Delegation name: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia

Draft country programme document: Ethiopia

Delegations are kindly invited to use this template to share their comments on any of the draft CPDs being presented during the forthcoming Board session.

In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1, country programme documents (CPDs) are considered and approved in one session, on a no-objection basis. All comments received by the Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board before the deadline will be made public on the Executive Board website, and considered by the respective regional office, in close consultation with the country office and the concerned Government.

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| The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia commends the Government of Ethiopia and UNICEF for the progress achieved to this date and remains hopeful that action will be advanced in areas that have not seen the expected results. We welcome the draft country programme focusing on capacity development for policies, planning, information management and service provision in all priority sectors of the programme as well as the improvement of SBCC strategies. The programme follows a holistic approach by bringing forward interlinkages and partnerships with other development and humanitarian partners and existing initiatives; however, we would like to see more the operational side of the cooperation described within the programme. In current circumstances, we see that the programme should describe undertakings to be put forward to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on children and youth. Alongside a strong response to the impact of COVID-19, it will be important to ensure the continuation and acceleration of ongoing initiatives with the aim to minimise delaying the implementation process of the established programme. The latter would increase inequalities and uncertainties even further.

Thank you for the appreciation. The final draft CPD was submitted to UNICEF HQ pre-COVID-19; however, UNICEF Ethiopia has now developed a full COVID response plan which will be soon incorporated in our Humanitarian Action for Children appeal, out of the CPD, but closely related to it.

Indeed, in the context of COVID-19, UNICEF aims at ensuring that its identified Flagships Results are duly supported. In spite of potential delays due to the current state of emergency potentially lasting until September 2020, we also have identified measures to support Government efforts in accelerating work that mitigates the impact of the emergency on children (e.g. guidance on preserving immunization; guidelines on preventing family separations and violence; sustaining the primary health care system etc.). UNICEF is also currently undertaking a reprogramming exercise in close coordination with the Government and donors. While some activities may be delayed or refocused, at this moment we do not envisage a major change in the CPD targets. We would like to
emphasize that several of the actions under various outcomes of the proposed CPD contribute to building systems whether in the area of health, child protection or nutrition. This is an important means of making sure that Ethiopia has in place the systems that can face any crisis, whether it is covid-19 or another crisis.

**Comments on specific aspects of the country programme document**

Regarding the section on health and the dire impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we would suggest including a paragraph on actions that address the shortcomings exposed by the pandemic within the health care system affecting children and adolescents and plans to build resilience in this regard.

The whole pillar/output on system strengthening under the health sector is a critical element of the health response, not only to the COVID-19 pandemic but to any health epidemic or crisis that may face Ethiopia in the future. While not every single activity can be mentioned in the CPD document itself, the workplans drawn on an annual basis with the government will focus on sustaining the primary health care system and ensure it continues to deliver services to the population, especially to children and their mothers. UNICEF is providing technical advice to the Ministry of Health, in close coordination with WHO, to finalize their guidance in this sense.

In the same section, the response to neonatal mortality and HIV/AIDS should be brought forward – areas where progress has stalled. As immunisation rates in Ethiopia are still low, firmly established should be the continuous effort to increase childhood vaccination rates against preventable diseases.

Integrated delivery of maternal neonatal and child health actions has been identified as a key output of our health sector, due to the fact that about 50% of under 5 mortality is neonatal and that a large share of it is due to preventable causes. The new Country Programme’s full results framework reflects this clear focus as follows (CPD only carries an extract): (A) Increase from 30% to 60% newborns receiving postnatal care within two days of birth; (B) Increase from 41% to 56% births delivered in health facilities; (C) Increase from 11% to 26% newborns treated for sepsis/Very Severe Disease (VSD).

In terms of HIV, a key target is the increase in the number of health facilities providing Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission services. UNICEF will continue the existing program actions to support adolescents’ awareness and HIV prevention.

In terms of immunization, the results framework foresees an increase from 61% to 75% of children under 1 year receiving diphtheria/tetanus/Pertussis-containing vaccine (pentavalent 3). UNICEF has also already started to engage the Ministry of Health on a roadmap to accelerate routine immunization for the 1.7 million children not fully immunized (main focus on four regions in which the vast majority of the caseload is present).

In addition, to support a safe and enabling environment for children, the attention should be put also on the provision of a safe and healthy environment in which children and youth develop.

Well noted. In line with the 2018-2021 UNICEF strategic plan, the focus on safe and healthy environment is under outcome 3 of the 2020-2025 Ethiopia CPD - WASH - including not only availability of adequate and safe water, but also appropriate sanitation in both
urban and rural contexts, with specific attention on hygiene promotion and the eradication of open defecation (flagship programme).

Considering learning and development, the pandemic has paralysed many school systems, created obstacles and sometimes even made it impossible for students to continue their education. The risk of social inequalities rising is high. To build resilience of schools and their ability to adjust to crisis situations in Ethiopia, we suggest incorporating into the programme the enhancement of distance learning opportunities.

The point is well noted. As part of the COVID-19 response UNICEF is already prioritizing remote learning, through support to the Ministry of Education on production and broadcasting of radio and TV classes and other actions. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF was already working on alternative learning pathways such as accelerated basic education in pastoralist regions and speed schools. However, increased attention will be given to technology-based solutions which are still lagging behind, in spite of the Ministry of Education having an ITC department.