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For information

Summary of midterm reviews of country programmes

Latin America and the Caribbean 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 Executive Board a summary of the outcome of mid-term reviews (MTRs), specifying, *inter alia*, the results achieved, lessons learned and the need for any adjustments in the country programme. The Executive Board is to comment on the reports and provide guidance to the secretariat, if necessary. The MTRs in this report were conducted in 2007.

* E/ICEF/2008/16.

Introduction

1. This report summarizes three midterm reviews from Chile, Guatemala and Uruguay. The MTRs in these countries highlight the significant contributions made by UNICEF and partners in the region in addressing major challenges for children and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The MTRs have contributed to the more strategic positioning of UNICEF in middle-income countries, particularly Chile and Uruguay. Important lessons have been derived from the work on capacity development and service provision at subnational levels. The lessons are generating knowledge, best practices and the sharing of experiences, fulfilling a normative role as well as influencing policies at national and subnational levels.

2. The Latin America and Caribbean region continues to experience deep social and economic disparities; large numbers of its people suffer exclusion. The continued use of national averages by Governments and international organizations to characterize progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals gives the impression that the region is “on track” to meet the Goals. Indeed, several national indicators are positive: poverty rates have decreased; access by children to education has improved; gender gaps have tended to close; and child mortality rates have been falling. This reliance on national averages, however, ignores the basic principles of equity and universality, as these averages mask large disparities occurring at the subnational level – between urban and rural areas; between men and women and boys and girls; and between and among indigenous and Afro-descendent populations. A focus on public policies to redress disparities and exclusion is a key strategy and feature of UNICEF-supported country programmes of cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Midterm reviews

Chile

3. **Introduction.** The programme of cooperation for 2005-2009 for the Southern Cone area, including Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, was approved by the Executive Board in 2004. The MTR of Chile took place between February and August 2007. The process included the broad participation of representatives of the State and civil society, including universities, non-governmental organizations; representatives from other United Nations agencies; and the United Nations Resident Coordinator.

4. The review was conducted in the context of national and international commitments related to children and adolescents, with a view to identifying precisely the UNICEF role and value added in a middle-income country. The MTR placed special emphasis on demonstrating and documenting the transformed engagement of UNICEF for obtaining results for children, even with limited resources, and thereby helped to define a model of engagement for UNICEF in middle-income countries.

5. **Update of the situation of children and women.** Over the past decade, Chile has maintained strong economic growth: the growth rate was 5.7 per cent in 2007, while the gross national income (GNI) per capita reached \$6,980 in 2006. Poverty rates fell from 19 per cent in 2003 to 14 per cent in 2006. In that year, child mortality had fallen to 9 per 1,000 live births. Despite its good national indicators, Chile is nevertheless one of the most unequal countries in the region. The new Government has focused on reducing inequalities, and has begun significant

initiatives in, among other areas, strengthening social protection systems and implementing a comprehensive early childhood development (ECD) policy. A further need exists for more inclusive social policies in relation to the protection of the rights of indigenous children.

6. Chile has achieved outstanding coverage in primary and secondary education. Nonetheless, children and adolescents, especially those from low-income families, do not always complete the full 12 years of compulsory education. To address this challenge, greater resources were allocated to the education sector, especially for improving the rural education system and for serving the most vulnerable students.

7. As in much of Latin America and the Caribbean, in Chile, violence against women presents a serious challenge. Domestic violence in general strongly impacts on children, especially in a culture that legitimizes, or at least tolerates, violence against children by their parents. It is estimated that 50 per cent of Chilean children suffer some form of physical abuse. Children and adolescents face several other child protection challenges, especially in the areas of juvenile protection and justice, where there is a need for legislative reform. One area that must be addressed is the criminal liability of adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18.

8. With HIV prevalence at 0.3 per cent, at least 15,000 people are living with HIV/AIDS. Limited work is being carried out on HIV/AIDS prevention. Issues such as drug abuse, teenage pregnancy and lack of information appropriate for adolescents are not adequately addressed.

9. **Progress and key results at midterm.** The MTR highlighted the fact that while great strides have been made in fulfilling children's rights, significant inequalities persist based on place of birth, family socioeconomic status, ethnic origin and gender. There also remains a large gap between the design of policies and their implementation, including their impact on the daily lives of children.

10. The MTR noted that good progress was made towards achieving the results formulated in the country programme document for 2005-2009. The review also demonstrated the importance of the transformed engagement of UNICEF, which involved a shift from a project to a policy approach, an increased emphasis on the organization's normative role, and a focus on the generation of knowledge on children. Also recognized were the convening role played by UNICEF and the organization's emphasis on child and social protection. It was concluded that UNICEF engagement in Chile could be used as a model for other middle-income countries.

