The draft country programme document for Mongolia (E/ICEF/2011/P/L.6) 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.
### Summary of the situation of children and women

1. In the 20 years since the nation’s transition from socialism to a liberal market economy, Mongolia has become one of the region’s most consistent economic performers and has undertaken a host of democratic reforms. This sparsely populated country is also experiencing a period of rapid urbanization. While semi-nomadic ways of life still predominate in rural areas, more than half of the country’s 2.7 million people now live in urban centres, particularly in the capital, Ulaanbaatar.

2. Largely buoyed by investment in the mining sector, the annual growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP) has doubled since 2000. The projected future dominance of the mining sector places Mongolia among those resource-rich countries whose economies depend on resource extraction, which makes them highly vulnerable to external financial shocks and volatile world commodity prices. Indeed, the sharp fall in GDP — from 8.9 per cent in 2008 to 1.6 per cent in 2009 — during the global financial downturn clearly demonstrated the vulnerability of Mongolia. It also highlighted the risks inherent in using mining revenue to support the welfare sector and underlined the lack of mechanisms available for targeting the poor. The country faces an inflation rate above 20 per cent and soaring food prices,
and this next period will establish whether or not Mongolia can transform its wealth into assets for sustainable broad-based development.

3. Human development indicators confirm that a significant percentage of the population remains largely untouched by the nation’s economic growth, which to date has disproportionately benefited the wealthiest segment. The poverty rate has remained stagnant at 35 per cent nationally and 50 per cent in rural and peri-urban areas. Seventy-three per cent of the poor work in low-paying jobs in urban centres or in rural herding and farming households. Nationwide, 42 per cent of children live in poverty and 21 per cent suffer from chronic malnutrition.

4. Inequity in Mongolia is rooted in a complex mix of political, social and economic factors, including discrimination targeting women, ethno-linguistic minorities and people with disabilities. It encompasses structural poverty, geographic isolation, weak governance and dominant cultural and social norms. Inequities persist across all areas and are comparatively higher in poor urban areas. The country’s Gini coefficient of 0.36 represents one of the highest rates of inequality among post-transition countries. Attempts to streamline the social welfare system have failed to generate more intensive or consistent support for the nation’s poor and disadvantaged. If left unchecked, these issues could undermine the progress Mongolia has made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

5. The Committees on the Rights of the Child and on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women have highlighted significant inequities in access to and quality of social services by women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. Internal migration, largely driven by the search for employment and greater access to social services, has placed a substantial burden on already overstretched services. It has also highlighted concerns related to child labour, gender-based violence and child abuse and neglect, as well as the lack of family support mechanisms, an organized child protection system and a continuum of care for victims.

6. Confirming the impact of the country’s disparities, a 2009 study found that one third of children from the lowest wealth quintile suffered from malnutrition and other micronutrient deficiencies such as rickets; one third were deprived of health and shelter; and half did not have access to education. Although strong gains have been made in the number of children accessing early childhood education, the Government has recognized that its quality and relevance are major challenges.

7. More than 50 per cent of the rural population has no access to safe water and nearly 70 per cent has no access to adequate sanitation. Lack of water and sanitation in rural schools and dormitories, where children spend up to nine months of the year, remains a critical area of concern.

8. While good progress has been made in reducing the maternal mortality ratio and child mortality rates, indicators are generally worse for rural and ethnic populations. In 2009, the maternal mortality ratio ranged from 23 deaths per 100,000 live births in Ulaanbaatar to 165 per 100,000 in one of the rural provinces. More than 75 per cent of these deaths were recorded among herdswomen, the unemployed and unregistered migrants. In terms of HIV/AIDS, an alarming increase of 92 per cent in the number of registered HIV and AIDS cases in the past five years is drawing attention to this currently neglected area.
9. Corruption and poor governance are undermining development and fuelling concerns about national insecurity, as disenfranchised segments of the population are increasingly left behind in the nation’s economic development. Women remain politically disempowered. Their ability to affect policy change has been hindered by their exclusion from political participation.

