

# **Lao People's Democratic Republic**

## **Country programme document 2012-2015**

The draft country programme document for Lao People's Democratic Republic (E/ICEF/2011/P/L.5) was presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comments at its 2011 annual session (20-23 June 2011).

The document was subsequently revised, and this final version was approved at the 2011 second regular session of the Executive Board on 15 September 2011.

<i>Basic data</i> <sup>†</sup> (2009 unless otherwise stated)	
Child population (millions, under 18 years)	2.8
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	59
Underweight (% , moderate and severe, 2006) (urban/rural, poorest/richest)	31 20/34, 38/14
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births, reported, 2005)	410 <sup>a</sup>
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female, 2008)	84/81
Survival rate to last primary grade (% , 2007)	67
Use of improved drinking water sources (% , 2008)	57
Use of adequate sanitation facilities (% , 2008)	53
Adult HIV prevalence rate (%)	0.2
Child labour (% , children 5-14 years old, 2006)	11
Birth registration (% children under 5 years, 2006) (male/female, urban/rural, poorest/richest)	72 72/71, 84/68, 62/85
GNI per capita (US\$)	880
One-year-olds immunized against DPT3 (%)	57
One-year-olds immunized against measles (%)	59

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

<sup>a</sup> 580 deaths per 100,000 live births is the 2008 estimate developed by the United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-agency Group (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank, together with independent technical experts), adjusted for underreporting and misclassification of maternal deaths. For more information, see [www.childinfo.org/maternal\\_mortality.html](http://www.childinfo.org/maternal_mortality.html).

## Summary of the situation of children and women

1. With a total population of 6.1 million people, 45.9 per cent of whom are under the age of 18, Lao People's Democratic Republic has one of the youngest populations in Southeast Asia. Eighty per cent of the population lives in rural areas characterized by poor infrastructure and subsistence farming. The multi-ethnic country has 49 distinct ethnic groups, many of whom live in remote mountainous areas.

2. The Seventh National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015) aims to accelerate achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. There are increasing opportunities to generate much-needed development revenue (mainly from the commercial exploitation of natural resources) but also increasing risks, especially for vulnerable populations that depend on the same natural resources for their livelihoods. The Plan addresses critical social issues, including child nutrition, child protection, sexual exploitation, trafficking, and the elimination of discrimination against women, and violence against women and children.

3. Lao People's Democratic Republic is making good progress towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals overall; however, when data on targets are disaggregated by geographic location, ethnicity, gender and wealth quintiles, stark inequities are observed. The UNICEF Child Well-being and

Disparities Study (2010) showed that over 50 per cent of all Lao children experience multiple and overlapping deprivations in terms of adequate sanitation, health, housing, water supply and nutrition. Deprivation is most acute in non-Lao Thai ethnic communities living in areas that are rural, hilly, off-road, remote and contaminated with unexploded ordnance.

4. Progress on poverty and hunger (Millennium Development Goal 1) is on track. Between 2001 and 2008, the poverty incidence declined from 34 per cent to 28 per cent. Despite an average annual gross domestic product growth rate of 7.2 per cent over the last five years, a large proportion of the population continues to live just above the poverty line. There has been almost no change in the rate of stunting of children since 2000, which remains at 40.4 per cent of children under five years old. Some 40.9 per cent of children 6-59 months of age are anaemic. In 2010, the prevalence of acute malnutrition (wasting) reached a critical level of 18.9 per cent in the most southerly province.

5. However, universal primary education (Goal 2) and gender equality and women's empowerment (Goal 3) are off track. Although girls' enrolment increased from 76 per cent in 2001 to 92 per cent in 2009, there are significant disparities between poor and non-poor districts, urban and rural areas, and girls and boys. The enrolment rate for lower secondary school is 60 per cent, and 34 per cent for upper secondary, but the low quality of education remains a concern. Nearly half of primary schools do not offer the full five grades, especially in remote areas and among non-Lao Thai ethnic groups. This is a major reason for high dropout rates. Only 22 per cent of children benefit from preschool education, with the rate for the richest twice as high as that for the poorest.

