

Ecuador

Country programme document 2010-2014

The draft country programme document for Ecuador (E/ICEF/2009/P/L.4) was presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comments at its 2009 annual session (8-10 June 2009).

The document was subsequently revised, and this final version was approved at the 2009 second regular session of the Executive Board on 15 September 2009.

Basic data[†]
(2007 unless otherwise stated)

Child population (millions, under 18 years)	5.1
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	22 ^a
Underweight (% moderate and severe, 2006)	10 ^b
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births, 2005)	210 ^c
Primary school enrolment or attendance (% net, male/female, 2006)	96/97
Survival rate to last primary grade (% , 2005)	76
Use of improved drinking water sources (% , 2006)	95
Use of improved sanitation facilities (% , 2006)	84
Adult HIV prevalence rate (% , 15 to 49 years old)	0.3
Child work (% , children 5 to 14 years old, 2008)	8
GNI per capita (US\$)	3 080
One-year-olds immunized against DPT3 (%)	99
One-year-olds immunized against measles (%)	99

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

^a U5MR equivalent to 21 per 1,000 live births (2006, National Statistics and Census Institute — vital statistics data).

^b Living Conditions Survey, 2005-2006.

^c This figure is a 2005 estimate of WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank, which is adjusted for underreporting and misclassification of maternal deaths. See <http://www.childinfo.org/areas/maternalmortality/>.

Situation of children and adolescents

1. Ecuador is a country that is exposed to natural hazards, heightened by environmental degradation, which have a heavy socio-economic and cultural impact. Ecuador's dollarized economy depends primarily on oil and remittances sent by the three million Ecuadorians who live abroad. The above factors, together with the absence of a monetary policy, makes the country more vulnerable during the current crisis.

2. Between 2000 and 2008, social spending rose from 2.9 per cent to 5.8 per cent; inequality also increased (the Gini coefficient rose from 0.43 to 0.51 between 1999 and 2006), as expressed in the Index of Children's and Adolescents' Rights. The poverty rate remains very high (62 per cent of the rural and 25 per cent of the urban population); 60 per cent of poor people are children; and the poverty rate is higher among the indigenous (68 per cent) and Afro-descendent (43 per cent) populations than among whites and mestizos, as noted in Ecuador's report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

3. The infant mortality rate has fallen, but the risk of death in the first month of life and perinatal care, the lack of which is the primary cause of death before one year of age, are among the health-care policy challenges. In the province of Esmeraldas, where half the population is Afro-descendent, the death rate rose from 17 to 27 per 1,000 live births. The under-5 death rate for Afro-descendents is greater than the national average (32.6 and 21.8 per 1,000 live births, respectively). Only

13.53 per cent of Afro-descendants have access to safe water, compared to 81.47 per cent for the rest of the country.

4. During the past twenty years, the chronic undernutrition rate has fallen from 34 per cent to 18 per cent among children under five, but for each child with chronic undernutrition in urban areas, there are two such children in rural areas; in indigenous territories, that ratio rises to four. While 86 per cent of births take place in health institutions, the rate of attended births is only 49 per cent among indigenous women. And while 84 per cent of women are monitored at least once during pregnancy, that rate falls to 61 per cent among indigenous women. Only 33 per cent of women meet the standard for prenatal care and 7 per cent of infants are born premature, weighing far less than the desired average. Most maternal deaths take place in health facilities, within a few hours of the birth. Maternal health care in rural areas is influenced by cultural factors, but health-care workers are not trained to understand them, so women prefer to deliver at home.

5. Child development programme coverage is only 14 per cent; only half of all poor children under 6 have access to primary care programmes. Psychomotor deficiencies hinder the development of 60 per cent of children from poor households, and half of all indigenous children under 5 have inadequate cognitive stimulation, as compared to 21 per cent for non-indigenous children.

6. The absolute illiteracy rate has fallen to 9 per cent and net enrolment in primary school rose from 89 per cent to 96 per cent between 2001 and 2007. The gender gap in education has been closed except for rural and indigenous women in some provinces, whose access to secondary and higher education is still low. In the Amazon provinces, where half the children belong to an indigenous nation and speak their own language, the school dropout rate is twice the national average and most teachers do not speak indigenous languages. In the province of Esmeraldas the average number of years of schooling is 4.1 years, while the national average is 8 years, and 50 per cent of women are functionally illiterate.

