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**Summary of midterm reviews and major evaluations of
country programmes****Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of
Independent States region***Summary*

The present report was prepared in response to Executive Board decision 1995/8 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1), which requested the secretariat to submit to the Board a summary of the outcome of midterm reviews (MTRs) and major country programme evaluations, specifying, inter alia, the results achieved, lessons learned and the need for any adjustments in the country programme. The Board is to comment on the reports and provide guidance to the secretariat, if necessary. The MTRs, evaluations and studies described in this report were conducted during 2006 and 2007.

* E/ICEF/2007/13.

Introduction

1. This report covers the MTR of the Tajikistan country programme, three studies and two evaluations that were useful in drawing lessons and bringing to light under-analysed aspects of child well-being. These include: (a) two evaluations — a formative thematic regional evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to reform of the juvenile justice system in Montenegro, Serbia and Tajikistan, and an external evaluation of the Girls' Education Campaign in Turkey; and (b) three studies — the *Innocenti Social Monitor 2006: Understanding Child Poverty in South-Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States*, a thematic regional study on education, and a subregional thematic assessment of actions to prevent child trafficking in South-Eastern Europe. In addition, the report highlights actions taken to use the evaluation function to strategically inform UNICEF positioning in the region.

Midterm review

Republic of Tajikistan

2. **Introduction.** The Tajikistan MTR meeting, held in May 2007, was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. Participants from the Government, the donor community, United Nations agencies, civil society and young people discussed the findings of reviews and evaluations of each programme component. These included: the long-term financial plan for the expanded programme on immunization (EPI); the implications of the financing mechanism for the proposed guaranteed basic package for maternal and child health care; an evaluation of hygiene promotion interventions; and reviews of the life skills-based health education project and the model for modernizing child social welfare. Youth groups undertook their own independent reviews of social service institutions, including hospitals, schools, youth-friendly services, drop-in centres and correctional institutes, and presented their recommendations at the meeting.

3. The MTR analysed programmatic results and reviewed strategies and their relevance to the National Development Strategy and Poverty Reduction Strategy (NDS/PRS). In addition, UNICEF commissioned an external assessment of the value added by the programme vis-à-vis the work of other development actors in the country. The MTR process was aligned with the review of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework by the United Nations country team to strengthen the synergies of UNICEF interventions with those of key United Nations partners, especially the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization (WHO).

4. **Update of the situation of children and women.** The preliminary results of the 2005 multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS) and the child poverty study undertaken for the May 2007 National Poverty Conference provided the basis for the updated situation analysis.

5. According to household surveys, the share of the population living in poverty decreased by 18 per cent between 1999 and 2003. The under-five mortality rate fell from 126 per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 79 in 2005. Administrative data show that the net enrolment rate for basic education rose from 88 per cent in 2000 to 96 per

cent in 2005. Underlying these positive trends are continued security, strong economic growth (8-9 per cent annually over the last five years) and some improvements in access to and coverage of services, reflected in a drop in home delivery rates and increased access to life-saving drugs.

6. Several challenges remain in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Poverty still affects two thirds of children. Nearly all indicators associated with long-term development problems such as child malnutrition, ill health and low levels of schooling are more common among the poor. Approximately one quarter of children under five years of age are stunted, 38 per cent are anaemic and two thirds have low levels of urinary iodine.

7. Only about 10 per cent of children aged 36-59 months attended some form of organized early childhood education programmes in 2005. In basic education, enrolment declined sharply in the last two years of compulsory education, which explains why the net enrolment rate for upper secondary (i.e., ages 16-17 years) is only approximately 32 per cent, about half the 1991 level, with girls comprising just one quarter of the enrolment. Recent data indicate that students in grade 9 master less than half of the minimum competencies in science and mathematics. There are also cultural constraints, affecting girls in particular. For instance, in the education programme, while 46 per cent of boys identified as not attending regularly or as out of school in project areas were successfully re-enrolled in school, only 26 per cent of such girls were able to benefit from the catch-up programme. Long distances to school and parental decisions not to allow girls to go to school are among the major reasons cited in the recent study on non-attendance and school drop-out.

8. Another area that is deteriorating concerns HIV/AIDS: as of 1 April 2007, there were 756 registered HIV cases, compared to 544 cases 11 months earlier. The 2006 surveillance data show that the prevalence among pregnant women is now 0.5 per cent. Recent studies point out that young people are generally poorly informed about HIV/AIDS.

9. Overall, the situation of children and women in Tajikistan is beginning to benefit from the concrete efforts of the Government and the international community to improve the country's socio-economic situation. There are still many challenges, particularly related to strengthening public sector systems and capacities. Public services in general need upgrading to improve their quality and effectiveness, and infrastructure and equipment require rehabilitation and modernization. Social sector budgets need to be increased to ensure availability of qualified staff and essential materials.

10. **Progress and key results at midterm.** The maternal and child care programme worked closely with UNFPA, WHO and the World Bank to support Tajikistan's efforts for public health reform and strengthening the health financial system. With WHO, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Government's analysis of the cost and financial sustainability of routine immunization and to the development of a comprehensive multiyear plan for financing EPI. UNICEF facilitated the provision of technical expertise from Columbia University in support of the National Development Strategy for Emergency Obstetric Care being developed by the Ministry of Health and UNFPA, which was subsequently incorporated in the PRS.