10. Mongolia also faces challenges related to its geography, harsh climate and lack of national road infrastructure, which make logistical planning and implementation costlier and more problematic than in many countries. Climate change has also engendered such challenges as increasingly extreme temperatures in summer and winter, water shortages, poor water quality, land degradation and desertification, which directly threaten livelihoods and national food security.

11. In 2010, Mongolia was hit by a devastating dzud (heavy snowfall and extreme cold), which prevented livestock from grazing. It adversely affected 30 per cent of the population, including 300,000 children, and resulted in the loss of 22 per cent of the nation’s livestock. It also increased the exodus of people from impoverished rural areas to peri-urban centres and exposed chronic weaknesses in the country’s ability to respond to humanitarian and environmental crises. This highlighted the need for ongoing support to the Government, particularly in improving coordination for emergency preparedness and response and mobilization of resources.

12. As Mongolia continues its rapid progress towards middle-income status, the challenge is to ensure that economic growth contributes to poverty alleviation and offsets widespread socio-economic disparities.

**Key results and lessons learned from previous cooperation, 2007-2011**

**Key results achieved**

13. The 2007-2011 country programme of cooperation contributed to defining national goals in the country’s Millennium Development Goals-based National Development Strategy. It focused on the priority areas of integrated child survival, early childhood development, basic education, child protection and emergency preparedness and response. In partnership with the Government of Mongolia, other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UNICEF achieved the following key results.

14. The establishment of 97 ger-kindergartens (mobile preschools) in remote areas and support for activities of visiting teachers, combined with legislation encouraging service provision and quality improvements, contributed to a 46 per cent increase in preschool net enrolment nationally. In addition, 3,000 most-disadvantaged children were enrolled in preschools, and the Government endorsed the inclusive child-friendly schools initiative.

15. From 2005 to 2009, the under-five mortality rate dropped from 51 to 29 deaths per 1,000 live births. The Reach Every District (RED) strategy was piloted in five districts of Ulaanbaatar. This intervention, which provides essential health services to marginalized children and women in isolated areas, effectively addressed inequities in provision of health services as determined in a 2010 evaluation. Implementation of the strategy also resulted in a three-fold budget increase for
vaccines in 2009. The Ministry of Health will progressively scale up the strategy in 2011.

16. The Government made significant progress in establishing a juvenile justice system and amended the Criminal Code and Criminal Procedures Law in line with international standards. UNICEF helped design a community-based juvenile justice diversion programme that was implemented at three pilot sites. It provided access to alternative legal mechanisms for 1,400 children and their families, and preventive actions were undertaken for more than 4,000 disadvantaged children. Authorities in nine districts have now established community-based diversion programmes and have committed funds, human resources and facilities to ensure sustainability.

17. The Government’s Household Development Plan, a national strategy targeting poor families, included two major UNICEF-supported initiatives: the Family Empowerment Strategy and the Child-Friendly Communities Initiative. The Family Empowerment Strategy training package was subsequently revised to include new indicators covering family income, employment, hand-washing, prevention of HIV/sexually transmitted infections and environmental protection.

18. In 2010, the Government led a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and the fourth national nutrition survey. UNICEF promoted development of institutional capacity in survey management, data analysis and report writing. The dissemination of results in 2011 will inform future decision-making, with a particular focus on equity to help to accelerate full realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

19. The 300,000 children affected by the 2010 dzud benefited from the health, nutrition, psychosocial and education support provided by UNICEF. Emergency preparedness was reinforced through establishment of a cluster-based emergency response system. UNICEF leads four key clusters: nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, and logistics and telecommunications, and co-leads the education cluster.

**Lessons learned**

20. A number of reviews indicate that a range of policies and legal frameworks were successfully developed, but adequate resources were not available for their implementation. In addition to the policy framework, UNICEF needs to better employ tools for strategic communication and social budgeting. This will ensure a more focused approach to the management and structuring of public finances and more equitable distribution to excluded populations.

