 people who have recently become internally displaced, with contingency plans made for an additional 15,000. The presence of the refugees has increased the risk of communicable diseases and has generated tensions between local populations and the refugees related to the need to share resources, including natural resources such as water and firewood.

### **B. The situation of children and women**

9. Living conditions remain precarious for children in Chad, as the State has encountered problems in implementing efficient education, health and child protection systems, while families have found it hard to adopt good practices in a context of widespread poverty.

10. The high under-5 mortality rate has not changed essentially in the last 20 years. One in five children dies before age 5. Diarrhoeal diseases, neonatal tetanus, malaria and acute respiratory infections are the leading causes of death among children, which are related primarily to several factors: poor service coverage and performance; the remoteness and inaccessibility of health care services; inadequate hygiene and sanitation practices; a low level of access to safe drinking water; and the under-use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets.

11. The high maternal mortality ratio reflects the low rate of prenatal care coverage (33 per cent), the insufficient coverage of reproductive health care services, the small proportion of births attended by skilled personnel (8 per cent in rural areas), high rates of early marriage, and early, numerous and closely spaced pregnancies. Child malnutrition remains high: 41 per cent of the country's children are underweight as a result of global acute malnutrition, while 14 per cent of them suffer from severe malnutrition, according to a 2000 multiple indicator cluster survey. Only 2 per cent of the country's women breastfeed exclusively.

12. With respect to the education sector, schools are scarce, are in poor physical condition (lacking fences, water points and sanitation facilities) and are overcrowded, with a teacher:student ratio of 1:69. Teachers are under-qualified and unmotivated, curricula are ill suited to students' needs, and materials are lacking. Largely as a result, the repetition rate is 20 per cent. During the next programme cycle, information will be collected on families' attitudes and opinions concerning school, particularly on the impact of early or forced marriages on education, in order to highlight the contribution of these factors to low enrolment ratios, especially among girls. The gross enrolment ratio among children 6 to 11 years old, which was 88 per cent in 2000/2001, masks disparities between different regions, with ratios ranging from 52 per cent in Waddi Fira, to 70 per cent in Guéra, to nearly 160 per cent in Logone Oriental. Disparities are also pronounced in terms of gender: the gross enrolment ratio for boys was 105.7 per cent, compared with 69 per cent for girls. Many school-age children, such as nomads, refugees and girls who work as domestic servants, live in situations that limit their ability to enrol or remain in primary school. Fewer than 3 per cent of children 3 to 5 years old are enrolled in pre-school.

13. The seroprevalence of HIV/AIDS is estimated at 3.5 per cent, according to 2006 data of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). According to Chad's 2005-2009 national strategic framework to combat AIDS, the most serious problems are the high mortality rate among AIDS sufferers and the rapid spread of the virus among youths 15 to 24 years old. This rapid spread among young people might reflect the fact that many of them become sexually active at an early age, have numerous partners and do not understand how the disease is transmitted or prevented. Moreover, many young people become infected through non-sexual means – drug use, for instance. Making matters worse is the fact that denial and stigmatization associated with HIV/AIDS tend to delay treatment. The epidemic is active nationwide, affecting all parts of the country to varying degrees. At the national General Hospital, the number of children born to mothers who are HIV positive is estimated at 600 per year, and steps being taken there to prevent mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV need reinforcement with resources, supplies and staff training. UNICEF coaches a PMTCT task force to enhance the quality of care and supply management. Children who are orphaned by AIDS, estimated to number around 96,000, receive little support, except for that provided by a few charitable organizations.

### **III. UNICEF contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals**

#### **A. Main objectives, strategies and contribution to the achievement of the Goals, especially in the context of national targets and priorities and the MTSP**

14. The overall aim of the country programme for 2006-2009 is to encourage the Government to invest more in children and women and create an environment conducive to the exercise of their rights by placing them at the centre of policies and resource allocations. The programme will help to build the capacity of the people of Chad to respect, protect and promote

the human rights of children and women. This is in accordance with the UNDAF, which was developed on the basis of the national poverty reduction strategy (PRS) and is geared towards seizing the opportunities offered by the country's new status as an oil producer. Taking into account the needs of refugee children in the country, the programme will help to reduce infant and child morbidity and mortality, increase school enrolment, especially among girls, stabilize the rate of HIV/AIDS seroprevalence among youths 15 to 24 years old, and strengthen the child protection environment.