11. Thanks to funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), social mobilization and the collaboration with salt manufacturers was accelerated and helped to increase the percentage of households consuming adequately iodized salt from 46 per cent in 2005 to 57 per cent in 2006. The programme also supported biannual national rounds of vitamin A supplementation. Coverage is now estimated at 95 per cent, whereas it was negligible in 2004. The Government and UNICEF are currently looking at fortification options (draft legislation is ready, and preliminary work has begun with millers), in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of vitamin A supplementation.

12. The Government tasked UNICEF with coordinating donor follow-up to the National Strategy for Education Development. The quality basic education for all programme focused on supporting development of documentation for the Fast-Track Initiative (FTI), regularly communicating between the Ministry and donors involved and, jointly with the World Bank, facilitating key FTI processes. As a result, Tajikistan received \$18.4 million from the FTI–Catalytic Fund for 2006-2008.

13. Jointly with UNDP (the principal recipient from the Global Funds to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria), UNFPA, WHO and other United Nations agencies, UNICEF provided technical support to the youth component of the national HIV/AIDS programme (2007-2010), focusing on the most at-risk adolescents. The young people’s health and participation programme supported the Ministry of Education to develop an operational model of youth-friendly health services in selected districts that now offer voluntary counselling and testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

14. The social policy reform and child protection programme, with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, concentrated on supporting the strengthening of the social protection system in Tajikistan. It facilitated the establishment in nine districts of innovative social work services — a child rights department (CRD) — and the creation of the first cadre of social workers in the country. The programme supported regulations governing the functioning of the CRDs as the core institution of the new child welfare model for the identification, reporting, and monitoring of children in vulnerable situations. With technical assistance from the Children’s Legal Centre (United Kingdom), UNICEF also supported the Government in amending the criminal code so that children accused of minor offences are not deprived of liberty.

15. The Government completed the MICS with the support of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF. Together with data from the child poverty study, the new data from the MICS enabled a deeper analysis of children’s issues and their inclusion in the PRS. Jointly with the State Committee on Statistics, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNDP and the World Bank, UNICEF initiated coordination between and among data producers which led to an increased interest on children’s issues in the poverty reduction agenda.

16. **Resources used.** The total approved budget for the period 2005-2006 amounted to \$12,232,000 (\$4,232,000 from regular resources, \$8,000,000 from other resources). The total funds available during the 2005-2006 period was \$7,444,974 or 61 per cent of the amount planned for the first two years. As of end-2006, country programme expenditures reached \$7,303,229, with an average

implementation rate of 98 per cent. The amounts used per programme component are: maternal and child care, \$2,259,897 (100 per cent implementation); quality basic education for all, \$1,921,566 (96 per cent); young people's health and participation, \$453,100 (100 per cent); social policy reform and child protection, \$1,079,854 (97 per cent); and cross-sectoral costs, including monitoring, evaluation and communication, \$1,588,812 (99 per cent). Key donors include SIDA, European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO), the Italian, Japanese and United Kingdom Committees for UNICEF and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security.

17. Of the four programmes, only the social policy reform and child protection programme has assured other resources funding until 2009. Less than half of the planned amount has been raised for education (39 per cent). A huge unfunded portion remains for maternal and child care (73 per cent) and in young people's health and participation (95 per cent).

18. **Constraints and opportunities affecting progress.** The national policy environment is increasingly driven by the NDS (2007-2015) and the PRS (2007-2009), which are closely linked and centred on achieving the Millennium Development Goals. There is a significant shortfall in funds to finance the NDS/PRS. Across the board, there is a need to improve policy and standards, increase implementation capacities and foster links between policy, planning and budgeting. The lack of effective management information systems is an additional constraint for planning and informed decision-making.

19. There is a consensus among donors to work towards sector-wide approaches in support of the NDS, focusing on developing sectoral strategies, implementing the medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF), piloting and extending financial reforms targeted on users' needs, developing management information systems and building the technical capacities of service providers to improve the cost-effectiveness and quality of services.

20. In such a context, there are a number of new opportunities for UNICEF, including facilitating donor coordination in relevant sectors, supporting ministries to work within the MTEF and monitoring the equity impact of financial reforms and the PRS. UNICEF is gradually transforming its role to respond to the increased demand in the area of social sector reforms. Specifically, the programme is working more consistently towards modelling new policies, collaborating more closely with donors, such as the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), USAID, ADB and the World Bank, and building key systems capacities, particularly in linking budgets for children to policies and plans.

21. **Adjustments made.** The MTR participants agreed that local planning, policy and community development continue to be relevant strategies, but that the programme has not yet found the right formula. They recommended several adjustments to be made for the remaining two years of the country programme.

22. UNICEF should continue to support the Government in service delivery and empowering families but also in linking these interventions to sectoral reforms and strengthening of systems. For example, as community-based alternative services and early childhood development efforts are modelled at the district level, the country programme should aim to influence policy development and implementation by

using lessons from the district models for the development of norms and standards at national level.