11. In early childhood development, UNICEF supported the country's in-depth review of the ECD policies. The review process, which consisted of a combination of research, technical support, advocacy and social mobilization, led to the strengthening of early childhood policies at the municipal level and the implementation of a comprehensive child protection system (the "Chile Grows with You" programme), which aims to reach lowest-income groups and provides free and universal pre-school services to children four to five years old.

12. In education, UNICEF played an important role by supporting the development of the law mandating 12 years of compulsory education. UNICEF also contributed to the policy dialogue within the Presidential Advisory Council on Quality Education, which prepared recommendations for a revision of the educational system. Two key areas of discussion were equal opportunity for access to school, and non-discrimination.

13. In the framework of the new Adolescent Criminal Liability Law, which established special criminal liability for adolescents, the Government appointed UNICEF a member of the Commission to supervise the situation of children in detention centres and to recommend changes to be introduced in the way children are treated.

14. The important work of UNICEF in Chile is widely recognized. In discussions at the UNICEF Executive Board, the Government has noted the organization's role as an independent voice to protect the rights of children. As part of the MTR, the United Nations Resident Coordinator highlighted the importance of a strong UNICEF presence for the United Nations and the United Nations country team.

15. **Resources used.** After adjustment of the planning ceiling in 2006, the country programme had an approved ceiling of \$7,000,000, including \$1,200,000 for regular resources. Donations from around 3,000 individuals as well as contributions from the private sector accounted for nearly 70 per cent of the other resources raised. While the country office faced significant challenges in raising funds in 2005 and 2006, the fund-raising trend became positive in 2007. Available funds were fully utilized in all years.

16. **Constraints encountered.** The country office has been working with relatively little resources. Taking into consideration the pending policy agenda, funding for the country programme from 2008 onwards, especially from regular resources, has remained a key area of concern for the Government and the UNICEF office. Local fund-raising is highly competitive in Chile. However, a study on the image and brand of UNICEF, conducted as part of the MTR, revealed that a significant share of the economically active population is willing to contribute to UNICEF.

17. **Adjustments made.** The MTR confirmed the appropriateness of the priorities and strategies of UNICEF in Chile and revealed the importance of the organization's transformed engagement. The MTR further recommended: (a) the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building for the Government and civil society, particularly in the design of inclusive social policies and in building links between sectors; (b) monitoring the impact of public policies on the well-being of children and building a knowledge centre on children while also increasing the normative work of UNICEF in the country; and (c) focusing on advocacy by UNICEF as an "independent voice" and supporting the systematization and dissemination of Chilean best practices, including in South-South cooperation.

Uruguay

18. **Introduction.** The MTR of the programme of cooperation of 2005-2009 for Uruguay was conducted between June and August 2007. The review took on particular significance in light of the changed context of the country programme: (a) early in 2005, a new Government with a different set of social and political priorities took office, opening up additional opportunities for addressing children's issues; (b) the United Nations country team in 2005-2006 elaborated the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2007-2010; (c) Uruguay became one of the eight pilot countries of the United Nations Delivering as One initiative – the only country in Latin America and the Caribbean and the only middle-income country to participate; and (d) UNICEF in 2007 began global review of its role and presence in middle-income countries.

19. In this changed context, the MTR was carried out in collaboration with Government and other partners. The review consisted of three stages: (a) an external evaluation of the cooperation programme and role of UNICEF in Uruguay; (b) an evaluation of results obtained, objectives reached per plan, and recommendations for changes of programme priorities; and (c) an analysis and final review of the main conclusions of the MTR.
20. **Update of the situation of children and women.** The new Government that took office in 2005 further targeted several areas of action: reducing high poverty levels, increasing public expenditure in key sectors such as education and health, and promoting localized strategies to address the most excluded. By 2007, this focus had already made a significant impact on children's lives: the proportion of the population defined as poor had fallen to one fourth, from nearly one third in 2004.
21. While access to primary education has become almost universal in Uruguay, dropout rates remain high. It is estimated that only 40 per cent of enrolled students finish their basic education on time, while only one in every three 20-year-old Uruguayans has graduated from high school. The high rates of dropout represent one of the most challenging problems the country faces on its path to development.
22. The level of child mortality dropped from 15 per 1,000 live births in 2002 to 12 per 1,000 live births in 2006. This positive development stands alongside the setting of clear health care goals for children and mothers in the current programme of reform of the health care system. Nonetheless, half of the country's children still spend their infancy in adverse health conditions. This is reflected in a worrying nutrition situation, with undernutrition of children standing at 11.3 per cent. HIV/AIDS prevalence, another health concern, is largely concentrated in high-risk populations, and stands at 0.8 per cent.
23. In juvenile justice, inconsistencies persist between legislation and its application. Moreover, the number of children and adolescents (3,163) living under direct government supervision is extremely high. Violence also remains a challenge for children: 33 per cent of girls and 43 per cent of boys reported that they had been victims of physical and/or psychological abuse, according to a 1999 poll. As a response, the Integral System of Protection of Childhood and Adolescence against Violence was created in 2007 to coordinate and support national programmes and interventions dealing with the protection of children against all kinds of maltreatment, abuse or exploitation.
24. **Progress and key results at midterm.** The MTR indicated that UNICEF is seen as a key institution that has an integral and comprehensive view of the situation of children's rights; provides high-quality technical support and knowledge; and actively works towards the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to the results of an assessment, counterparts value the technical capacity of UNICEF and expect the organization to play an even greater role in providing technical assistance in the future. Partners also value the role of UNICEF in the dissemination of objective information and reliable data to help to monitor child rights. UNICEF is seen as an independent voice for children, playing a significant role in the coordination and mobilization of stakeholders.
25. The MTR also highlighted the fact that UNICEF and its partners are progressing towards achievement of the formulated results, including in the improved functioning of the child protection system. This is being done, for example, through the development of a model for local systems to