15. The UNDAF comprises the following five strategic areas, which are based on the five national priorities identified in the PRS, and enable the United Nations system to support the country's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals: the enhancement of human capital, combating HIV/AIDS, the promotion of democratic and economic governance, and crisis and emergency management.

16. For 2006, there are three programme priorities:

(a) the establishment of an Integrated Strategy for Accelerated Child Survival and Development in the national health policy, and efforts to ensure that the Strategy is given priority attention in the annual health budget from 2007 onwards. UNICEF Chad has supported a successful intervention that reduced child mortality by 10 per cent within three years;

(b) the establishment of Hand-Powered Drilling Technology in the National Water Strategy. With hand-drilled wells, Chad could achieve the Millennium Development Goal for safe water supply by 2015. UNICEF is working to secure the adoption of this technology into the national water strategy. In 2006, UNICEF worked with the Netherlands NGO Practica Foundation to strengthen the capacity of existing hand-drilling teams to produce quality water installations and to develop a quality assurance mechanism to monitor and certify hand-drilled wells;

(c) the introduction of the Essential Learning Package (ELP) for Primary Schools. The Government integrated the ELP into the national education strategy in early 2006, following the participation of the Minister of Education in consultations for the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative in Beijing in August 2005, with UNICEF sponsorship. In 2006, UNICEF is working to introduce the ELP into 100 primary schools in five regions, paying special attention to developing capacity among regional education authorities and assessing the management actions and financial costs needed to introduce each element of the ELP. This year's activities will strengthen the quality of education services for 30,000 children, and will provide a sound base for the significant expansion of activities in 2007, focusing on the most influential and cost-effective aspects of the package. In the regions affected by the influx of Sudanese refugees, the ELP is being introduced in 40 schools in cooperation with UNHCR, which is supporting school construction, and the World Food Programme (WFP), which is supporting school feeding.

**B. Coordination with the Government and other partners, including United Nations agencies, in the context of United Nations reform**

17. The Ministry of Planning is responsible for overall programme coordination. Annual work plans are reviewed and approved by the Secretaries-General of Ministerial departments and are signed by the Ministers and the UNICEF Representative.

18. UNICEF is striving to strengthen its synergies and cooperation with United Nations agencies. Joint programming is being considered with WFP for the "child-friendly" school

approach, and with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in PMTCT, with technical assistance from UNAIDS.

19. Close cooperation with UNHCR is taking place regarding support for refugees and in line with the UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in emergencies, and with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for mine-risk education and the development of the *DevInfo* database in the national statistical office. UNICEF will also work in partnership with the World Bank and French official assistance agencies in strengthening the budget-preparation capacities of programme managers. In the context of the programme to combat HIV/AIDS, the programme will seek to build synergies with the World Bank, which supports a component on information, education and communication for young people throughout the country. Cooperation with NGOs and associations will undergo strengthening based on the experiences of successful partnerships in emergency response.

20. Sector Working Groups have been established within the humanitarian response, and UNICEF chairs the water and sanitation group and co-chairs both the health and nutrition and child protection groups.

### **C. Main achievements and expected results**

21. The UNICEF response to the current humanitarian crisis has been a major achievement. The contribution of UNICEF in supporting refugees and host communities has resulted in well-functioning refugee camps and minimized tension between the refugees and the host communities. The required shift of priorities to the crisis, however, reduced the organization's capacity to implement the regular country programme during this period.

22. The UNICEF emergency programme is now addressing the needs of 120,000 Sudanese refugee children up to 17 years old from 12 refugee camps in eastern Chad, as well as the needs of around 11,000 school children from Chadian host communities affected by the refugee influx. UNICEF will need to pay increased attention to the needs of 22,000 refugee children from the Central African Republic, as well as 2,000 Chadian children from vulnerable host communities from southern Chad, besides continuing the current emergency programme.

23. In addition to the humanitarian response, major achievements were made in the health sector with the implementation of the Integrated Strategy for Accelerated Child Survival and Development. These activities, supported by UNICEF, contributed to reducing child mortality by 10 per cent within three years in three health districts (Kelo, Bere and Gounou Gaya). It is expected that the child mortality rate will be further reduced by the expansion of the programme.

24. In the recent polio campaign supported by UNICEF, the competence of UNICEF in organizing vaccination campaigns, as well as in providing vaccines, was considered an invaluable asset to the authorities.

25. UNICEF is playing a very important role in Chad and enjoys a good name and reputation, especially in child care and child protection.