21. Because of the country’s relatively small child population, the country programme receives only minimal regular resources funding. This meant that efforts to address challenges across many locations saw the budget spread thin and some results diluted. However, investment in a limited number of on-the-ground projects was vindicated as strong model projects were brought to scale by the Government, generating evidence for policy development.

22. Flooding and dzud emergencies highlighted critical gaps in capacity. As a result, programming by both the Government and the United Nations programmes fluctuated between regular programming and emergency response. This experience demonstrates the need for focus on the impacts of climate change and better integration of disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness and response into strategies and workplans.
23. The need to focus on equitable access to health care was confirmed in a joint study by the Government, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization on emergency obstetric and essential newborn care. The study highlighted the value of the RED strategy and the importance of analysing gaps and bottlenecks and the costs required to address them for effective promotion of equity in maternal and child health services.

The country programme, 2012-2016

Summary budget table*

(In thousands of United States dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Regular resources</th>
<th>Other resources</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social policy, investment and advocacy for children’s rights</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>2 453</td>
<td>3 418</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrated and inclusive interventions for children</td>
<td>2 310</td>
<td>12 427</td>
<td>14 737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>370</td>
<td>845</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3 750</strong></td>
<td><strong>15 250</strong></td>
<td><strong>19 000</strong></td>
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* Additional funds for emergency response may be raised if necessary.

Preparation process

24. In 2010, the Common Country Assessment (CCA) undertaken in conjunction with the Government established consensus on the priority areas to be included in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2012-2016. The draft CPD covers the contribution of UNICEF to the UNDAF and responds to the most recent concluding observations of human rights treaty bodies.

25. The CCA, UNDAF and CPD processes were highly consultative and inclusive. Strategic planning sessions were conducted for the first time with international financial institutions and bilateral partners. Joint UNFPA/UNICEF consultations reinforced with the Government and NGOs the strong collaboration and shared vision of these organizations on key areas of Millennium Development Goal achievement. A joint consultation of vice-ministers, UNICEF, UNFPA and the United Nations Development Programme on the CPDs of the three organizations resulted in a comprehensive understanding by the Government of the focus, synergy and results to be achieved. It also helped to ensure that country programme components were strategic and complemented other initiatives planned by the Government and partners.

Goals, key results and strategies

Goals

26. The overall goal of this country programme is to support Mongolia in addressing inequity in accordance with the National Development Strategy, UNDAF and Millennium Development Goals. The programme has two key priority areas.
27. The first employs social-budgeting initiatives and support for the creation of pro-poor social and investment policies. It will support the Government in introducing essential mechanisms for data management, disparity analysis, social protection, policy review, coordination and advocacy on child rights, and equitable social investments.

28. The second priority area defines clear targets to address the multiple deprivations suffered by children and monitors the impact and results of a limited number of equity-focused programmes and policy strategies. In this regard, UNICEF will support high-impact interventions in selected disadvantaged communities. It will introduce child-friendly, integrated interventions while also making provision for appropriate and timely responses to humanitarian needs. Special emphasis will be placed on water and sanitation approaches that are community-driven and utilize energy-efficient technologies. These interventions will provide evidence for policy initiatives and will validate scaling up by the Government.

