

## **Argentina**

### **Country programme document 2010-2014**

The draft country programme document for Argentina (E/ICEF/2009/P/L.28) was presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comments at its 2009 second regular session (14-16 September 2009).

The document was subsequently revised, and this final version was approved at the 2010 first regular session of the Executive Board on 12 January 2010.

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*Basic data<sup>†</sup>*

*(2007, unless otherwise stated)*

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Child population (millions, under 18 years)	12.3
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	16
Underweight (% , moderate and severe, 2005-2006)	4 <sup>a</sup>
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	48 <sup>b</sup>
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female, 2005)	99/98
Survival rate to last primary grade (% , 2004)	87
Use of improved drinking water sources (% , 2006)	96
Use of improved sanitation facilities (% , 2006)	91
Adult HIV prevalence rate (%)	0.5
Child labour (% , children 5-14 years old, 2004)	7 <sup>a</sup>
GNI per capita (US\$)	6,050
One-year-olds immunized with DPT3 (%)	96
One-year-olds immunized with measles vaccine (%)	99

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<sup>†</sup> More comprehensive country data on children and women are available at [www.childinfo.org](http://www.childinfo.org)

<sup>a</sup> Indicates data differ from standard definition.

<sup>b</sup> The estimate developed by WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA and the World Bank is 77 per 100,000 live births, which is adjusted for underreporting and misclassification of maternal deaths.

## **The situation of children and women**

1. Argentina is a middle-income country with an unequal distribution of resources and significant disparities in social indicators. The socio-economic recovery after the 2002 crisis reduced unemployment from 21.5 per cent (2002) to 8.5 per cent (2007) and poverty from 57.5 per cent (2002) to 26.9 per cent (2006). However, the challenges for achieving the Millennium Development Goals are significant, given the situation of the poorest urban sectors and the northern regions. Poverty affects 40.9 per cent of children, and extreme poverty 14.3 per cent. Children of immigrant families, those who are indigenous, have a disabled family member or live in marginalized rural areas are at the highest risk.

2. The achievement of universal access to quality education (Millennium Development Goal 2) is challenging. Basic education is characterized by high rates of enrolment and coverage, but also by high rates of failure, repetition and dropout. Though enrolment rates for secondary schools are high (86 per cent), completion rates are low: the national failure rate is 35.5 per cent, reaching a peak of 51.4 per cent in some provinces. Significant gaps in institutional regulations and capacities explain limited results in retention and learning achievements. Bilingual intercultural education is deficient in terms of access and quality. Of the indigenous population, 11 per cent are illiterate, 27 per cent have not finished primary school and 45.8 per cent have not completed secondary school.

3. Between 1990 and 2007, the under-five mortality rate declined from 29.6 to 15.6 per 1,000 live births, and the infant mortality rate fell from 25.6 to 13.3 per 1,000 live births. However, since 1990, the gap between the provinces with

the highest and lowest infant mortality rates has increased. Lack of access to primary health care, especially in extremely poor communities, and deficient quality of hospital care are among the main factors contributing to high levels of mortality.

4. To achieve Millennium Development Goal 5, maternal mortality reduction by 75 per cent from the 1990 rate (52 deaths per 100,000 live births) is needed. This implies reaching a rate of 13 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births by 2015. Since 1990, the rate has fallen little, to 44 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2007. Nevertheless, regional disparities remain pronounced — 18 deaths per 100,000 live births for the city of Buenos Aires, compared to 165 deaths per 100,000 live births for Jujuy province. Poor planning and management and a paucity of key human resources where they are most needed are the main reasons for inadequate quality of services, which are crucial for combating maternal mortality.

5. Approximately 70 per cent of pregnant women are tested for HIV, among which 0.3 per cent are infected. Since 1999, the mother-to-child transmission rate has decreased regularly, to 0.87 per 10,000 live births in 2005. Access to antiretroviral and other key drugs, including prophylaxis, is guaranteed. However, social protection of families and children affected by AIDS needs substantial improvement.