23. The overall programme strategy will therefore encompass three complementary thrusts:

(a) **Support to social sector reform.** With the changing funding/policy environment, the programme will continue to work closely with donors to develop and monitor sectoral strategies, policies, standards, regulations and key system capacities;

(b) **Strengthening local governance.** The programme will increase its support for developing the capacities of local institutions. A model for local planning and community development will be tested in a few districts, in cooperation with the UNDP project on local governance. The focus will be on early childhood development in a limited geographic area to ensure the quality of the project and the effective use of limited resources, and to generate results;

(c) **Community and family participation.** In the priority districts, the programme will work with the Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide an enabling environment for families and communities to apply appropriate care practices for young children. It will support the creation of spaces for dialogue not only among young people themselves but also with adults. Good practices of young people's participation will be developed and disseminated. Coalition-building among potential partners for young people's participation will be tried out and benchmarked.

24. The above shifts will be reflected in each of the programme components.

25. The maternal and child health programme will use data and information systems more strategically to monitor the impact of the new policies on children. For example, the programme, in cooperation with SDC, USAID and the World Bank, will support monitoring of the impact on the poor of the guaranteed basic package. This will be done through a household-based survey, so as to more accurately measure the impact of the package on potential and actual users.

26. As efforts are currently in place to integrate maternal and child health and immunization in the ongoing health reform process, support will be given to strengthen delivery of primary health care services with emphasis on immunization, the integrated management of Childhood Illness and nutrition interventions. School-based projects such as those in water and sanitation, mine-risk and girls' education will be streamlined under the framework of the child-friendly school concept that will be elaborated further and adapted in the context of Tajikistan.

27. The UNICEF/World Bank-led review of the FTI-Catalytic Fund grant highlighted the pressing need for the Ministry of Education to prepare for working within the MTEF. The quality basic education programme will assist in the identification and building of a range of competencies at central and local levels, such as policy-based budget planning and expenditure monitoring, to enable the Ministry to introduce successfully the MTEF. This will enable a closer link between educational policy, budgets and expenditures, and a more effective and equitable use of public resources.

28. The availability of funds from the Global Fund represents an opportunity for the official adoption of standards for youth-friendly health services and for

developing an action plan for their introduction nationwide. The ADB/World Bank support to curriculum modernization is also an opportunity to integrate life skills-based health education into a revised national curriculum, particularly in the context of coordinated donor support as part of the FTI-Catalytic Fund process.

29. The review of the CRD model for child welfare revealed the need to ensure that it is institutionally and financially embedded in a reformed national social welfare system, and that it is subject to proper supervision and independent quality assurance monitoring. In light of the European Commission's budgetary support to the Government's social welfare system, the social policy and child protection programme will work closely with the Commission to develop the underlying legal and regulatory framework of the CRDs and associated support services; integrate these institutions into a broader reformed system of social welfare; develop the budgetary framework to finance CRDs and associated support services; and incorporate mechanisms into a reformed welfare system for the supervision and quality control of the CRDs. This will help to ensure the sustainable national scaling-up of the child welfare model and its equitable impact.

30. The National Poverty Conference highlighted the fact that the PRS needs to be monitored for its impact on child poverty, and that there is a lack of coordination among agencies in providing support to the Government in this important area. In order to close this gap, the monitoring and evaluation component of the country programme will work closely with other United Nations agencies and donors to introduce DevInfo as a national government tool for monitoring the PRS. It will facilitate the exchange of data for development monitoring among producers and users. It is expected that this will provide the necessary evidence to enable the introduction of policy course corrections and mobilize and target donor and public resources towards financing children's basic services.

Major country evaluations

A. *Innocenti Social Monitor 2006: Understanding child poverty in South-Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States*

31. **Reasons for the study.** The purpose of *Social Monitor 2006* was to measure the scale, nature and trends of poverty affecting children in the region and to point to actions that Governments in the region could and should be undertaking. Using an analytical framework that defined child poverty with a child-rights perspective, this was the first comprehensive look at data on poverty in the region from the perspective of children.

32. **Summary of design and methodology.** This report is based on the analysis of child poverty and inequality among children across a number of different dimensions. Administrative data, especially from the TransMONEE database, and representative household surveys such as MICS, Demographics and Health Surveys (DHS) and Living Standards Measurement Survey, were the principal sources used in the analysis.

33. **Findings, lessons learned and recommendations.** The findings are striking. The *Social Monitor* presented evidence that one in four children in the region was living in extreme poverty in 2004 (defined as living in a family with less than \$2.15 per person per day). In every country, children were found to be the group most

vulnerable to poverty. Young children, children in large families and children in rural areas were found to have lost ground in relation to other population cohorts, with the relative risk of poverty for children rising compared to older age groups. Child poverty is becoming more concentrated in certain groups and in geographical areas. Disadvantage in health, education, housing and access to utilities was found to be correlated with rural residence, large families and low income, with a widening gap between rich and poor children.