6. Progress on child mortality (Goal 4) is on track, with national level data showing a decline from 107 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 98 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2005; neonatal deaths account for one third of this rate. Large disparities exist: some districts have child mortality rates three times the national average. Maternal mortality (Goal 5) is off track, showing only marginal decline since 2000. The 2005 census showed maternal mortality as being 405 deaths per 100,000 live births — the highest in the region. Skilled birth personnel attend only 20 per cent of all deliveries, and only 35 per cent of pregnant women benefit from antenatal care. This is due to a shortage of skilled personnel, weak health systems, and financial barriers. Family knowledge of key practices related to health, nutrition and hygiene is also limited.

7. Progress on HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (Goal 6) is on track. Lao People's Democratic Republic has a low prevalence rate for HIV: 0.2 per cent. The country is committed to achieving the virtual elimination of paediatric AIDS by 2015, and services for the prevention of parent-to-child transmission of HIV are being integrated into the routine health services. National data as of 2009 show that 189 children under 15 had been infected.

8. Although progress on environmental sustainability and access to safe drinking water (Goal 7) is on track, sanitation remains a major challenge. Access to water from improved sources increased nationally from 54 per cent in 2005 to 57 per cent in 2008, such that the Goal 7 target was achieved. Approximately 72 per cent of families in urban areas enjoy water from improved sources, while the rate is 51 per cent in rural areas. The urban-rural disparity in access to sanitation facilities is even starker, with rates of 98 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively. Open defecation is

common practice and hygiene practices are extremely poor. Currently, only 29 per cent of schools have water and sanitation facilities.

9. Children's risk of abuse, exploitation, violence, neglect and discrimination is exacerbated by the breakdown of families due to increasing migration and urbanization, and the continuing lack of protection services. The lack of a national strategy and policy and inadequate coordination and monitoring among concerned ministries continue to hinder progress in this area. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has made the development of a national system of social welfare a priority. The challenge posed by unexploded ordnance led the Government to make this a ninth national Millennium Development Goal.

10. Lao People's Democratic Republic reviewed its second periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in January 2011. Concluding Observations noted the need to address the following areas: low and uneven access to primary health care, nutrition and education services; low exclusive breastfeeding rates; the lack of quantitative and qualitative data and; and low social sector budget allocations. The 2009 Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women highlighted several areas: the lack of disaggregated data relating to ethnic groups; a concern about gender-based violence; and the vulnerability of women and girls to exploitation, violence and trafficking.

11. Lao People's Democratic Republic is vulnerable to seasonal, extreme climatic events. The main ones are annual river floods, flash floods and landslides, rodent infestation and related animal and human epidemics. Such events have had an impact on rural households that are dependent on natural resources for their income and food security. A lack of awareness about disaster risk, an absence of systematic contingency planning, and a lack of resources and coordination all contribute to the challenges.

## **Key results and lessons learned from previous cooperation, 2006-2010**

### **Key results achieved**

12. There was a stronger enabling environment for children's rights across all programme areas. Of note were the following results:

(a) New or improved legislation, policies and strategies such as the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children (2007); the amended Education Law (2007) and Education Sector Development Framework 2009-2015; and policy developments in juvenile justice, trafficking and unexploded ordnance;

(b) Improved awareness and understanding of the situation of children and their rights. For example, the UNICEF-supported Child Well-being and Disparities Study (2010) focused attention on the overlapping multi-dimensional aspects of child poverty. UNICEF also provided technical support to the Government to help ensure that the Seventh National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015) included a focus on child and social protection;

(c) Strengthened upstream coherence from the support of UNICEF to sector working groups. This included support to the Ministry of Education's leadership of the Education Sector Working Group as co-chair; the establishment of a water,

sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector coordination mechanism; support to the Centre for Information and Education on Health, and work as lead development partner for behaviour change within the technical working groups on maternal and neonatal child healthcare (MNCH) and nutrition; and support to the informal child protection working group;

(d) Strengthened sector partnership for children: UNICEF supported the development of a comprehensive MNCH package, including prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, a national nutrition policy, and a comprehensive multi-year plan on immunization (2007-2011).

