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: *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia*

Draft country programme document: *Kazakhstan*

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.

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<th>Category</th>
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| **General comments** | Estonia appreciates the CPD bringing forward children’s rights and gender equality as cross-cutting priorities and emphasizing the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and adolescents.  
We commend UNICEF and Kazakhstan on the progress achieved in key areas, such as immunization as well as the decrease in child and maternal mortality rates.  
In addition, we commend the partnerships brought forward, especially the aim to implement the common chapter of the strategic plans 2018-2021 which have proven to be very effective. Moreover, as the COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the well-being of children, we welcome bringing forward the need to ensure continued service delivery for all and the further strengthening of social safety nets. Nonetheless, the activities dealing with the setbacks caused by the pandemic should be addressed more clearly, including the exacerbated inequalities caused by the unequal access to education. | UNICEF thanks the Government of Estonia for its comments and will continue to work with the Government of Kazakhstan to advance the progress for children, especially the most vulnerable.  
The comment is noted with thanks.  
Noted.  
UNICEF reconfirms our commitment to work on strengthening further social safety nets for children and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.  
Jointly with other UN agencies, UNICEF has conducted the assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 in the country, with a special focus on children, to inform our programming in the areas of education, health, and protection. |
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<th>Comments on specific aspects of the country programme document</th>
<th>Every child grows up healthy, well-nourished and safely: the programme brings forward the importance of addressing violence against children, however, the CPD should also address gender-based violence and sexual exploitation of children.</th>
<th>UNICEF reconfirms that addressing all forms of violence against children will be the priority of the new CPD, including gender-based violence (paragraph 50). It will be an integral part of the efforts under outcome 3, including communication for behavioural and social norms change interventions targeting the public to raise awareness on and condemn gender-based violence and discrimination; strengthening gender-sensitive mechanisms for identification, referral and follow-up of cases of violence and capacity building of child protection and law-enforcement specialists; a dedicated assessment on sexual violence against children is planned in the new country programme to understand the prevalence, root causes and bottlenecks.</th>
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<td>Another issue that has seen slow progress is child labour. Although Kazakhstan has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labour, the enforcement of child labour laws continues to be insufficient.</td>
<td>The new Country Programme aims at strengthening the overall child protection system to effectively address various types of violations of child rights, including child labour exploitation. The most recent evidence on child labour comes from the study of UNICEF and the Commissioner for Human Rights on unaccompanied and separated migrant children in Kazakhstan. The study documented that many teenage children from Central Asia arrive in Kazakhstan with the purpose to earn money for supporting their families back home. Most of these children work without work permit which makes them especially vulnerable to various risks including abuse and exploitation. Through the programme on children affected by migration, UNICEF is working to strengthen legislation and its implementation, inter-country collaboration and protection mechanisms for migrant, unaccompanied and separated children including those who work in Kazakhstan.</td>
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Every child is educated, skilled and resilient: to address inequalities in education, the greatly unequal quality of education in private and public schools should be thoroughly dealt with.

To support the Governments Digital Kazakhstan strategy and build resilient education systems and their ability to adjust to crises, we suggest incorporating into the programme the enhancement of distance learning opportunities and the digitalization of the education system in general. Digital literacy and skills of teachers, parents and children need to improved and digital disparities addressed.

UNICEF reconfirms its commitment to support the Government of Kazakhstan in improving quality of education under the programme component 2, including for public and private pre-schools (paragraph 44).

Fully agree. Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Education and Science is quite advanced in roll out of distance learning, digital platforms and digital skills of teachers and students at all levels of education. UNICEF will support improving innovations in education and scaling them as one of the strategies for equitable learning and skills development under programme component 2. In support of the Government’s Digital Kazakhstan strategy, UNICEF will continue to collaborate with business, start-ups, universities and young people on digital innovations and digital literacy to benefit children, as well as to address digital divide in urban and rural schools in access to Internet (I.e. GIGA initiative). The empowerment of adolescent girls through digital skills development is also a part of the new Country Programme. While the programme’s support is focused on the development of a policy on life and citizenship skills, it will include digital skills into a set of core skills. This programme component establishes linkages with the private sector regarding the skills required for employment and support horizontal cooperation to share knowledge, best practices and lessons learned. Added text in track changes (paragraph 45 and 46).