**Key results**

29. The programme will advance the rights of children, women and poor families through targeted and integrated interventions that support policies and better public finance approaches and address inequities in achievement of the Millennium Development Goals for children. It will work with the Government to achieve the following results:

   (a) Government policies and mechanisms are established that address the governance, accountability, policy and legislative issues that reinforce patterns of deprivation, and are reflected in equitable budget allocations and the provision of a continuum of services for child protection;

   (b) The Government collects and analyses disaggregated data using DevInfo and other tools, and conducts evaluations to improve the effectiveness of actions targeting children and women;

   (c) Institutions, systems and structures better integrate disaster risk reduction in development programmes, enhance gender mainstreaming and prepare for and respond to emergencies in line with the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action;

   (d) The private sector, donors, individuals, the media and civil society organizations engage in dialogue on child rights issues, support for South-South cooperation and long-term strategic partnerships to leverage resources and action for children;

   (e) In selected pilot areas, local governments engage in planning and budget reviews that promote achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and provide evidence for national scaling up of integrated, child-friendly, healthy approaches in communities and schools that:

      (i) Improve by 50 per cent the utilization of quality basic social services by households and individuals;

      (ii) Integrate ethno-linguistic minorities, migrant children and children with disabilities into quality basic education;
(iii) Reach 50 per cent of children aged 10-14 years with comprehensive knowledge on life skills and HIV prevention;
(iv) Engage adolescents in community development for social change, civic participation, environmental sustainability and awareness of climate change;
(v) Model child protection and support systems and empower parents and children with knowledge on prevention of violence;
(vi) Ensure that at least 75 per cent of disadvantaged children and women benefit from high-impact preventive health and nutrition interventions in a minimum of 15 remote provinces;
(vii) Ensure that primary school children have access to energy-efficient water and sanitation facilities and practise good hygiene, and that all health centres have functioning water and sanitation facilities.

Strategies

30. The main shift of this country programme compared with the previous one is to provide stronger technical assistance to the Government to establish appropriate mechanisms and promote effective policy implementation and budget allocations that are sensitive to human rights, gender and social inclusion. As such, UNICEF interventions will be directed at national, subnational and community levels.

31. At the national level the programme will encourage the establishment of mechanisms for data and disparity analysis, policy review and effective implementation with appropriate budget allocations. Strategic communications and evaluations will be aimed at positioning children and women, particularly those most vulnerable, at the heart of the country’s development agenda.

32. At the subnational level the programme will support reinforcement of partnerships with selected local governments to address capacity gaps in local planning, delivery and monitoring of quality services for children to ensure better tailoring to each district’s needs.

33. At the community level the programme will support empowerment of service providers and beneficiaries through support for behaviour change and demand-driven provision of quality services. This will involve increasing the emphasis on Communication for Development.

34. To generate evidence and provide a foundation for effective advocacy and policy review, throughout the cycle the country programme will maintain a focus on social inclusion, human rights, gender equality, awareness of climate change, and emergency preparedness and response. It will also emphasize child and adolescent participation in implementing interventions, primarily in one peri-urban area and one rural area. These will be selected using the following criteria: (a) a composite index indicating multiple deprivations and a study of the drivers of inequity in those locations; (b) locations at which UNICEF can add most value and be operationally efficient; and (c) districts that the Government has assessed to be the most disadvantaged.
Relationship to national priorities and the UNDAF

35. The programme of cooperation is aligned with the priorities of the country’s National Development Strategy (2007-2021). The programme introduces the shifts in focus that will help generate evidence for policy review and increase strategic investments for children.

36. The country programme outcomes contribute to all four pillars of the UNDAF, 2012-2016, with a particular focus on ensuring access to and use of quality basic social services, particularly for those most disadvantaged. Other outcomes are: (a) ensuring economic development is inclusive and equitable; (b) improving the sustainability of natural resource management and the resilience of ecosystems and vulnerable populations to climate change; and (c) strengthening governance for protection of human rights and a reduction in disparities.

Relationship to international priorities

37. The country programme is designed to accelerate equitable achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Its development was guided by human rights treaties, the medium-term strategic plan and the agenda of A World Fit for Children, as well as the Millennium Development Goals and Millennium Declaration and other internationally agreed goals. It has been reviewed against the development plans of key bilateral and multilateral partners. The results will contribute to all focus areas as elaborated in the revised UNICEF medium-term strategic plan, 2006-2013.

Programme components

38. Building on the achievements of the past, the new country programme will strengthen work upstream and be backed by evidence generated through integrated interventions on the ground under two programme components.