6. Argentina established its own Goal 9, aimed at eradicating child labour. A total of 6.5 per cent of children under 13 years work. Birth registration rates show serious gaps in the northern provinces, particularly among indigenous children and migrants. Children who lack birth registration often have more difficulty accessing social services. Among children under detention in juvenile institutions in 2007, only 60 per cent had an identification card. Equal access to justice for immigrant women and their children remains an important challenge.

7. At the end of 2005, nearly 20,000 children were in institutional care throughout the country; 87.1 per cent of them were non-penal cases. The number of adolescents imprisoned for infractions of the law decreased from 2,377 in 2005 to 1,799 in 2007; 81 per cent of those deprived of their liberty were 16 to 17 years old. A 2007 study of all convicted or presumed juvenile offenders up to age 17 identified 6,294 children. Of these, 1,799 lived in 119 institutions, 39 of which were non-specialized as juvenile institutions. The remaining 4,495 were participating in 25 open programmes, not all of which were in full compliance with quality standards for juvenile justice.

8. Important gaps have been identified in children's ability to speak out, especially among the most marginalized children and adolescents. During 2007, children were the subject of 26,660 articles in 12 of the most important newspapers, but they were consulted as sources in only 4.1 per cent of these articles.

9. Various State and non-State research entities generate relevant analytical studies. However, the use of evidence-based studies in formulating and evaluating policies to uphold child rights needs to be strengthened. The attainment of results for children demands adoption of multi-annual and multisectoral planning frameworks, based on solid evidence, at the national, provincial and local levels.

10. Social sector public expenditure recovered after the 2002 crisis, reaching 20.8 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2006. At that time health expenditure represented 4.6 per cent of GDP and education 5.1 per cent. Education spending has increased regularly since 2003, and a national goal was established in

2005 to allocate 6 per cent of GDP to education by 2010. The public budget devoted to children grew 34.4 per cent between 2001 and 2007, when it reached 4.5 per cent of GDP. The challenge ahead entails ensuring sufficient funding to improve quality of services and equity across provinces.

11. The process of reforming the legal framework of Argentina in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child has accelerated over recent years. New national laws enacted include the Integral Protection Law N° 26,061, providing a framework for normative adjustments and public policy developments; National Education Law N° 26,206, increasing obligatory education to 13 years; and Law No. 25,871, aiming to ensure that migrant children can realize their rights as citizens. In the matter of juvenile justice, a national law in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child is still not available.

## **Key results and lessons learned from previous cooperation, 2005-2009**

### **Key results achieved**

12. The overall results were achieved through partnerships with national legislative bodies, ministries and social networks. This collaboration led to approval of the law on Protection of Child Rights (2006), inspired by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other legislative changes at national and provincial levels. Also in 2006, a new Secretariat for Children and Family was established, which in 2008 took over responsibility for coordination of the 2008-2016 National Plan of Action for Children, for which UNICEF is an adviser. Trends in impact indicators have been positive for infant mortality, child nutrition, mother-to-child transmission of HIV, deinstitutionalization of children and net education enrolment, but not for maternal mortality or school dropout.

13. Significant achievements include: (a) the more “concurrent” national and provincial action, with strengthened decision-making mechanisms by sectoral “federal councils” involving all the 24 provincial governments; (b) in the northern provinces, successful innovations supported by UNICEF contributed to effectively addressing repetition rates in elementary education, holding school-level evaluations in support of improving education quality, and establishing comprehensive care of children with disabilities and alternative care of children in conflict with the law; (c) the implementation of justice system practices more attuned to the Convention on the Rights of the Child through training of judicial officials; and (d) increased access to relevant information by the poorest families through the training of community leaders in State-run social compensation programmes.

14. Since 2005, the UNICEF partnership with the National Ministry of Economy has led to monitoring of public expenditures for children in all 24 provinces. In 2007, spending on children reached a historic peak of \$16.5 million. New relevant knowledge was generated and disseminated through studies and evaluations on early childhood integrated care services, inclusion and retention of children in school, indigenous children’s socio-cultural education, and care practices in the health system, among other areas.