### **Lessons learned**

13. The midterm review of the country programme in 2009 and the Mid-Year Review and Annual Reviews of 2010 contributed to the following lessons learned:

(a) The country programme is on track towards most of its expected results, particularly in supporting the Government to develop child-focused national legislation, policies and action plans. However, implementation is hindered by limited human and financial capacity among government partners and a lack of data in almost all sectors. Data are insufficient, unreliable, and inadequately disaggregated, thereby impacting the capacity of sectors to address disparities and national capacity for strong evidence-based research and advocacy;

(b) The country programme played an increasing role within sector-wide approaches, demonstrating the criticalness of supporting the Government to promote sector coherence. Of note is the role of UNICEF in education, where the organization contributed to national sector coordination and the aid effectiveness agenda;

(c) Strong political leadership influences the achievement of key planned results; therefore, engagement with decision makers at all levels is essential. For example, the measles campaign achieved 95 per cent coverage after the Deputy Prime Minister issued an order that all administrative bodies should contribute to achieving this goal;

(d) The need for an increased focus on Communication for Development across all programmes is key to the achievement of objectives, particularly for health, nutrition and WASH.

## The country programme, 2012-2015

### 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>
Communication	1 115	5 500	6 615
Education	1 540	10 600	12 140
Health and nutrition	1 560	11 910	13 470
Child protection	855	6 090	6 945
Water, sanitation and hygiene	610	8 500	9 110
Social policy	708	6 000	6 708
Cross-sectoral costs	1 472	3 088	4 560
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 860</b>	<b>51 688</b>	<b>59 548</b>

### Preparation process

14. The National Commission for Mothers and Children (NCMC) led the midterm review process and the preparation of the country programme, engaging all government and development partners. The process coincided with the Round Table Consultation on National Priorities and the formulation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), 2012-2015, contributing to the alignment of results. The preparation process built on a solid base of evidence, including a situation analysis led by NCMC and UNICEF and reviews of Communication for Development (2009) and Capacity Development (2009). The Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women were fully taken into account.

### Programme and component results and strategies

15. The country programme will advance children's rights by building and strengthening government systems and institutional capacity to deliver quality social services to the most disadvantaged populations. The programme will demonstrate and document innovative approaches, contributing to national and organizational learning, and will have the potential to be expanded nationally. As Lao People's Democratic Republic has been identified as a Delivering as One country, the country programme has been developed in close coordination with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP). The country programme will pursue the strategies described below:

(a) *Strengthening national capacity to lead, coordinate and monitor sector development* in line with the 2006 Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Country Action Plan. As the United Nations organizations co-chair the majority of the sector working groups, there is potential for UNICEF, in partnership with the others, to strengthen national policies and systems that will actively contribute to the national aid effectiveness agenda;

(b) *Strengthening the policy, legal and regulatory environment* by sharing in-depth operational experience and good practices; applying lessons from innovative programming; advocating for appropriate budget allocations; mobilizing and coordinating multinational expertise in numerous sectors; and facilitating South-South cooperation. In addition to providing policy support for each programme component, UNICEF will play a prominent role in policy advocacy on gender, governance, decentralization, social protection and social budgeting at the national level;

(c) *Strengthening national and subnational planning and data systems* emphasizing the use of disaggregated data. This includes: demonstrating different ways to analyse data to identify multiple deprivations, including gender inequality; strengthening institutional capacity to address equity and the improved targeting of interventions; working actively eliminating the bottlenecks in the delivery of key services; and promoting social inclusion;

(d) *Strengthening the capacity of communities, families and caregivers* to practice behaviour that ensures that all children reach their social, emotional and physical potential. This includes a focus on building the capacity of the most disadvantaged children and women to claim their right to quality social services;

(e) *Building strategic partnerships* that focus on collaboration with an expanded network of partners. UNICEF will do this by acting as a convener among ministries, development partners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and by being a catalyst for child-sensitive policies and an increase in resources for children;

(f) Improving geographical targeting of programme components results to *enhance impact at the local level*. The programme will focus support in areas where the comparative advantages of UNICEF will complement the support of other United Nations agencies, donor partners and international NGOs. One province will be selected as a “learning zone” to demonstrate the added value of collaboration and track the optimal combination of high-impact Early Childhood Care and Development programme interventions. The learning zone will also explore the best way to support decentralization and increase the accountability of local leaders to address equity and the meaningful participation of women and young people in decision-making processes;

(g) *Integrating human rights, gender equality, youth participation, environmental sustainability, including climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness* across the programme, in line with international commitments. UNICEF will continue delivering upon its commitments to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and leadership roles in emergencies, coordinating clusters at country level.