address violence through the provision of technical support and capacity-building. UNICEF managed to influence the political agenda by placing greater emphasis on the State's budgeting for children, emphasizing education in particular. UNICEF also contributed significantly to the development and implementation of early childhood and nutrition policies.

26. **Resources used.** The country programme for 2005-2009 has an approved planning ceiling of \$4,800,000, of which \$2,000,000 is from regular resources. The available funds (\$2,949,000) were fully utilized in 2005-2007. Other resources are to a large extent obtained through in-country private fund-raising, which combines work with the corporate sector, raising funds among private donors and direct marketing.

27. **Constraints affecting progress.** One key constraint of programme implementation was the fact that the negotiations had to take place with the new Government in 2005 before the cooperation agreement could be signed, and this delayed implementation. Another main complication for programme delivery was the substantial additional workload linked to the process of Delivering as One.

28. **Adjustments made.** The MTR recommended an extension of the programme period by one year, to the end of 2010. This will allow UNICEF to harmonize with the programming cycles of other United Nations agencies.

29. The country programme focus for the remaining three years, 2008-2010, should help to prioritize support of national efforts towards ensuring 10 years of quality education (emphasizing reducing dropout rates in secondary education and making greater financial assistance available for vulnerable children). The Government will also receive support for the elaboration of a National Plan of Action and the development of targeted interventions to better address early childhood issues, with emphasis on prenatal care and health promotion among adolescents.

30. Work in social mobilization and institutional reform will include the development of strategies to promote a change in attitudes and behaviour and the reform of legal and institutional practices to ensure the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Generating knowledge and the strengthening of information systems on children was also recommended. Child abuse, exploitation and violence prevention will be better addressed, as will birth registration and the establishment of alternatives to children's privation of liberty as a result of legal offences or for care purposes. Finally, stronger cooperation with the media will be sought.

Guatemala

31. **Introduction.** The MTR of the programme of cooperation for 2005-2008 took place between April and October 2007. The process included the broad participation of representatives of the Government and civil society in Guatemala, including universities, non-governmental organizations, adolescents, the private sector and media, and the United Nations system. Indigenous organizations were also consulted.

32. The MTR took place during the election campaign and was conducted with the outgoing Government. In addition to assessing programme results, the MTR analysed changes in the situation of children on the basis of an updated situation analysis. Also analysed were the gender component of the country programme and the effectiveness of the municipal strategies. The results formulated

in the Guatemala UNDAF and the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan were also taken into consideration.

33. **Update of the situation of children and women.** Guatemala is the second-most unequal country in income distribution in Latin America. The inequalities particularly affect indigenous groups, which comprise 40 per cent of the total population. While on average 50 per cent of all children and adolescents live in poverty, this percentage is much higher for indigenous children (80 per cent), especially those living in rural areas. Over the past years, GNI per capita rose from \$1,750 in 2002 to \$2,650 in 2006. This gain, however, has not helped to reduce inequalities or increase the low level of social investment.

34. Immunization rates remain above 80 per cent and the percentage of children receiving all required immunizations has increased significantly. The main challenge for the country remains the percentage of children suffering from chronic malnutrition (49 per cent). The rates are even higher in rural areas and among vulnerable groups. Child mortality was halved between 1990 and 2006 (the rate fell from 82 to 41 per 1,000 live births), while maternal mortality has remained very high, with a ratio of 290 per 100,000 live births (2005).

35. Attendance rates in primary school remain at 80 per cent for boys and 76 per cent for girls. Major efforts are required to ensure that children finalize primary school in a timely manner, as only 60 per cent of children who start first grade complete grade 5; only 39 per cent complete grade 5 at the right age.