Programme component 1: Social policy, investment and advocacy for children’s rights

39. This component aims to help ensure that children are given due importance under national priorities and benefit from commensurate allocation of financial resources. It will support the development of strong child-friendly policy briefs, including economic impact analysis, costing studies and annual updates on the situation of children in Mongolia. Based on evidence generated through pilot projects, it will also support the development of new child-friendly laws and policies and will ensure the availability of disaggregated data. This programme component covers the three areas described below.

40. Social policy and budget will promote the use of data to inform social policy dialogue and influence decisions and the introduction of key mechanisms at national and subnational levels on: (a) children’s and women’s rights; (b) social protection and the inclusion of marginalized groups; and (c) strengthening capacity at national and subnational levels for the design and implementation of social protection programmes. It will address the impact of social protection and social-sector spending on outcomes for children and child poverty. It aims to provide options that enable social sectors and public finance reforms to be more sensitive to children, ensure that national legislation conforms with the principles of the Convention on
the Rights of the Child principles and that budgetary allocations adequately target vulnerable children. It is also focused on building capacity to improve analysis of public spending and its impact on social and gender equity through greater engagement in public financial management at national and local levels.

41. Monitoring and evaluation capacity will be strengthened to help to ensure that the Government collects, analyses and uses disaggregated data to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, quality and equity of development for children and women. Special attention will be paid to managing and disseminating knowledge, including evaluation and documentation of experiences for scaling up and policy development. Research will also be carried out to generate evidence in areas not specifically addressed under the programme components. It will also ensure that progress in monitoring and reporting is aligned with key priorities. During the cycle, UNICEF will primarily support cost analyses of its core interventions, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and evaluation of key interventions.

42. **Advocacy and communication** will build long-term partnerships with the private sector, the media, civil society groups and prominent individuals. The aim is to create an alliance for children across Mongolian society and to strengthen the sustainability of social inclusion initiatives. This will help share knowledge to assist with mobilization of resources for sustained investments aimed at improving the situation of excluded and disadvantaged children and to strengthen political commitment. Such efforts will be particularly important if an economic downturn constrains government resources. Strengthened partnerships will also lead to better advocacy, information management and budgetary adjustments, which will ensure the protection of children during difficult economic periods and emergencies or natural disasters. The programme will also support the Government in emergency preparedness and response coordination through the National Emergency Management Agency.

**Programme component 2: Integrated and inclusive interventions for children**

43. This component will address groups of children most affected by disparities, reaching them with cost-effective, integrated services. The services are designed to reinforce policy initiatives undertaken at the national level, providing evidence of their effectiveness and thus persuading the Government to bring them up to scale. Interventions in two geographic areas will focus on reaching pregnant women and children from birth to 5 years in communities. It will use schools to introduce integrated approaches to providing quality child-friendly education for children aged 6-18 years. This component covers three areas of intervention, described below.

44. **Young children’s survival and development**. This will promote the use of high-impact, low-cost health interventions; reinforce food fortification and nutrition policy initiatives; strengthen birth and migration registration to improve access to services; build parenting skills; and promote quality early childhood development opportunities to reinforce policies that enhance the quality of such services. The RED strategy and the FES will be strengthened and scaled up according to government planning, supported by UNICEF and building on the UNFPA-supported Telemedicine project.

45. **Quality and rights-respecting schools**. This will promote models of inclusive quality education in safe school environments for children aged 6-18 years. This
component will ensure that ‘unreached’ children — such as children with disabilities, children from ethnic minorities and boys in monasteries — receive schooling. It will operate by reinforcing the policy focus on education quality, including support for establishment of national and school-level systems to assess child-friendly schools and student learning achievements. All dimensions of child-friendly schools will be promoted: inclusiveness; relevance; a healthy, safe and protective environment; and the involvement of students, families and communities.