7. More than half of households admit to using corporal punishment; 30 per cent of children say that they receive corporal punishment at school; at least three of every ten children have been victims of sex crimes; 700,000 children have worked since a very early age; 35 per cent of parents do not spend free time with their children; 22 per cent of children drop out after primary school; 35 per cent of adolescents have no access to secondary education; in 2007, 21,593 adolescents were in trouble with the law, and 3,411 of these young people were convicted of a crime. Many children of foreign migrants experience family break-ups, new patterns of child raising and new forms of consumption that lead to a lack of protection.

8. A total of 49 per cent of deaths of adolescents are attributable to accident, homicide or suicide. The risks are higher among young indigenous people: 55 per cent of indigenous adolescents aged 12 to 17 die of preventable causes. According to Ecuador's report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, many victims of the rising violence are adolescents. Although the rate of HIV/AIDS is low in Ecuador, approximately 1,000 children under 15 are seropositive. The adolescent pregnancy rate has risen: in 2007, 16,000 mothers aged 12 to 17 accounted for 7 per cent of births. Sexually transmitted infections are also on the rise; in one province alone (Guayas), such infections accounted for 3 per cent of hospitalizations of children and adolescents.

9. Inequalities and risks are increasing in border areas characterized by violence, little access to justice and movements of large numbers of people. In the provinces of Esmeraldas and Sucumbíos, many girls and women, including displaced persons and refugees, are caught in prostitution rings.

10. One factor that explains the existing inequalities is the weakness of institutions. Between 1996 and 2006 there was large-scale political instability; there was a tendency to cover up gender, ethnic and generational differences during State planning, and it was difficult to achieve social agreements and universal public policies.

11. The rights of children and adolescents were recognized in the 2008 Constitution; the Children's Code has been established; and the National Protection System has been created. The rights of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples have been recognized and Government agencies such as the National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education have been established.

12. The current Constitution establishes national equality councils, which are the bodies responsible for ensuring full effectiveness and enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the Constitution and in international human rights instruments. They will be in charge of formulation, mainstreaming, monitoring, follow-up and evaluation for public policies related to gender, ethnicity, ageing, intercultural issues, disabilities and movement of persons.

13. Enterprises in Ecuador are moving from a philanthropic focus to one of social responsibility. Some are changing in their strategies in order to mitigate the impact of their actions. They have also created networks, and some of them are starting to join international initiatives such as the United Nations Global Compact.

14. Since 2007, the process of social, economic and political reform has taken the form of a human-rights-based National Development Plan; the social ministries and the Social Policy Council that coordinates them have also been strengthened. Policies are moving towards free and universal access to basic social services.

15. A State with strong social and legal foundations and a new approach to land management is emerging. One challenge lies in overcoming difficulties in ensuring that social programmes meet the coverages and targets established in the National Development Plan. The effects of the global crisis are forcing the social ministries to rationalize social investment and to improve the effectiveness of those programmes, especially in the poorest areas.

Key results and lessons learned from previous cooperation (2004-2009)

Key results achieved

16. The 2004-2009 country programme focused on advocating stronger public policies in support of children and adolescents. The rights-based approach linked the priorities established in the medium-term UNICEF strategic plan to national priorities and ushered in agreements for implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Ecuador ratified in 1989.

17. The goals were to support the Government and the National Decentralized System of Comprehensive Protection for Children and Adolescents (SNDPINA) in

the area of health and education and in monitoring social investment. In cooperation with private enterprises, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the National Institute for Children and the Family (INNFA) and the Ministry of Labour, steps were taken to eliminate child labour and the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. The programme helped the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CNNA) implement the Children's Code and amend the Penal Code, criminalize and punish sexual crimes against children and adolescents, and establish 110 cantonal councils and 30 rights protection committees.

18. Support was provided for children's and adolescents' rights monitoring. INNFA was bolstered with the establishment of 25 comprehensive protection centres. The Ministry for Economic and Social Inclusion, INNFA and the Civil Registry were supported in the tasks of registering and issuing identification documents to 300,000 children and adolescents after the normal time frame; institutionalizing the use of mobile identification brigades; and opening registration at 30 Ministry of Public Health units.

19. The Ministry of Public Health received support in implementing the Free Maternity and Child Care Act and in taking other steps to reduce the vertical transmission of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of child undernutrition. The Ministry of Education and local governments were supported in their efforts to achieve universal access to high-quality primary education. The National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education also received assistance. The establishment of the Agenda for Indigenous Children and the introduction of vertical childbirth were sponsored, and debate on intercultural issues was encouraged.

