Delegations are kindly invited to use this template to share their comments on any of the draft country programme documents being presented to the Executive Board during the second regular session.

Delegation name: **Sweden**

Draft country programme document: **Colombia**

In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1, country programme documents 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.

### General comments

- Due to the COVID-19 public health crisis, the already precarious access to basic services (like health and education) in the most impoverished and historically abandoned regions is being exacerbated. Migrant and vulnerable populations will be especially affected by the pandemic. Perhaps greater analysis can be devoted to how the COVID-19 pandemic might impact the programme’s objectives in the short and medium term.

- One of the pillars of Sweden’s engagement with children in armed conflict, and most relevant in Colombia, is children’s right to have their voices heard. While Unicef Colombia spells out in great detail how it would work with government agencies, CSOs, and universities, among others, it would be very interesting to see initiatives that give children the opportunity to influence debates and decisions – not least as future decision-makers.

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

(Delegations providing comments may wish to include details, such as the page number, paragraph number, or page of the annexed results and resources framework).

- More space in the “Programme rationale” section (paragraphs 7 & 11) could be devoted to the growing concerns of child recruitment and use not only by former FARC combatants, but by other illegal armed groups who have begun occupying former FARC areas of influence after the signature of the Agreement. This is a critical issue which has been increasingly stressed by CSOs that work with vulnerable populations (like indigenous, afro-descendant communities) in the most conflict-ridden areas.

- In relation to the above, and somewhere in paragraphs 8-9 and/or the results framework, Unicef could further expand how it intends to work with CIPRUNNA on recruitment...
Response from the UNICEF Regional/Country Office

UNICEF appreciates the comments made by Sweden on the Colombia country programme document (CPD). The comments are pertinent and timely and will serve to inform the ensuing and work-in-progress processes of elaboration of programme strategy notes, workplans, and advocacy strategies.

UNICEF agrees with the comments made by Sweden in relation to the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The current crisis caused by it is already exacerbating affectations for children and poses significant risks that can potentially result in the reversal of gains in child-related trends in education, health, nutrition and child protection. In this regard, UNICEF has a clearly outlined an equity focus, as well as a strong on-the-ground presence that simultaneously seeks to strengthen local and national institutions to protect children’s rights. Furthermore, the results framework includes risk mitigation both generally for emergencies and specifically for sanitary emergencies (output 3, outcome 1). In addition, output 3, outcome 2 (on migration) incorporates a resilience-building approach at the community level and output 1 within outcome 3 on child protection seeks to strengthen local planning capacities for a risk-based approach in disaster risk reduction and emergency response with a specific emphasis on health and social emergencies. UNICEF has adapted its interventions to the COVID-19 context, focusing on distance and blended learning, violence prevention, risk communication and community engagement, water sanitation, and hygiene considering the global framework on reopening schools.

In the short and medium-term, UNICEF has analysed and repurposed its current annual workplans, and emergency response plans to ensure the protection of children’s rights within the COVID-19 context.

UNICEF takes note, agrees and appreciates the comment on participation. Child participation is a key underpinning principle in all programme strategies and components (PDET, Migration, SDG acceleration). In addition, UNICEF Colombia includes a specific output on adolescent empowerment, as well as related interventions included in para. 19, para. 22, para. 23, para. 32, para. 34, outcome 3, output 5. Furthermore, UNICEF Colombia, through its participation platform linked to Territorios Amigos de la Niñez (included in outcome 1, output 1 and outcome 2, output 3), ensures that children’s views and perspectives are incorporated in local planning processes throughout the country. In addition, the CPD is informed by a series of consultations with adolescents conducted as part of the development of the proposed 2021-2024 CPD development.

In terms of recruitment prevention, UNICEF shares and agrees with the growing concerns. UNICEF continues to stress the importance of sustained efforts to prevent child recruitment and use by all illegal armed groups. The UNICEF CPD echoes the terms used in the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which refers to armed groups in general terms. In this sense, UNICEF child recruitment prevention initiatives cover all programme components and also address this risk with migrant children. Further, the UNICEF CPD also focuses on working with local institutions, NGO and CSO partners to reintegrate children and adolescents victims of the armed conflict in their communities. Differentiated approaches will be applied: monitoring the situation of children and adolescents in communities affected by violence and mainstreaming local peacebuilding initiatives with a view of enhancing trust and reconciliation at the community level. Reference to alerts
issued through 2017-2019 have been included in para. 7, which now incorporates “In the period 2017-2019, the Colombia’s State Ombudsman’s Office Early Warmings System issued child recruitment risk warnings for 182 municipalities1”

We further agree with the reference on expanding the work carried out with CIPRUNNA on the prevention of recruitment and use and have modified the paragraph 8 to reflect “(g) The National Public Policy to prevent child recruitment adopted in 2019 and its implementation plan in 184 municipalities with the highest risk”. The implementation of this policy will be the core of the joint work with CIPRUNNA, as stated in a recently approved MPTF initiative in partnership with the Presidential Advisor for Human Rights and International cooperation. The geographic scope of this initiative is determined by the recruitment early warning system of both the ombudsman and the Presidential Advisor. We have also added CIPRUNNA to the partners' column in the results framework.

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1 https://www.defensoria.gov.co/es/nube/comunicados/9150/Entre-2017-y-2019-Defensor%C3%ADa-emiti%C3%B3-108-alertas-tempranas-sobre-riesgo-de-reclutamiento-infantil-ni%C3%B1os-soldado-Defensor%C3%ADa.htm