### **D. Opportunities, constraints and future outlook**

26. To ensure tangible results and sustainable development, increased Governments efforts and initiatives are necessary to curb poverty. The country's greater oil revenue (expected to exceed an estimated \$200 million annually) gives the Government of Chad an unprecedented

opportunity to tackle poverty. In this regard, it is imperative that social institutions are strengthened.

27. UNICEF has maintained a longstanding presence in Chad that is strongly supported by the Government. Endorsement of the work of UNICEF was expressed by all Government officials the delegation met. Consequently, UNICEF has a unique opportunity to support the Government in strengthening its policies and in honouring the rights of children and women, and is expected to continue advocacy towards these ends.

28. There are opportunities for further benefiting from joint programming and joint programmes.

29. The role of the United Nations in Chad can be enhanced by strengthening cooperation among the United Nations agencies within their existing mandates.

30. A major constraint for sustainable development is the unstable political situation. The regional humanitarian crisis takes a toll on the country, and the security situation affects the activities supported both by the United Nations and NGOs.

31. To remain proactive in both development and humanitarian activities in Chad, within the United Nations country team and countrywide, UNICEF greatly relies on its partners and depends on them to various degrees in implementing the country programme and in responding to the humanitarian crisis. The low presence of international NGOs and local civil society organizations constitutes a challenge in this regard.

32. A constraint for the humanitarian response is lack of funding. At the time of the Executive Board visit, \$3 million of the 2006 Consolidated Appeal of \$16 million had been received. UNICEF has applied for funds from the recently established Central Emergency Response Fund.

33. The future outlook will depend on the political situation, both in Chad and neighbouring countries. However, the Government should greatly intensify its efforts and commitment to implement poverty eradication measures; otherwise, the Millennium Development Goals will be far from met.

34. Concerning the humanitarian situation, the large flow of refugees from the neighbouring countries of Sudan and the Central African Republic has stopped; however, the future is highly unpredictable.

## **IV. Conclusions**

### **A. Observations**

35. Chad is an extremely challenging country to work in, especially for agencies such as UNICEF that are trying to meet needs throughout the country. If the security situation is not improved, it will be very difficult for UNICEF to continue to support the Government in an effective manner to achieve desired outcomes. (As of 13 April, the political and security situation in Chad, and in particular eastern Chad, had been very volatile. A UNICEF water and sanitation officer was shot in Abéché on 5 May and remains hospitalized in Paris.)

36. The presence of UNICEF in Chad is very important. From what the delegation saw, heard and read, UNICEF is one of few actors advocating for the rights of children and women.

37. The delegation's view is that the presence of UNICEF has been an advantage in the humanitarian response. However, if the security situation deteriorates, especially to the point where staff will have to be evacuated, it will be difficult to provide the required assistance. Fortunately, the local population has a good impression of the UNICEF brand, an important consideration for maintaining security.
38. Government officials and other partners, both United Nations agencies and NGOs, expressed great satisfaction with the cooperation with UNICEF.
39. All Government officials the Board members met with during the visit expressed satisfaction with the support and operations of UNICEF. The NGOs also confirmed their good cooperation with UNICEF, highlighting the organization's work in coordinating the two clusters of water and sanitation and education in the context of the humanitarian operation.
40. UNICEF staff expressed the need for enhanced support from the regional office in implementing programmes as well as for greater understanding of the difficult situation.
41. Difficulties in recruiting experienced international and national staff were acknowledged by United Nations agencies.
42. A problem addressed by many partners was the inadequate support given by the United Nations to the security of the staff members of associated NGOs, who indicated that they might not be adequately protected during severe crises, especially those requiring evacuation.
43. The delegation had the impression that discussions at United Nations headquarters on the reform agenda were not actively supported by the UNICEF regional or headquarters offices.
44. Another observation was that UNICEF Chad was not engaged in the global campaign "Unite for Children, Unite against HIV/AIDS", launched in 2005. This impression was probably due to the fact that there are no separate activities linked to the campaign; rather, all actions take place within the HIV/AIDS programme. Chad is one of four sub-Saharan countries with a stand-alone HIV/AIDS programme, which implements the campaigns "4 P's" of primary prevention in youth, protection of children orphaned and made vulnerable by AIDS, PMTCT and paediatric treatment.
45. UNICEF staff said that the several UNICEF strategies in support of the MTSP recently adopted by the Executive Board were useful.
46. The Resident Coordinator expressed strong support for a common Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator role. He had extensive experience in this area, having served in this post in several countries. However, the delegation had the impression that the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator should pay more attention to his coordination capacity as Humanitarian Coordinator in the context of the humanitarian crisis in Chad. There was an obvious need for more attention to be paid to the issues of early recovery efforts and assistance to internally displaced persons and host communities.
47. The Executive Board members were struck by the dedication of the UNICEF staff.
48. The delegation was also impressed by the thoroughness of the practical arrangements, support and assistance provided by UNICEF during the visit.