20. There was cooperation with the business sector on the issue of social responsibility. Social programmes were supported with funds collected through the Niñosperanza (hope-child) campaign by Diners Club, Expoflores, the airline, ICARO, and OCP Ecuador S.A. The role of businesses and social and State organizations in the development of social responsibility was highlighted. Artists, the media and businesses were mobilized, united and involved in support of children.

Lessons learned

21. Evaluation of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan and evaluation of the country programmes coincided in that the rights-based approach was key to having an impact on public policy design. Nevertheless, the evaluations stated that greater emphasis must be given to ensuring that social programmes were operational.

22. They agreed on the importance of monitoring children's and adolescents' rights, mobilizing the public and giving children and adolescents a higher place on the national agenda, and they recommended that this responsibility should be shared with governmental and local institutions.

23. They drew attention to projects in areas with indigenous populations, although it was noted that the intercultural approach was weak. As with Ecuador's report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, recommendations included (a) work with social ministries in the design of rights-based mechanisms; (b) support the agenda of indigenous peoples and nations, particularly youth leaders, and of Afro-descendent groups in the debate on equality; (c) give greater importance to the theme of youth; and (d) support the families of children and adolescents affected by migration.

24. They noted that there were few links with women's organizations. They recommended that the gender perspective should be expanded, along with mechanisms to overcome conflicts between gender rights and the rights of children and adolescents.

25. In light of the poor coordination between national and local implementation of the programme, it was recommended that a territorial approach should be developed; that cooperation should focus on areas where socio-economic inequality and inequity were most acute; that the sustainability of projects and their impact on children should be ensured; and that government plans that linked local and national policies should be supported.

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>
Early childhood and adolescent health and nutrition	850	3 745	4 595
Universal education with equity	805	5 750	6 555
Strengthening of the comprehensive protection policy	845	4 900	5 745
Cross-sectoral costs	1 250	1 855	3 105
Total	3 750	16 250	20 000

Programme preparation process

26. The cooperation programme (2010-2014) has been prepared with the joint participation of the National Secretariat for Planning and Development (SENPLADES), the Ministry of Social Development Coordination, the Ecuadorian Agency for International Cooperation (AGECI) and the CNNA. A situation analysis was prepared on the basis of existing data and studies and two stakeholders' workshops, two focus groups for specialists and one focus group for professionals and the media were organized. The draft document was discussed with the Social Policy Council and the operational stakeholders before and after the adoption of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

27. The new cooperation programme has been supported greatly by UNDAF and by the joint work of the United Nations system through the thematic groups. It is noteworthy that UNICEF shares common goals with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in monitoring social investment; with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the intercultural approach; with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Panamerican Health Organization (PAHO) and UNFPA for advocacy of universal access to health; and with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the commitment to achieving universal primary education.

Goals, key results and strategies

28. Supporting the National Development Plan and the Social Agenda for Children and Adolescents (ASNA), and based on the 2008 Constitution and the Children's Code, the country programme for 2010-2014 will help the SNDPINA ensure that the human rights of children and adolescents are reflected in State plans and programmes. There will also be continued support for increased social investment in implementation of the ASNA and of sectoral and local plans.

29. The programme will apply human-rights-based public policy approaches and the social responsibility approach with an emphasis on support for service provision. It will be guided by principles to ensure that its benefits are universal, free, progressive and selective and will focus on reducing ethnic, land, gender and generational inequalities through the use of intercultural, gender and risk-management approaches.

30. Technical assistance will be provided for initiatives aimed at giving indigenous and Afro-descendent children and adolescents in the poorest areas of the 23 provinces access to: (a) high-quality services where they will be received warmly and where preventable deaths will be reduced and adequate nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and participation promoted; (b) properly funded, high-quality early education, child development and intercultural primary education using a human-rights-based approach that promotes gender equity; and (c) properly funded comprehensive protection as a key criterion for social programmes and business practices.

31. The goals are aimed at: (a) advocacy for children and adolescents' rights; and (b) improving the leadership capacities of the ministries represented on the Social Policy Council (CPS) so that they can implement reforms and incorporate risk management, particularly in programmes designed to reduce inequalities.

32. The first strategy will be to help public institutions generate and manage information that will increase their technical and operating capacity to achieve the results envisaged in the National Development Plan. The Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Social Development Coordination, SENPLADES and the sectoral ministries will receive continuing support for the monitoring of social investment with a view to better resource allocation and institutional performance, taking the global crisis into account; for the Ministry of Social Development Coordination, SENPLADES and the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion will be supported in strengthening public debate on the setting of investment priorities and on tax collection capacities; SENPLADES will receive support in the area of social policy assessment and organization; the Office of the Comptroller-General and other public accountability mechanisms will be supported, in the development of a public system to promote participation by citizens, social audits and the enforceability of rights; and universities and other research centres will receive support for studies of the country's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and towards equality. The exchange of knowledge and innovative experiments with other nations, primarily those of the Andean Community, and with regional programmes of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) will continue.