15. The key result regarding adolescent participation was pursued through four studies on adolescents’ opinions, disseminated through the media. Wide-scale

exercises were carried out to engage children in discussing child rights issues. The “One Minute for my Rights” initiative allowed adolescents in 11 of the poorest provinces to learn and analyse child rights and express their views.

### **Lessons learned**

16. Important lessons were learned through efforts to gain public attention on issues such as maternal and neonatal mortality, the rights of indigenous children, and the need to establish a juvenile justice system consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Dissemination of relevant and updated information, the use of assertive communication campaigns, and the strengthening of alliances with key governmental and civil society entities have been pivotal elements of this strategy.

17. To reduce maternal and neonatal mortality, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund identified the need to cooperate on systemic adjustments in planning and managing health services in a group of provinces, based on the government inputs. This interagency and participatory approach was crucial for the adoption of a national plan of action for reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality that was put in place in 2009.

18. The UNICEF-supported and first-ever analysis of the educational situation in selected indigenous communities proved to be an effective evidence-based study and advocacy tool. The analysis contributed to the work of the recently created Intercultural Bilingual Education Council, which is engaged in improving educational achievements among indigenous populations. The evidence-based analysis was disseminated in the national senate.

19. Productive dialogue with the national Government facilitated the compilation, for the first time, of updated data on the situation of children in conflict with the law in all provinces. The availability and use of this information has been effective in achieving consensus on the need to establish a specialized justice system for adolescents consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

20. In 2008, UNICEF fund-raising efforts generated the greatest amount ever in Argentina — \$5 million. The trend towards regular increases has been achieved primarily by raising the contributions of the most sustainable funding component: individuals who make regular contributions (nearly 65,000 people by 2009), not for specific projects but for the overall country programme. Providing solid information to donors on UNICEF action in the country is playing a key role in shaping the UNICEF image, and reinforcing the critical mass of local actors committed to the fulfilment of child rights and to sustaining this funding trend.

## The country programme, 2010-2014

### Summary budget table

<i>Programme</i>	<i>(In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
	<i>Regular resources</i>	<i>Other resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
Health and nutrition for women and children	475	8 350	8 825
Inclusion and quality education for children and adolescents	550	12 850	13 400
Child protection	500	6 850	7 350
Monitoring and communication for child rights	725	7 350	8 075
Cross-sectoral costs	1 500	850	2 350
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 750</b>	<b>36 250</b>	<b>40 000</b>

### Preparation process

21. During 2008 UNICEF maintained continuous dialogue with Government partners on implementation of the main recommendations of the 2007 midterm review. The role of UNICEF in middle-income countries such as Argentina has been closely analysed. The Government favours renewed engagement in the country in selected areas that face gaps regarding two key issues: (a) changing prevalent attitudes, both institutional and societal, that do not contribute positively to children's well-being; and (b) enhancing the level of services needed to achieve the universal realization of child rights. Dialogue among UNICEF, the Government and other United Nations agencies centred on the results to be achieved through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which was signed on 6 October 2009, and the UNICEF-Argentina draft country programme.

### Goals, key results and strategies

22. The overall goal of the country programme is "Within the UNDAF, to contribute to full compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Argentina regarding all issues related to children and adolescents, with reductions of disparities by 2015".

23. The 2010-2014 country programme will contribute to the achievement of the following key results:

(a) Compared to 1990, maternal mortality rates have declined by three-quarters to 13 per 100,000 live births; under-five mortality has been reduced by two thirds, to 8 deaths per 1,000 live births; and neonatal mortality has fallen by 50 per cent; and the risk of HIV infection has been reduced among adolescents;

(b) Fulfilment of learning achievements and inclusion of children and adolescents in the education system have improved at all levels;

(c) Children and adolescents are fully protected against violence, abuse and exploitation;

(d) Children and adolescents are prioritized in public policies in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and children, along with their families and communities, demand fulfilment of their rights.

24. The country programme has two broad features: (a) a comprehensive approach, addressing a spectrum of issues, with the objective of maintaining a broad understanding of the situation of children; and (b) a selective approach, combining technical assistance, capacity-building and field testing of innovations, concentrating in areas facing relevant gaps. Maintaining a level of engagement appropriate for a middle-income country, UNICEF will emphasize monitoring the Convention and cultural and policy transformations.