16. Regular (core) resources will be used for advocacy, core capacity development, assuring the fulfilment of critical UNICEF staff functions and strengthening sector partnerships. Other resources will support capacity development, operational research and extended staff deployment.

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

17. The country programme is fully aligned with the National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015), and with all relevant sector plans and major

national reform programmes. The UNDAF covers 2012-2015 to harmonize with the Plan. The United Nations will develop a Joint UNDAF Action Plan promoting Delivering as One, allowing UNICEF to build on its experience in an increasing number of joint programmes. These include the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition; REACH: Ending Child Hunger and Under Nutrition Partnership; the implementation of the MNCH package; and Supporting an Effective Lao National Assembly.

18. The country programme reflects the contribution of UNICEF to all of the five UNDAF Strategic Priority Results (Inclusive Economic Growth, Natural Resource Management, Governance, Unexploded Ordnance and Investing in Human Development), with priority support given to the latter. UNICEF will actively support the integration of unexploded ordnance issues into education, health and social welfare systems.

### **Relationship to international priorities**

19. The country programme is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and other human rights treaties. The objectives and strategic approaches are consistent with the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals and with the Government's commitment to the principles of the 2006 Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Programme component results correspond to all five focus areas of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan, 2006-2013.

### **Programme components**

20. Programme components and results are presented below. Intermediate results will be further defined in annual work plans, allowing for flexible focus and adaptation to emerging opportunities. The programme component results will be adjusted if necessary during the Mid-Year Review in 2013.

21. **Health and nutrition.** The programme will address the following challenges: large geographical disparities in health and nutrition; barriers to accessing services; weak systems and human resource capacity; and low awareness of key family practices. The expected result is that by 2015 the programme will achieve an enhanced policy environment, increased coverage of quality services (MNCH, nutrition, HIV), and improved practices by individuals, families and communities, with particular emphasis on the most remote and vulnerable populations, resulting in healthier children and mothers.

22. Areas of cooperation include:

(a) Increased availability, accessibility and utilization of quality MNCH services, including the roll-out of the MNCH package at the provincial and district levels; strengthening the quality and reach of services for prevention of parent-to-child HIV transmission; expanding diarrhoea treatment using zinc; and increasing coverage of vitamin A supplementation;

(b) Expanding the coverage of evidence-based nutrition interventions to reduce stunting and wasting, including close links with WASH. This will focus on the prevention and treatment of malnutrition in women of reproductive age and children under five.



23. The programme strategy includes strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Health to implement both the National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action and the comprehensive MNCH package, reaching the most vulnerable, and to strengthen the capacity of communities to promote and maintain their own health. UNICEF will use its operational experience to strengthen the sector in the areas of capacity development, sector financing, marginal budgeting for bottlenecks and social protection schemes.

24. Programme coordination will be assured through the existing Health Sector Working Group established by the Government, and the co-chair role of UNICEF in three technical working groups under the nutrition strategy of the Ministry of Health (monitoring and evaluation, micronutrients and behaviour change).

25. **Water, sanitation and hygiene.** The programme will address the challenge of wide disparities in access to and use of safe drinking water, and the rates of open defecation and poor hygiene. It will support the national strategy for rural water supply and environmental health that places emphasis on the off-road, rural communities. It will operate within government schemes and seek to leverage resources in this and other areas to scale up decentralized WASH approaches. The expected result is that by 2015 children's health and development will benefit from equitable and sustainable access to, and use of, safe water and basic sanitation, with particular emphasis on reaching rural remote areas.