33. The second strategy will consist of providing technical assistance to the CPS ministries so that they can increase the technical and operating capacity of social programmes at the national level and link national and local policies in response to inequalities. Support will be provided for initiatives aimed at bringing civil society and local governments closer together by strengthening cantonal councils and equality councils and their efforts to encourage citizens and to involve them in ensuring respect for children's rights. Assistance will be provided for strengthening institutional mechanisms so that local governments can play the role assigned to them by the Children's Code. Horizontal cooperation among municipalities will also be promoted.

34. The third strategy is to strengthen shared civic responsibility by taking steps in the fields of social communication, mobilization, advocacy and tax collection, in order to support the provision of basic services. Support will be given to the CPS ministries and the Office of the Deputy Minister of Communication so that greater visibility can be given to children's rights, mainly among excluded groups, in their communication policies. In close cooperation with the social ministries, campaigns will be launched in order to promote behaviours, attitudes and practices that ensure respect for rights. The voices of children and adolescents of different ethnicities and regions, speaking about issues that affect them, will be recorded and transmitted. Communication programmes will be designed to link the social responsibility of businesses, individuals and organizations with a focus on the provision of basic social services. Technical assistance will be provided so that State and private media can include rights-based programming.

35. The programme will support the development of national policies in accordance with government priorities, but will concentrate on the cantons with higher levels of poverty and ethnic exclusion, including border areas. During the first year, studies will be conducted to consider in greater depth the areas and issues where there is greater inequity.

Relationship to national priorities and the UNDAF

36. The programme will contribute to the social goals of UNDP, in particular those relating to education, health, protection and humanitarian action. Strategies will be coordinated with other United Nations agencies in the context of meeting the UNDAF goals.

Relationship to international priorities

37. The programme is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. UNICEF, together with other United Nations bodies, will support the country's efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals. It will support the Government by contributing to implementation of the recommendations of: the Committee on the Rights of the Child; *A World Fit for Children*; International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169; and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The programme will place emphasis on the areas of child development, basic education and gender equity, HIV/AIDS, child protection and the public policies defined in the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan 2006-2013.

Programme components

38. The component on health and nutrition in early childhood and adolescence will support the goals of the annual plans of the Ministry of Public Health, especially the national plan for rapid reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality, the expanded immunization programme, the integrated regional nutritional intervention plan, the potable water and sanitation plans, the National Development Plan and the Social Agenda for Children and Adolescents.

39. The results of the component are: (a) an improvement in children's nutritional status and development, beginning with those living in the excluded territories; (b) adult women, adolescents and children have access to health services with a view to preventing maternal and neonatal mortality; (c) no child is born with HIV; and (d) adolescents are aware of HIV and other risks and take preventive action.

40. The results will be achieved through two strategies. The first consists of providing technical assistance to the health services network, basic health teams and the Ecuadorian Social Security Institute so that they can: (a) apply high-quality prenatal check-ups that prevent neonatal mortality and the vertical transmission of HIV; (b) guarantee access to antiretroviral therapy for seropositive children; (c) devise special protection protocols for the victims of severe violations such as sexual exploitation, abuse and mistreatment; (d) include protection criteria and indicators in the epidemiological surveillance systems; (e) reduce chronic undernutrition; (f) improve children's physical and cognitive capacities; and (g) institutionalize identity registration. The second strategy consists of the production and management of knowledge, together with a social awareness campaign.

41. The component on universal education with equity will support the country in moving towards the goals set forth in the Ten-year Education Plan, the Social Agenda for Children and Adolescents and the National Development Plan, mainly in the elimination of ethnic, gender, territorial and socio-economic inequities which exclude indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian populations, girls, adolescents and poor people from education.

42. The results of the education component will be: (a) 800,000 children aged from 0 to five years benefit from child development support in early childhood, through a high-quality initial education that is relevant to their culture; (b) 96 per cent of children and young people have access to and complete at least 10 years of high-quality basic intercultural education; (c) decision-makers in the Ministry of Education use the evaluation and accountability system; (d) justice workers take action on the right to education and human rights in education; and (e) children (110,000) of 12 indigenous peoples and nations are taught in their own language with appropriate educational materials.