### **Relationship to national priorities and the UNDAF**

25. The simultaneous preparation of the draft country programme, the first-ever UNDAF and the United Nations Development Programme's country programme for 2010-2014 has provided an excellent opportunity for an explicit alignment of the UNICEF country programme with key national priorities.

26. UNICEF participated proactively in the UNDAF preparation process, which informed the planning of the key results in the country programme. Formulation of the country programme took into account the priorities identified in 2007 by the Government to achieve full compliance with the recommendations made in 2002 by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

### **Relationship to international priorities**

27. The country programme is based on the priorities identified in the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan for 2006-2013, and is particularly focused on issues faced by children, young people and families in the poorest areas. Across the five focus areas, many of the key results areas from the medium-term strategic plan are addressed in the country programme. Support will be given to the monitoring of the situation of children and women and to the obligation of the State regarding child rights, with emphasis placed on monitoring maternal mortality, secondary education, violence on children, children and justice, indigenous children's rights, adolescents' empowerment, and public budgeting for children.

## **Programme components**

### **Health and nutrition for women and children**

28. The country programme comprises four major components: health and nutrition for women and children; inclusion and quality education for children and adolescents; child protection; and monitoring and communication for child rights. The outcome of the health and nutrition programme expected by 2015 is "high-quality services and family care practices in health, nutrition and HIV are delivered in integrated packages at critical points in the life cycle of mothers and children". Specific results to be expected from the cooperation in 15 priority provinces include: (1.1) at least 70 per cent of the maternity hospitals with more than 1,000 deliveries per year actively monitor their own quality and improve adherence to national quality standards; (1.2) families in the poorest communities carry out effective preventive and care practices for mother and child health, nutrition and

psychosocial and cognitive well-being; (1.3) the general public and families demand more effective health promotion and services and a safe environment; and (1.4) adolescents in selected municipalities use gender-sensitive prevention information, services and improved personal skills to protect themselves from HIV/AIDs.

29. For specific results 1.1, in coordination with WHO and UNFPA, advocacy will be carried out and technical support provided for implementation of national and subnational plans; self-evaluation of hospital services for quality improvement; and monitoring and control of public policies with the collaboration of the State, civil society organizations and knowledge centres.

30. In connection with specific results 1.1 and 1.3, communication strategies will be crucial and will include large-scale campaigns on maternal mortality and creating a safe environment as well as data-driven and evidence-based advocacy on effective interventions. These strategies will also involve strengthening of family care practices.

31. With a focus on families in the poorest communities, and especially on indigenous populations, technical support and capacity-building activities will be provided to support the design and implementation of local action plans tailored to communities' specific primary health care challenges (specific result 1.2).

32. Specific result 1.4 will be pursued by supporting adolescents to engage in initiatives that contribute to a protective environment and strengthen measures to prevent or reduce stigma, discrimination and vulnerabilities associated with high-risk behaviours. This will involve working in alliance with local governments and social networks.

### **Inclusion and quality education for children and adolescents**

33. The expected outcome for the programme is “educational services and friendly practices have improved the quality and opportunities for access and retention of children and adolescents in school within the framework of the National Education Law N°26,206”. The specific results for the programme are: (2.1) the Secondary School Reform and National Education Law is implemented and fully working, to ensure full inclusion, completion and improved learning achievements; (2.2) school quality and performance have improved, and national policies on evaluation and school self-evaluation are established and applied in 15 priority provinces; (2.3) quality standards for early childhood development are established nationally and implemented in early childhood development services in five provinces, achieving coverage of 70 per cent; (2.4) secondary schools in 15 provinces have established mechanisms that promote and facilitate human rights-oriented respectful relationships and effective participation; and (2.5) national and provincial offices of the Ministry of Education carry out quality intercultural bilingual education for indigenous children and adolescents in rural communities in five provinces, achieving access to basic education and completion rates of 90 per cent.