34. One sensitive indicator of material living conditions of low-income families is the number of children growing up in public care. During transition, the number of families in distress whose children often were placed in institutions rose substantially. During an economic recovery, one would expect these numbers to decline. However, *Social Monitor* highlights that the rate of placement in public care continued to rise between 1998 and 2004.

35. Improved economic conditions represent a window of opportunity to invest further in children. However, public expenditures in health, education and social infrastructure have recovered only slowly and remain low in many countries. In particular, the real value of child benefits, as part of the package of countries' social protection systems, has been seriously eroded, reflecting a decline in support to families. In a number of countries, the State is undertaking reform of social services and in so doing is transferring a significant part of the burden of social expenditure onto families. In many settings, more generous support from the international community is also needed to accelerate progress in lowering high levels of child poverty, and to diminish the risk that such patterns of deprivation becomes intergenerational.

36. **Uses made of the study.** The study provided an essential set of concepts and methodologies to analyse child poverty in the context of countries with economies in transition. Several country programmes have been using the same analytical framework to carry out their own national child poverty studies. The *Social Monitor* provided comparability among similar situations across countries in various subregions and will enable benchmarking measurement for public policies for children in the region. The regional launch took place in Finland, and the report was also presented and discussed at the World Bank in Washington and at the European Union in Brussels, with the aim of further strengthening partnerships for children.

B. Regional thematic study: Education for some more than others?

37. **Reasons for the study.** Before transition, the region had attained levels of access to education that were well beyond those in many other countries at similar stages of economic development. Access to basic education was nearly universal, there was broad gender equality and learning achievements, particularly in mathematics and sciences, were high in much of the region.

38. A 1998 UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre report on education in Central and Eastern Europe found that although some reforms had been positive, there had been several worrying changes since the onset of transition: the costs to families of educating children had increased, often sharply; the quality of schooling had fallen; enrolment and attendance had often dropped, especially in less developed parts of the region; and there was greater selectivity and competition in education. War and ethnic tensions had severely disrupted the education of thousands of children in

several countries, and many young people faced unemployment on finishing their full-time education.

39. The trends in access to and completion of quality education reported since the early 1990s, and particularly the mixed prospects towards achievement of Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3, all seemed to point towards a reversal or deterioration of the situation in the region. The study, *Education for Some More than Others*, examines the extent to which these trends are continuing.

40. **Summary of design and methodology.** The study was based on field work and analysis of a wide range of reports, studies and databases, including from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNICEF, the World Bank, the TransMONEE database and MICS. It was supplemented by a survey of the views of disadvantaged parents and children in five countries — Albania, Azerbaijan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan and Turkey — that intended to give a voice to people who are often ignored. For this purpose, more than 20 focus groups were conducted with parents and school-aged children (grades 7-11). Open-ended interviews with key informants, including education experts from ministries of education, principals, teachers, staff from local and international NGOs and UNICEF education officers, also took place in each country.

41. **Findings, lessons learned and recommendations.** Nearly 2.4 million children of primary-school age (of a total 27 million) and 12 million children of secondary-school age (of a total 54 million) were estimated to be out of school in the region in 2004.

42. Income disadvantage is compounded by ethnicity, the need for special education, gender and location. In many countries, the Roma are the most acutely disadvantaged group. In five South-Eastern European countries, primary-school enrolment rate for Roma children is below 50 per cent (below 30 per cent in three countries) compared to 90 per cent for majority children. Roma children are disproportionately represented in residential care facilities and special schools. Five countries — Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova and Tajikistan — with the lowest levels of gross domestic product per capita, the highest income poverty rates and the greatest fiscal difficulties are also the least likely to achieve Goal 2, and two countries — Turkey and Tajikistan — are not on track to achieve Goal 3.

43. Many reforms initiated during the past decade in the areas of teaching, curriculum, books and materials, learning and assessment have not reached all schools or brought radical changes to classrooms. Schools in disadvantaged areas and small towns have not benefited from reform and new teaching methodologies in most classrooms have yet to be enhanced. Budget deprivation is undoubtedly affecting the quality and the quantity of schooling. Attempts at educational reform in the poorer countries are hampered by the inadequacy of central funding, with the burden being passed to local communities. Funding is not available to improve physical conditions in schools, reshape pre-service teacher training or modernize teaching equipment and materials. Teachers are not paid a living wage and the profession is ageing. The consequent slow spread of active learning approaches in schools contributes to the relatively poor performance of the region's students in tests that measure their ability to use skills in real-life situations.

44. The report suggests a number of policy recommendations to promote equity and efficiency, and to ultimately move from “education for some more than others” to “education for all”. The main recommendation relates to the development by each country of an MTEF for the education sector — a costed framework within which trade-offs between alternative targets can be analysed. Other measures include: early childhood approaches to develop the rhythm of schooling; promoting child-friendly schools as safe spaces, using child-centred teaching methods and following a curriculum seen as relevant and where parents and the community are welcomed and involved; free school meals and regular health and nutrition checks; abolition of school fees; and targeted and conditional cash grants.