43. In order to achieve these results: (a) technical assistance will be provided to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice and other state bodies so that the National Assembly can incorporate the constitutional mandates into legislation and regulations on education; (b) support will be provided for social pacts to make education universal and provide funding for it; (c) the institutional capacities of the Ministry of Education will be strengthened in order to develop programmes to improve information quality and technologies, educational innovation, sensitivity and good treatment by applying standards, evaluation and social accountability,

strengthening the national Subsystem of Bilingual Intercultural Education, and promoting a disaster-prevention culture and the coexistence codes that are contained in the plan for the eradication of sex offences in the education system; (d) efforts will be made to promote agreements between the private sector, the Ministry of Education and other public entities to encourage socially responsible practices; (e) information and expertise on educational progress in relation to meeting the Millennium Development Goals will be produced and managed; the systematization of educational innovations which make it possible to reduce inequities and inequalities, the generation of information on the levels of financing and the allocation of expenditure.

44. The component for strengthening the integrated protection policy will provide support for the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion in the implementation of the National Special Protection Plan and the Plan to Eradicate Child Labour and their coordination with sectoral policies for children in such a way that the SNDPINA is strengthened.

45. The results of this component are: (a) in the selected territories the ministries implement standards and policies to protect against violence and sexual exploitation that are appropriate to the cultural environment; (b) children and adolescents have a comprehensive protection system for identity registration, services for mistreatment and violence, sexual abuse and exploitation, street living and the worst forms of child labour; (c) children and adolescents in the selected territories who are victims of irregular migration, trafficking or commercial exploitation have access to a protection programme; (d) juvenile offenders have access to comprehensive protection services and the judicial system.

46. The strategies for this component are as follows: (a) support the School of Public Administration in developing a programme for training and production of expertise in social management; (b) provide assistance to the INNFA and the cantonal councils in the design and monitoring of protection plans in order to create services, organize protection networks and institutionalize SNDPINA at the local level; (c) support the CNNA and the Office of the Comptroller-General in setting up a forum for mayors and prefects in order to follow up on local protection initiatives and ensure compliance with the commitments laid out in the Children's Code and the Constitution; (d) provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Labour for promoting social responsibility. For that purpose: (a) a handbook of academic practices will be devised; (b) incentives will be provided for businesses to adhere to the Global Pact and comply with the Labour Code and the Children's Code; (c) support will be provided for including job creation for poor families as a component of the protection programmes of the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion and of the INNFA, and the Ministry of Labour's child labour eradication programmes; (d) efforts will be made to produce indicators, social standards and municipal accreditation systems to support comprehensive protection; (e) the Ministry of Justice and the social ministries will set up a forum to incorporate the rights-based approach into the administration of justice and services for juvenile offenders.

Major partnerships

47. The main government partners will continue to be the social ministries, and also SENPLADES, AGECI, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice, Interior Ministry, INNFA, National Migration Department, Civil Registry Office, and the equality, municipal and prefecture councils. The non-government partners will be the Observatory for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, the Social Contract for Education, indigenous and Afro-descendent organizations, business organizations and the private sector. Relations with the university sector will be strengthened. In addition, links with other agencies of the United Nations system and technical and bilateral cooperation with donor countries will be strengthened.

Monitoring, evaluation and programme management

48. The cooperation programme will be administered in a coordinated and integrated manner, in accordance with the priorities established in this document. Each programme will coordinate its local work with national policies. The area of communication and external relations will contribute to strengthening the promotion of the interests of children and of social responsibility, in order to sensitize, inform and educate social communication media, the business sector and the public on the rights of children and adolescents.

49. The programme will be monitored through periodical meetings and an annual review organized with SENPLADES and AGECI, to evaluate results and discuss the annual operating plan. The impact of the programme will be monitored through key indicators such as maternal and infant mortality; chronic malnutrition; birth registry; HIV/AIDS prevalence; reported cases of violence against children; education, including enrolment, repetition, dropout and completion rates; and percentage of the public budget spent on health, protection and education, both at the national level and in prioritized municipalities. The programme will establish mechanisms to identify its contribution to progress on results as part of the midterm and final reviews, within the framework of strategic alliances. Regular monitoring and evaluation activities will be held with the counterparts. All of these activities will be harmonized with the UNDAF five-year Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. Regular analyses of the situation of children and adolescents will be carried out in coordination with the specialized information agencies (SENPLADES, the Ecuadorian Social Security Institute, the National Statistical Institute, non-governmental monitoring organization and sectoral ministers). The meeting for the mid-term review of the country programme will take place in 2012, with government participation.