34. Activities planned to achieve results 2.1 consist of technical assistance and advocacy support to the national and provincial levels of the Ministry of Education and advisory commissions in implementing the Secondary School Reform and National Education Law. The primary partners will be the National Congress,



Ministry of Education, Federal Council of Education, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), universities, and the media.

35. Specific result 2.2 will be reached by advocating for the establishment of policies on evaluation, including self-evaluation, for schools and the educational system. This is aimed at tackling school failure and dropout. Studies, guidelines and proposals will be developed and disseminated to support good practices. Strategic partners will include national and provincial offices of the Ministry of Education, NGOs, the media and United Nations agencies.

36. Result 2.3 will be pursued through evidence-based advocacy, studies and technical assistance to design and test the application of draft standards in services of five provinces. Strategic partners will be the Ministry of Social Development, national and provincial Ministry of Education, NGOs and United Nations agencies.

37. Specific result 2.4 will be obtained through evidence-based advocacy, participation and social mobilization to build friendly environments and opportunities within the school community. Cooperation will be provided to generate and strengthen adolescent networks to promote participation. The main partners will be the Ministry of Education at the national and provincial levels, local networks, the media and NGOs.

38. Result 2.5 will be pursued through advocacy, technical assistance, social mobilization and monitoring activities. The national and provincial advisory committees on intercultural bilingual education will be supported in developing policies. The main partners will be indigenous organizations, the Ministry of Education at national and provincial levels, NGOs, universities, the United Nations Development Programme, the media and the private sector.

### **Child protection**

39. The expected outcome is that “the rights of children, adolescents and women are fully protected by coordinated interventions of local protection services, judiciary systems and families”. Specific results to be expected from the cooperation in at least 15 provinces include the following: (3.1) local protection services apply adequate protection measures according to the National Law on Children and Adolescents’ Rights; (3.2) child-friendly and gender-appropriate investigations are routinely carried out for child victims of violence, abuse or exploitation; (3.3) specialized local juvenile justice systems apply measures according to international standards; and (3.4) within intersectoral provincial plans, effective and adequately funded mechanisms function to prevent and eradicate child labour at the local level.

40. Specific results 3.1 and 3.2 will be obtained by (a) providing technical assistance to harmonize provincial laws and regulations with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; (b) training of officials in the justice and local administration systems on services and justice administration; (c) promoting reform of the institutional care system; and (d) supporting the compilation of disaggregated data on violence, abuse and exploitation. The main partners will be national and provincial organizations in the area of justice and human rights, the National Secretary of Children, Adolescents and the Family; the National Congress and provincial legislative bodies; universities; NGOs; local protection services and the

Niño Sur (Child of the South) Initiative established in the broad framework of the political and economic South American alliance of the Southern Common Market (Mercosur).

41. Specific result 3.3 will be reached through: (a) advocating for legal and institutional reform in accordance with international standards; (b) providing technical assistance for implementation of specialized non-custodial measures; (c) supporting, monitoring and strengthening implementation of diversion programmes; and (d) generating updated evidence-based knowledge on adolescents deprived of their liberty. The major partners will be the Ministries of Justice and Social Development; the National Secretary of Children, Adolescents and the Family (SENNAF); the National Congress and provincial legislative and judicial bodies; the general prosecutor; universities; NGOs; and local protection services.

42. Specific result 3.4 will be achieved by supporting implementation of inter-sectoral provincial plans of action through strengthening the institutional response capacity, broadening alliances with the private sector and providing technical assistance to translate the new legal framework into practice. The main partners will be the Ministry of Labour, Commission on Eradication of Child Labour, International Labour Organization, the private sector, universities, and local protection services.

#### **Monitoring and communication for child rights**

43. The expected outcome for the programme is that ‘Policy makers, society, media, family and children use improved and relevant knowledge to act, and to demand that child rights be upheld’. The programme has two components: (4.1) communication for child rights, and (4.2) monitoring and evaluation. The specific results for the first component (4.1) are: (a) families, children and civil society organizations increasingly demand fulfilment of the rights of excluded and vulnerable children; (b) relevant media in the country consistently report on child rights and rights violations; and (c) decision makers and stakeholders have available and effectively use high-quality analytical studies addressing gaps in the realization of child rights. The specific results for the second component (4.2) are: (a) comprehensive State-run monitoring and evaluation systems are in place and strengthened at national, provincial and local levels, and they effectively support evidence-based planning and evaluation; and (b) public expenditures for children are increased, prioritized and more focused to address disparities in the health, education and protection sectors.