45. **Uses made of the study.** The study, to be launched in summer 2007, will be used for: (a) advocacy, with a particular emphasis on setting of standards for inclusive and quality education and developing child-friendly education policies and early childhood approaches; (b) programmatic positioning of education in the region, particularly the identification of strategic niches from which UNICEF can contribute to education reforms; and (c) development of partnerships with key actors in education, such as the World Bank around the FTI, the European Commission, ADB on early childhood care and education and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) around inclusive education for children with special needs.

C. External evaluation of the Girls’ Education Campaign in Turkey

46. **Reasons for the evaluation.** In a large middle-income country such as Turkey, disparities and socio-economic patterns of exclusion are an important concern. The ratios of girls to boys in primary and secondary school are 94:100 and 76:100, respectively. In some provinces, differences are even more significant. As consequence, the economy is denied valuable human resources, as women without a complete education tend to be excluded from the labour force. In Turkey, 75 per cent of women of working age are not in the registered labour force.

47. UNICEF supported the Government to close the country’s primary education gender gap through a two-tier strategy. On one side, the Government, through research, has defined and quantified the problem, identified major barriers to girls’ education and proposed solutions. Research findings were used to discuss the need for action with government officials at central, local and provincial levels. Partners including the European Union, World Bank, NGOs, United Nations agencies, the private sector, media and local leaders committed to improving the situation of girls’ education. On the other side, public awareness was galvanized with support from television broadcasts and newspaper coverage. Teachers, NGOs and volunteers conducted door-to-door campaigns to mobilize parents to send their daughters to school.

48. As an integral part of this two-tier strategy, the Girls’ Education Campaign was launched jointly by the Minister of National Education and the UNICEF Executive Director in June 2003. Its objective was to eliminate the gender gap in primary-school enrolment and to realize the Millennium Development Goal target for achieving gender parity in universal primary education.

49. The campaign focused on the central, provincial, subprovincial and village levels. Major implementation steps included: (a) the design and planning of the campaign at the central level; (b) capacity-building and increased social awareness

and mobilization at provincial and subprovincial levels; and (c) support at the village level for identification, mobilization, follow-up and monitoring of families and their children. Campaign management and coordination systems were strengthened at central, provincial and local levels.

50. The objectives of this evaluation were to: (a) determine the extent to which the campaign's objectives were achieved; (b) analyse the appropriateness of strategies used in the campaign (giving reasons in case of shortfall); and (c) serve as a reference guide for future UNICEF programming. The evaluation was planned in 2006 to be able to contribute to the planning of the second phase of the campaign starting in 2007.

51. **Summary of design and methodology.** The evaluation design combined representative sampling by categories and randomisation. Fourteen provinces were selected for the overall sample. The representative sampling had two stages: (a) sampling of provinces; and (b) sampling of locations within the same provinces. During the evaluation process, 112 locations were visited and 11,363 questionnaires were completed by administrators, teachers and students. In addition, 255 focus groups were conducted with teachers, non-attendant schoolgirls (girls who either had dropped out or never attended school) and male members of communities. There were 538 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with administrators, mothers, fathers and social leaders. All responses were differentiated between those who had been exposed to the campaign and a control group.

52. The evaluation was conducted by an independent international company with the participation of stakeholders from all levels, including those responsible for the management of the campaign. Participating stakeholders included: (a) primary stakeholders — the learners (particularly girls), including those enrolled in school and those who had dropped out or never attended school; (b) secondary stakeholders — teachers, parents and community members; and (c) partners in the overall management of the campaign — ministries, provincial and subprovincial authorities, development partners, etc.

53. **Findings, lessons learned and recommendations.** The evaluation found that the campaign had broadly influenced society and its perceptions. Thanks to its active role in the Turkish educational and wider socio-political contexts, the campaign has been instrumental in changing societal norms. It succeeded in mobilizing the media and private sector. The media spontaneously built on the campaign as, for example, when the second largest national newspaper and the nation's largest phone company launched their own campaign and other large companies associated themselves with it. There appears to be a good base for scaling-up and sustainability.

54. The evaluation also revealed that differences in perceptions on the importance of girls' education are larger between the centre (urban) and subprovinces (within each province) than between provinces, and confirmed that urban families attach more value to the education of girls than rural families. These differences in perception also emerge within urban areas/cities in provinces with migrant populations. The level of economic development is positively related to the value attached to girls' education.

55. The evaluation's findings pointed out the underlying causes of low participation of girls in education that characterize "difficult-to-reach" communities.

These go beyond a general lack of awareness of the importance of girls' education and relate to economic conditions, ethnicity and geographic position, and are more related to the family's cultural/religious background and to their geographical and economic position than to the province where they live. The larger the difference between socio-economic conditions, perceptions, practices, beliefs and value systems of campaign staff and the target group (families with girls not in school), the less effective the campaign strategies become. This situation could be redressed by always including some local personnel as part of the campaign staff, as has already happened in some cases.

56. The quality of education represents an important factor within a gender context, particularly since many families facing problems in sending their children (especially girls) to school also seem to be concerned about low educational quality, mainly in village schools. Within a greater orientation towards child-friendly schools, the development of strategies to change practices for recruiting and deploying teachers may help to improve the quality of education.