**B. Recommendations for future visits**

49. The delegation found the field visit to be relevant and useful. To improve the benefits derived from such visits in the future, the participants made the following recommendations:

- (a) The programme for the visit must be prepared strictly in accordance with the Guidelines adopted by the Executive Board in 2004;
- (b) As much time as possible should be spent in the field;
- (c) Courtesy visits should be kept to the minimum required by local protocol;
- (d) Time should be allocated for discussions among the Executive Board members.

**Annex 1**

**List of Participants in the field visit by members of the Executive Board of UNICEF to Chad, 2-8 April 2006**

**Head of Delegation**

Mr. William O. Brisben  
United States Representative to the United Nations Children's Fund

**Rapporteur**

Ms. Unni Rambøll  
Counsellor (Economic and Social Affairs), Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations

Ms. Connie Taracena  
Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations

Mr. Mahmudul Karim  
Economic Minister, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations

Mr. Mohamed Sofiane Berrah  
First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Algeria to the United Nations

Mr. Grigory V. Ustinov  
Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

Ms. Kirsi Madi  
Deputy Director/Assistant Secretary of the Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board of UNICEF

## **Annex 2**

### **Summary of the programme of the field visit**

#### **Monday 3 April**

1. Meeting with UNICEF country management team
2. Security briefing with the United Nations Field Security Officer in UNDP
3. Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and African Integration
4. Working Lunch with Kingsley Amaning, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Lucy Tamlyn, United States Embassy , Dieter Freund, German Embassy
5. Evaluation of the polio campaign in N'Djamena
6. Working Dinner with the Programme Officers for Health, Government counterparts and NGO partners

#### **Tuesday 4 April**

1. Visit to Abéché
2. Courtesy call to the Governor of Ouaddaï
3. Briefing on the security situation in the east
4. Presentation of UNICEF programme
5. Visit to Gaga refugee camp with partners CORD and Africare
6. Return to Abéché
7. Meeting of the Executive Board delegation
8. Working dinner hosted jointly by OCHA, UNHCR and UNICEF with the participation of Government partners and NGOs

#### **Wednesday 5 April**

1. Visit to Bahaï refugee camp
2. Courtesy call to the Préfet
3. Visit to Oure Cassoni refugee camp
4. Visit to Iriba
5. Courtesy call the Préfet
6. Visit to Iridimi refugee camp
7. Lunch at the UNICEF office in Iriba
8. Return to Abéché
9. Meeting with partner NGOs and Government delegations
10. Dinner with Government and NGO partners and heads of United Nations agencies

#### **Thursday 6 April**

1. Return to N'Djamena
2. Participation in discussion groups with teachers, school administrators and parent-teacher associations
3. Meeting with the Children's Parliament
4. Working Lunch with the education programme staff, Government partners and NGO partners
5. Meeting with the Minister of Education
6. Working dinner with the United Nations Heads of Agencies

#### **Friday 7 April**

1. Meeting of the Executive Board members
2. Meeting with the Minister of Health
3. Meeting with the Minister of Social Action and Family
4. Working lunch with the UNICEF country management team
5. Debriefing and discussion with all UNICEF staff
6. Cocktail party offered by the UNICEF Representative with members of the Government, Ambassadors, United Nations Agencies and local and international partners

**Saturday 8 April**

1. Press conference
2. Meeting of the Executive Board members on the report
3. Farwell hosted by of the Representative together with the committee in charge of the visit of the Executive Board

**Annex 3**

**Acknowledgements**

The delegation expresses its deep gratitude to the officials of the Government of Chad at all levels for their cooperation, assistance and hospitality; to the UNICEF staff members in N'Djamena, Abeche and headquarters, whose efficient, impressive work ensured a highly informative and useful visit; and to the many partners of UNICEF who shared their information and insights and expressed encouraging support for the work of UNICEF.

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