36. Violence and insecurity have been a constant threat for the population. For example, in 2006, some 460 children were killed, a number that reflects the highest homicide rate of children in Latin America. This situation highlights the weakness of public security and citizen protection systems, as well as the impunity that reigns in the justice system. It also lays bare the lack of opportunities for young people, who are attracted by illegal, high-risk activities in the absence of opportunities for productive and dignified work. Domestic violence is also affecting many children and women. In 2004, a total of 8,231 such cases were reported. Moreover, 32 per cent of women 15-49 years old believe that corporal punishment is necessary in educating children.

37. Many Guatemalan children are being adopted at the international level. In 2006, for example, 4,135 Guatemalan children were adopted by families of the United States of America. The high demand for children for adoption by foreign families has given rise to an adoption-related business and to situations such as kidnapping and trafficking in girls and boys. The persistence of long waiting periods to adopt children and the enormous difficulties the country has experienced in enacting the Law on Adoptions highlight the existence of special interests in maintaining the status quo in this area, which runs counter to children's best interests.

38. **Progress and key results at midterm.** The country programme consists of two components: the public policies and institutional capacity-building; and the state of law, participation and peace culture.

39. Progress in influencing public policies and institutional capacity-building has been significant. Models for the development and implementation of municipal public policies for children and adolescents have been piloted with good results in 72 municipalities. In these municipalities, UNICEF supported the establishment of municipal commissions on children and

adolescents and provided technical and financial support for setting up municipal offices for this purpose. In several of these municipalities, the efforts have already started to show results in municipal budgeting for children. In 2006, 40 municipalities allocated over \$42 million for children.

40. Between 2005 and 2007, UNICEF worked with various United Nations agencies in a joint programme to address chronic malnutrition. At the same time, UNICEF developed a subregional strategy to address this important issue. In Guatemala, UNICEF and partners provided technical and financial support for the design and implementation of a policy on food security and a national programme on the reduction of chronic malnutrition, eventually reaching 255,000 children under five years of age. As part of efforts to address HIV/AIDS, 370,000 adolescents received messages on the prevention of HIV infection and 32,000 pregnant women were tested on HIV, while at the national level, an adolescent health policy was developed.

41. Very good results were achieved in addressing international adoption. UNICEF support was pivotal in bringing this issue further into the public debate and in securing the country's approval of the Hague Convention on International Adoptions. Follow-up was provided through technical support for the definition of laws and policies in relation to national and international adoption. Good results were also achieved in dealing with commercial and sexual exploitation such as trafficking, with major emphasis given to the adequate treatment of victims as well as prevention. One good example was an agreement signed with the tourism sector on the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation. New strategies for the prevention of youth violence were implemented in more than 70 municipalities.

42. The country programme places specific emphasis on intercultural bilingual education, particularly as a means to enhance access to primary education for indigenous children in rural areas. With the support of UNICEF, a model for culturally sensitive education was developed. A total of 56,000 children in 625 schools benefited from this programme, while various elements of the curriculum that was developed were incorporated into the national multi-grade schools model.

43. **Resources used.** The country programme for 2005-2008 has an approved total planning ceiling of \$22,126,000, of which \$3,648,000 is from regular resources. Following a significant funding shortage observed in 2005, the ceiling for other resources was exceeded in 2006 and 2007, mostly as a result of several large contributions for emergencies. The available funds were fully utilized in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

44. **Constraints affecting progress.** The election process in 2007 led to some implementation constraints. Despite the good progress made in influencing policies at the national and even the municipal level, and despite the allocation of resources for children in budgets in some municipalities, significant constraints also exist in national and local government funding for implementation of these policies. Another challenge is the fact that the capacities of partners remain weak, particularly in child protection. Adding to this challenge is the insufficient coordination among stakeholders in the implementation of multi-sectoral strategies. This lack of coordination hampers the effectiveness of several interventions, particularly those addressing chronic malnutrition.

45. **Adjustments made.** New priorities and adjustments were established for the balance of the cooperation period, 2008 -2009. The country programme will further emphasize the rights of indigenous children and intensify actions in favor of ECD through the Integrated Action Plan for

Early Childhood, giving priority to chronic malnutrition. In addition, the country programme will support implementation of the new legislation on adoptions; strengthen bilingual and intercultural education; and increase attention given to the prevention of violence. More emphasis will also be given to working at the municipal level, including in the generation of local data. This will help to further link the influencing of policy at the national level with the development of models for implementation at the local level.

46. Special importance will be given to addressing the challenges faced by children with disabilities and by migrant children, with emphasis on protection and prevention efforts. Knowledge on social investment in favor of children at the national and municipal levels will be generated for the purpose of strengthening advocacy in civil society, especially with regard to chronic malnutrition. Actions for the prevention of HIV/AIDS will be taken to scale, with emphasis on prevention among adolescents and halting vertical transmission.