57. In almost all provinces, the Ministry of Education coordinated house-to-house visits, identified out-of-school girls and encouraged parents to send their daughters to school. This contributed to a 15-per-cent improvement in the gender gap between 2003 and 2006. The evaluation also showed that this approach had the greatest effect when the sensitization teams included representatives of the school, the community (muhtars, imams) and such higher-level administrators as deputy governors. The effect of awareness-raising activities was enhanced when endorsed by imams (religious leaders) and muhtars (heads of villages/urban districts) in their roles as community advisors and leaders.

58. The evaluation also revealed that the campaign has laid the foundation for a decentralized approach to tackling the low rates of enrolment and retention of girls, i.e., with different interventions designed to address the specific needs of one distinct target subgroup. The campaign needs to be tailor-made, targeting regions which encounter specific problems with specific target groups (i.e., Roma populations in İzmir). Such strategies need to continue to focus on gender equity and may go beyond the education sector and address, inter alia, the need for creating employment opportunities or environmental issues.

59. The evaluation underlined that the strength of the campaign is its recognition that the low enrolment and participation of girls in school is not solely an educational problem, hence the importance attached to inter-agency collaboration.

60. Compared to investments of other development partners, the UNICEF contribution — \$1.2 million between 2003 and 2007 — is relatively small. Strategic partnerships with the European Commission's Support to Basic Education Project and the World Bank's Social Risk Mitigation Project and Conditional Cash Transfer scheme contributed greatly to the efficiency of the overall intervention when comparing its design with the cost and objective.

61. **Use made of the evaluation.** The Ministry of National Education and other related partners endorsed the evaluation's recommendations. They intend to refocus the campaign in provinces where gender disparities in school enrolment are most pronounced. Such a shift will lead to greater channelling of human and financial resources to hard-to-reach provinces and help reduce the social exclusion gap.

62. As follow-up to the evaluation, a strategy and action plan for preventing and reducing violence in educational environments were developed and are being implemented. A birth registration campaign is under way to ensure that girls have birth certificates so that they can enrol in and attend school. An amnesty for families who otherwise would have had to pay a fine for late registration was also introduced for a period of two years.

63. Finally, the recommendations of the evaluation are being used to strengthen an integrated approach and introduce structural changes. UNICEF dialogue with the Government and the World Bank has contributed to an important policy decision: the World Bank-supported conditional cash transfer was increased for girls, giving them about 20 per cent more than boys. A catch-up education programme was developed for children aged 10-14 years who had dropped out or never attended school.

D. Subregional thematic assessment: Action to prevent child trafficking in South-Eastern Europe

64. **Reasons for the study.** In the aftermath of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the early part of this decade, human trafficking in the Western Balkans reached crisis proportions. The emergency response focused on law enforcement and assistance to victims. Agencies assisting victims indicated that around 20 per cent were children under 18 years of age. To ensure basic standards of protection for these children, UNICEF developed guidelines on the protection of the rights of child victims of trafficking, which have been endorsed by all countries participating in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings.

65. A 2005 report on trafficking in human beings in South-Eastern Europe highlighted that: (a) few countries were addressing prevention; (b) awareness-raising campaigns were the main activities, but had limited focus and rarely were evaluated; and (c) existing efforts have been largely directed to adults and not tailored to the needs of children.

66. A series of country studies revealed that some children are especially vulnerable to trafficking, e.g., children from ethnic groups or those in institutional care. The Assessment on Action to Prevent Child Trafficking in South-Eastern Europe carried out by UNICEF and Terres des Hommes sought to capitalize on this evidence by examining the effectiveness of current responses. The main objective was to increase the strategic reliability of work on prevention of child trafficking by looking at the effectiveness and impact of different approaches, including through a unique and valuable insight into the experiences of trafficked children themselves.

67. **Summary of design and methodology.** Albania, the Republic of Moldova and Kosovo¹ were selected to participate in the assessment, which adopted a child-rights framework and examined current prevention responses from the perspective of children at risk and who have been trafficked. The assessment examined vulnerabilities of groups of children to trafficking, analysed who was accountable to protect them and recommended measures to ensure that their rights are upheld and protected more effectively.

¹ Currently under the United Nations Administration (United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo), hereafter referred to as Kosovo.

68. The specific criteria for assessing current approaches used elements of good practices identified for the design and implementation of a prevention strategy, including respect for the principles and provisions of child rights, use of evidence and analysis of causes, participation of key stakeholders, including children, and existence of indicators for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and impact of interventions on children.

69. In addition to a review of reports and studies on human and child trafficking, semi-structured interviews were carried out with staff from government agencies, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs involved in child protection or in anti-trafficking initiatives in all locations. For the first time, the voices of children themselves were also captured through interviews with 25 young people who had been trafficked and assisted in the previous three years.

70. **Findings, lessons learned and recommendations.** In all settings, the investment in prevention efforts represents a small proportion of anti-trafficking work. Efforts are focused on awareness-raising, give disproportionate attention to trafficking for sexual exploitation and are not well-tailored to children. The assessment argues that prevention must become the centrepiece of all anti-trafficking efforts.