44. The communication for child rights (4.1) will also focus on establishing partnerships with the Government at all levels, National Congress, civil society organizations, ombudsman’s offices and media and opinion leaders. Advocacy campaigns aligned with programme priorities will target relevant “influencers” and communities, and public opinion research will be compiled and disseminated.

45. Result 4.1 will be also be pursued through capacity-building strategies for journalists and advocacy with media companies based on research about media coverage. The main allies will be national newspapers, broadcast corporations, journalists, opinion leaders, and national institutions regulating the media, and members of Parliament.

46. Activities planned to achieve result 4.1 include the preparation and dissemination of studies, evaluations and case studies on relevant good policy practices for children. Activities also include the development of new outreach products and the use of new media to share knowledge and broaden partnerships with civil society groups, academia, the media, and decision makers.

47. Within the second component (4.2), specific results will be obtained by strengthening the public sector and civil society to ensure that the rights-based approach is embedded in planning, monitoring and evaluation processes and to reinforce strategies to assess trends and disparities for policy making. Partnerships within the UNDAF to establish a common strategy to achieve the Goals will be strengthened with United Nations agencies, national and provincial ministries, universities and independent child rights observatories.

48. Advocating for a more relevant and focused budgeting for children; strengthening the capacity of civil society to influence social policy; and prioritizing investment for children will be key strategies for obtaining results on 4.2. Protection of investment in education will receive special attention in light of expected limits that are expected to be placed on the planned increase in spending for 2010 as a result of the current economic situation. The main partners will be the Ministry of Economy, SENNAF, universities, and independent observatories.

#### **Cross-sectoral costs**

49. Cross-sectoral costs cover technical support for several programmes and a percentage of administrative costs, including those to cover the costs of the Southern Cone Operation Centre, which is part of the country office structure in Argentina that also manages key administrative functions of the UNICEF country offices in Chile and Uruguay.

#### **Major partnerships**

50. Close partnerships with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the coordinating body, and sectoral ministries will be crucial in all programme strategies. Partnerships with the judicial and legislative powers will also be strengthened. Direct engagement will take place with national and provincial levels of government aimed at capacity-building, with efforts concentrated in provinces with weaker child indicators. Specifically, the focus will be on the nine northern provinces, certain areas in Buenos Aires province and, for each of the results planned, an additional five provinces chosen because of their rankings regarding key indicators. More focused cooperation with local partners will include support for the local authorities' leadership role for change.

51. Alliances and cooperation will also be strengthened through interaction with State bodies that have coordination functions involving all provinces. In partnership with civil society and NGOs, knowledge centres and media, UNICEF will work to support development of public policies and mechanisms to address gaps in the situation of children.

52. According to the fundraising plan, nearly 90 per cent of funds from other resources will be raised within the country, as has been the case for the last three years of the present cycle. The plan continues the matching of funds with programme priorities, strategies and various types of cooperation. To this end,

dialogue and focused communication strategies will be especially important with relevant partners. Efforts will be continued to embrace the growing number of individual contributors, private companies and related networks that show interest in supporting the country programme.

**Monitoring, evaluation and programme management**

53. Monitoring and evaluation will be carried out through the integrated monitoring and evaluation plan for 2010-2014 and will be coordinated with the UNDAF monitoring tools set up for use beginning in 2010. The Government and UNICEF will perform an annual joint review and a midterm review (in mid-2012) of the country programme. Within the UNDAF framework, UNICEF will support studies and evaluations, promoting the dissemination of regularly updated key data on achievement of the goals and on social disparities. This will contribute to monitoring of the country's compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international legal instruments. UNICEF will provide continued technical assistance to the Government at national and provincial levels to use DevInfo to strengthen results-based management in public policies.

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