46. Underpinned by a strong legislative framework, local pilot projects will provide evidence for child protection services in schools where the policy is currently under development. The component will also support efforts to develop a comprehensive national child protection system, by introducing early-detection mechanisms, building children’s awareness and skills, and promoting cross-sectoral mechanisms to respond to abuse and neglect by engaging the health, education, social welfare and justice sectors.

47. This approach will also promote children’s participation in areas including civic knowledge, life skills, health promotion and community development for social change. With a focus on children in the 10-14 age group, the approach will promote their access to information, the services essential for their health (including HIV prevention), education, development and participation. These services will be offered in adolescent-friendly spaces in peri-urban areas and through after-school programmes, modelling the most effective approaches for and in conjunction with vulnerable adolescents.

48. Water, environment and sanitation. Water and sanitation is crucial to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, so this will be a key area of focus through child-friendly schools and community approaches. Energy-efficient sanitation facilities and the use of solar power for schools and health facilities in rural Mongolia will be piloted in selected areas. These activities will reinforce efforts to enhance sector capacity to provide quality services; improve coordination, planning and management; and introduce innovative ‘green’ technologies and methodologies. Demonstrations of good practices will be undertaken in selected vulnerable communities in tandem with other partners working to develop infrastructure and services in health care facilities. This effort will provide evidence for policy development, knowledge generation, advocacy and provision of resources. At the grass-roots level, awareness will be raised, leading to capacity development among individuals, families and communities.

49. This component will also mainstream emergency preparedness and disaster risk management.

50. Cross-sectoral costs encompass programme support and operational functions to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the country programme. They also cover supply and logistics, communications and programme management.

Major partnerships

51. Under the leadership of the Government of Mongolia, partnerships will include: (a) United Nations agencies guided by the UNDAF, 2012-2016; (b) the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and bilateral and other multilateral partners; (c) international and national NGOs and civil society organizations, human rights groups and youth associations; (d) regional and subregional bodies such as the Asia
Foundation; (e) the private sector, for support in service delivery and sustainability; (f) the media and national and subnational communication forums aimed at raising awareness of child rights; and (g) South-South cooperation.

52. UNICEF and UNFPA will collaborate on maternal and child mortality data collection and maternal, newborn and child health. The two agencies will also target in-school adolescents with life-skills programmes; UNICEF will focus on children aged 10-14 years. UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Health Organization will build on each other’s strengths to ensure the most effective use of resources in targeting vulnerable populations.

53. UNICEF and UN-Habitat will coordinate efforts regarding provision of social services in peri-urban areas.

54. The exchange of information, experiences and expertise on issues related to children and women will continue through the Alliance for Children, a group of NGOs currently working on these issues.

**Monitoring, evaluation and programme management**

55. Monitoring and evaluation will be harmonized with the national, sectoral and UNDAF monitoring and evaluation system. It will (a) support the Office of the Prime Minister and the National Statistical Office to develop a policy and strategy for child-sensitive monitoring and evaluation of the National Development Strategy across all sectors; (b) support harmonization of management information systems and provide technical support for establishment of standards for national statistics and research; (c) strengthen surveillance and survey systems to ensure timely availability of valid disaggregated data and analysis on the situation of children and women; and (d) increase access to strategic information for performance monitoring and reporting on children.

56. The programme’s field monitoring system will be strengthened through careful selection of performance management indicators and targets, including data disaggregated by gender and age, and improved use of financial and programmatic field monitoring reports.

57. Overall management will be led by an Inter-Ministerial Country Programme Management Team chaired by the Prime Minister. Members will come from the programme’s counterpart ministries, government agencies, the National Council for Children, National Authority for Children, civil society, academia and the UNICEF country management team.

58. Major data gathering, review, analysis and knowledge management activities for each programme component will be consolidated within the framework of the Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and coordinated with national partners and the United Nations country team through the UNDAF. This will include evaluations and surveys, a situation analysis of children and midterm and annual reviews with partners.