71. Concrete data on child trafficking, including an understanding of risks and vulnerabilities of children and their causes, either are missing or do not sufficiently inform prevention strategies. The demand side of trafficking is not clearly understood or adequately taken into account. The assessment highlights the importance of data collection, including through dialogue with children who have been trafficked.

72. The assessment makes a unique contribution to the understanding of patterns of vulnerability from interviews with child victims of trafficking. It confirms that the most vulnerable are children without family care (separated and homeless children, children in institutional care), children from families where violence is taking place and children from poor, disadvantaged and/or marginalized families, including children belonging to particular ethnic minorities.

73. Effective child protection systems have a fundamental role to play in preventing child trafficking. Many children had experienced deprivation, violence and abuse prior to being trafficked and would not have fallen victim to trafficking had education and social service professionals and law enforcement officials recognized early signs of risk and responded in a timely and appropriate manner. The assessment stresses the crucial importance in investing in effective child protection systems based on a continuum of services to prevent, identify, report, address, treat and provide services to children at risk and their families.

74. A number of good practices identified included cooperation between child protection authorities in source and destination countries. This was particularly the case in collaboration between Albania and Greece. The comprehensive approach of Transnational Action Against Child Trafficking, implemented by the Terres des Hommes Foundation in Albania, was identified as especially successful in involving parents, children and school authorities from most marginalized communities in assessment of risks and in the design and implementation of prevention programmes. Targeted life-skills education programmes, such as the one supported

by UNICEF in the Republic of Moldova, have reduced the vulnerability of children placed in boarding schools.

75. **Uses made of the study.** The assessment was jointly launched by UNICEF and Terres des Hommes in London in August 2006, and international media called on Governments to improve prevention efforts and upgrade the competencies of social workers for early identification and intervention.

76. In October 2006, a round table was held in Brussels, attended by concerned government representatives and authorities and representatives of European Union institutions and NGOs. UNICEF and Terre des Hommes presented a set of recommendations to the Union, highlighting the need to use external policies including the enlargement process to improve the promotion, safeguarding and fulfilment of children's rights. The recommendations were adopted by the European Parliament in its Resolution on Fighting Trafficking in Human Beings, which highlights the need for special measures to reduce the vulnerability of children and protect child victims of trafficking.

77. The Government of the Republic of Moldova has made specific commitments to upgrade child protection systems, strengthen national referral mechanisms and improve competencies of social assistants for identification of early signs of risk. The bilateral agreement between Albania and Greece on protection and assistance to child victims of trafficking, which has been identified as a good practice, is being considered as a model for cooperation between destination and source countries.

E. Formative regional thematic evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to juvenile justice system reform

78. **Reasons for the evaluation.** The concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child have consistently pointed out that juvenile justice reform is relevant and necessary in all countries in the region, as the provisions of the law or practice are not compatible with international standards. Within the region, 12 UNICEF country offices have explicitly included juvenile justice reform as a priority in their country programmes of cooperation.

79. The purpose of the evaluation was to: (a) provide feedback to country offices on the strategic soundness and impact of their approaches; (b) inform the MTR process; and (c) extract key lessons for UNICEF role in the juvenile justice system reform across the region.

80. **Design and methodology.** The evaluation was undertaken in Montenegro, Serbia and Tajikistan, which were selected to represent different contexts and stages of development of juvenile justice systems. Although strategic approaches are tailored to the local situation, key components, including legal reform, promotion of non-custodial sentences and diversion schemes, protection of rights of children in conflict with the law and demonstration of systemic change through pilot projects, are present in every country.

81. The evaluation was designed as formative, as many of the components with the most direct impact on children have often only recently been put in place. The evaluation team combined international and national expertise. A focus on qualitative methods of data collection enabled consultation with government officials at national and local levels, NGOs, civil society and professional organizations, donors, and international organizations involved in justice system

reforms, including the European Union, Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Some 75 semi-structured interviews were complemented with 14 focus group discussions and field visits to specific project sites. A comprehensive desk review included appraisal of situation analyses as well as complete programme and project documentation.

82. **Findings, lessons learned and recommendations.** The evaluation concluded that the three juvenile justice projects had a positive influence on overall reform, which was achieved through the use of situation analysis for evidence-based system reforms and changes in the law, institutionalized training of judges and other professionals, introduction of diversion schemes and enhancement of conditions for children in custody.

83. In Tajikistan, the situation analysis was combined with a demonstration pilot in Dushanbe for diversion, prevention and non-custodial sentencing of convicted children. The first results show reduced recidivism and overall crime, and provide evidence of the value of community-based alternatives. In Serbia, children in custody have benefited from improved life-skills and support for reintegration after release from detention. These positive results enabled policy makers to scale up such measures to the national level. In Montenegro, the creation of the National Commission for Juvenile Justice Reform has had a positive effect on the way the professionals deal with children.

84. In Serbia and Tajikistan, the project provided the Governments with the necessary evidence of “what works” and enabled them to make a long-term commitment to the juvenile justice system reform. In Montenegro, where fewer children are involved in the justice system, the project was given credit for creating a commitment to reform.