26. Areas of cooperation include:

(a) Supporting communities to improve sanitation and eliminate open defecation community-wide, building on experience and lessons learned from Community Approaches to Total Sanitation, as implemented in other UNICEF programmes and by other partners in Lao People's Democratic Republic. This will take advantage of the transformative process of achieving "open-defecation-free" status to also promote hand-washing, household water treatment and safe storage;

(b) Ensuring that communities, schools and health centres have access to safe water, with an emphasis on sustainability;

(c) Supporting improved, gender-sensitive, sanitation and hygiene facilities for schools and health centres. All supported activities will focus on the most remote and disaster-prone areas.

27. Programme strategies will focus on supporting the Ministry of Health and concerned subnational departments to implement the National Strategy on Rural Water Supply and Environmental Health. This component will support assessments on climate change, water and vulnerable populations, capacity development and advocacy for increased allocation for the WASH sector.

28. Programme coordination will be assured through UNICEF facilitating and building partnerships with donor partners and NGOs working in the WASH sector, under the guidance of the Ministry of Health.

29. **Education.** This programme component will address the lack of preschool education in remote areas; the poor coverage and quality of primary and secondary education in educationally disadvantaged communities; the low survival rates in primary education; and low transition rates, especially among ethnic groups. The expected result of the programme is that by 2015 the most disadvantaged children

will be developmentally prepared for right-age entry into school, continue through the last primary grade, and make the transition into lower secondary education.

30. Areas of cooperation include:

(a) Strengthening education policies, budgets and systems that promote equitable access to quality education;

(b) Ensuring that preschool-aged children, especially girls in educationally disadvantaged communities, are better prepared for school;

(c) Ensuring that primary and secondary school-aged children, especially girls in educationally disadvantaged communities, are enrolled in and complete primary and secondary education.

31. The programme strategy includes: strengthening national capacity to plan, budget, implement and monitor the education sector development framework with an increased equity focus; supporting coordination of the education sector; systems-strengthening to revise preschool, primary and secondary pre-service teaching and learning materials that address the needs of disadvantaged children; service delivery to implement community-based preschool readiness programmes and the Child-Friendly Schools approach in primary and secondary schools in educationally disadvantaged communities; and increasing the school readiness of children, using age-appropriate, multimedia educational material aimed at children, parents and caregivers.

32. Programme coordination will be assured through the Education Sector Working Group, led by the Ministry of Education, and co-chaired by UNICEF and the Government of Australia.

33. **Child protection.** The programme will address the challenges related to the fragmentation of services and the lack of a national strategy and plan for a comprehensive national social welfare system, while strengthening collaboration among stakeholders. The expected result of the programme is that by 2015, children are protected against abuse, exploitation, violence, neglect and discrimination through the development of a legal, regulatory and social welfare system.

34. Programme cooperation areas include:

(a) Supporting the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to develop a child protection system informed by a national policy on child protection;

(b) Supporting a child-sensitive and gender-appropriate justice system for children in contact with the law that is increasingly accessed by children and that complies with international standards;

(c) Establishing or strengthening subnational structures and mechanisms of service coordination, delivery and referral.

35. Programme strategies include strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour and other relevant ministries to develop, expand, regulate, coordinate and monitor child and family welfare systems and services. Evidence from innovative models will inform strategic communication to counter exploitation, violence, abuse, discrimination and vulnerability to HIV. The programme will also facilitate policy discussion on promoting greater understanding

of child protection among decision makers, and a better understanding of costing national plans, sector financing and leveraging resources.

36. **Social policy.** The expected result is that by 2015 children, young people and women have their rights fulfilled through a strengthened knowledge, policy, legislative and budgetary environment. The specific expected result for the learning zone is that by 2015 there will be strengthened subnational capacity for evidence-based and integrated planning, budgeting and monitoring to enhance delivery of social services.

37. Programme cooperation areas include:

(a) Monitoring disparities, building a knowledge base on children to support evidence-based, child-centred policy advocacy and development and to influence development plans and budgeting. Advocacy will focus on strengthening social protection mechanisms and expanding social sector spending;

(b) Strengthening government capacity at all levels to monitor child-related national and international obligations;

(c) At subnational level, and with support from the zone office, strengthening linkages between social sector planning and decentralized administrative planning processes, with a focus on improving delivery of social services and addressing inequities.