85. Across three countries, the situation analysis was identified among the ‘best investments’ as it demonstrated to Governments the value of data collection and analysis, evidence-based planning and monitoring and the power of identifying and energizing potential partners. The evaluation also revealed the valuable contribution of capacity-building of the actors involved in reform — particularly the judiciary and other juvenile justice professionals — through training, constant exchange of information and study visits. Support to the establishment of interministerial, intersectoral bodies and interdisciplinary teams at the local level was highlighted as vital for a holistic approach to justice for children. Modelling often turned out to be particularly successful as means of empowering stakeholders, more so than traditional means of awareness-raising campaigns.

86. The evaluation revealed that the projects demonstrated an important capacity to coordinate with numerous partners at the same time, to act as a bridge between Governments and civil society and to deliver quickly and be more flexible than other actors. The projects’ success was due largely to the quality of technical assistance, including reliance on local expertise. The evaluation praised UNICEF for its ability not to duplicate other actors’ efforts and thus to ensure a high degree of complementarity.

87. An important lesson learned is the need to improve results-based management. Juvenile justice reform is a new area and limited experience has hindered strategic planning, indicator development and systematic monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, UNICEF needs to increase its attention to the participation of children,

to gender and ethnicity issues, and improve the synergy between juvenile justice programmes and other programmes.

88. Overall, the positive impact and soundness of the three projects' strategic approach led the evaluation to recommend that UNICEF continue to pursue and scale up its work on juvenile justice reform across the region.

89. **Uses made of the evaluation.** The evaluation was completed in April 2007 and has been shared internally with all country offices. The three participating countries are using the evaluation's findings to re-position and strengthen their country programmes in support of the national reform processes for juvenile justice and to intensify discussions with partners. Based on the recommendations, the Regional Office is drafting a guidance note on a juvenile justice system reform strategy. A technical round table on juvenile justice is planned in the region for the autumn of 2007, with juvenile justice experts, key donors and the European Union, among others, to consider the recommendations of the evaluation and identify areas for further action.

F. Regional evaluation strategy

90. The Regional Management Team approved in 2005 a regional evaluation strategy to improve the quality of knowledge produced by evaluations. In 2006, the Regional Office offered technical support services with two clear objectives: (a) to support country offices in managing good-quality, decentralized evaluations through the regional quality assurance system; and (b) to facilitate access to qualified consultants through a regional roster. Governments and country offices in the region benefited from a new regional training service in monitoring and evaluation, which is delivered in the country and tailored to national needs. The training follows United Nations Evaluation Group standards, and is organized in cooperation with the United Nations System Staff College.

91. The strategy has contributed to a significant improvement in the quality of evaluation reports produced in the region, with the percentage of reports rated by the UNICEF Evaluation Office as "very good" having doubled from 22 to 44 per cent from 2000-2003 to 2004-2006. The quality of multi-year and annual integrated monitoring and evaluation plans also improved, and there is more careful selection of fewer evaluations and studies. There is also evidence of a better linking of the knowledge generated from evaluations to decision-making milestones in government reform processes and in the use of evaluation findings to adjust country programmes strategies and reprofile UNICEF assistance.

92. At the field level, the challenge is to strengthen the United Nations contribution in supporting and upgrading government capacities to design and implement national monitoring and evaluation systems. In several countries in the region, national development plans based on the Millennium Development Goals and/or PRS now include an integrated monitoring and evaluation system. UNICEF is working with several United Nations country teams to support Governments and local authorities in enhancing such systems through DevInfo. In Moldova, the Ministry of Economy and Trade is using DevInfo to monitor the national PRS; in Turkey the Ministry of the Interior is using DevInfo to monitor the performance of governorates in the area of social protection; and in Serbia, municipalities are using data provided through DevInfo to allocate — and increase — social public budgets.

93. With technical and financial assistance from UNICEF and other United Nations agencies, 13 countries successfully completed a third round of MICS and three other countries added MICS modules to their DHS. These household surveys have collected data disaggregated by gender, age, region, urban or rural residence and income, and the preliminary data are already being used at national and regional levels to inform public policies and progress towards national and Millennium goals.

94. UNICEF is facilitating the sharing of best practices through knowledge fairs in key events, such as the OECD World Forum on Measuring the Progress on Nations, held in Istanbul in June 2007. In partnership with OECD, UNDP, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Higher School of Economics in Russia and the International Programme Evaluation network, UNICEF is organizing a regional workshop on the role of monitoring and evaluation in evidence-based policymaking.

95. To further strengthen the good progress in PRS monitoring and tracking, Governments are enhancing the evaluation function to identify good practices and lessons learned. With assistance from UNICEF, the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina is pioneering a country-led evaluation of the social protection chapter of the PRS, with focus on good governance for children. The Government is leading the evaluation process, notably by identifying the scope of the evaluation, the evaluation questions that respond to the national information needs to design the next cycle of the PRS, and by involving all the major stakeholders, including civil society organizations and international development organizations. This is a practical means through which UNICEF can support the Government in placing children's concerns at the centre of the PRS.