38. The programme strategy includes strengthening partnerships with the National Commission for Mothers and Children, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the National Assembly and local government. The programme will draw on the technical knowledge and experience of the sectoral programmes when engaging in policy discussions on child poverty and social protection.

39. **Communication.** The communication programme will promote behaviours that will enhance child survival, development, protection, participation and social inclusion. The expected result is that by the end of 2015 families and communities, especially in areas that are remote, poor and populated by underserved ethnic groups, have increased demand for, and better access to, quality social services within a supportive public and media environment.

40. Programme cooperation areas include:

(a) External communication to support programme priorities and resource mobilization;

(b) Applying Communication for Development methodology to support all programme components, with priority attention given to nutrition, maternal mortality reduction, sanitation and hygiene practices, and promoting the expression of voices of youth, women and the most vulnerable.

41. The programme strategy includes strengthening the demand side of all programme areas, in particular strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Health's Centre for Information and Education on Health to undertake quality communication interventions; and working with partners to support the capacity of families and communities to promote and maintain their own health, including through the piloting of new demand-led approaches to sanitation and hygiene. The programme will also build the capacity of media to produce effective mass-media educational programming for children and young people.

### **Cross-sectoral costs**

42. Cross-sectoral results will focus on overall coordination and management of the country programme, including improved intersectoral collaboration, monitoring and evaluation, and support to the management of the UNDAF Joint Action Plan.

### **Major partnerships**

43. The country programme will pursue strategic partnerships and widen collaboration as a key strategy in addressing inequity. This will be achieved through measures including strengthening and expanding key partnerships with (a) the Australian Agency for International Development and Asia Development Bank in the area of education; and (b) the Japan International Cooperation Agency and Luxembourg Development in the area of health. In this Delivering as One country, UNICEF will contribute to the collaborative work of the United Nations system, leveraging United Nations resources for children. UNICEF will also implement joint programmes with the World Health Organization, WFP and UNFPA in the areas of health and nutrition, and will support further joint programming with other United Nations agencies. The programme will coordinate closely with UNDP, United Nations Capital Development Fund, the World Bank, German Development Cooperation, Netherlands Development Organization, and the International Labour Organization. All partnerships will be coordinated through government-led technical working groups.

44. In the current cycle, the country programme has benefited from funding contributions from the Governments and/or the National Committees for UNICEF of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as the European Union. UNICEF will seek to maintain and expand on these partnerships in the new country programme.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and programme management**

45. The National Commission for Mothers and Children (chaired by the Standing Deputy Prime Minister) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (which will sign the UNDAF Joint Action Plan), remain the primary government counterparts of UNICEF overseeing the coordination of UNICEF programme components and the adjustment of intermediate results agreed with counterpart ministries. The National Statistical Center, under the Ministry of Planning and Investment, maintains the national socio-economic database, strengthening the use of LaoInfo, tracking progress towards the National Socio-Economic Development Plan, Millennium Development Goals and UNDAF targets. The Intermediate Results to be achieved by UNICEF will be developed together with the Government following the third UNDAF Strategic Retreat and should relate to the UNDAF outputs.

46. The results of the UNICEF-supported Lao Social Indicators Survey (2010) will contribute to laying the baseline for the UNDAF Joint Action Plan and the National Socio-Economic Development Plan, and will collect data on key indicators as they relate to the Millennium Development Goals.

47. As far as possible, monitoring and review of the country programme will be conducted through UNDAF processes and within the framework of the Vientiane Declaration Action Plan. Evaluations and studies will be presented in the Integrated

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, which will periodically measure progress towards quantitative results; document lessons learned; monitor changes in institutions, systems and attitudes affecting children and women; and track the contribution of UNICEF to bringing about positive change. Monitoring and evaluation is a key element for the achievement of planned results in the county programme and will support organizational learning, in particular in the learning zone, and in building the evidence base needed for effective policy advocacy. Strategic evaluations will contribute to building evidence on high-impact interventions, prioritizing evaluation of the impact of cross-sectoral results and equity-based approaches.

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