

Thailand

Country programme document 2012-2016

The draft country programme document for Thailand (E/ICEF/2011/P/L.45) was presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comments at its 2011 second regular session (12-15 September 2011).

The document was subsequently revised, and this final version was approved at the 2012 first regular session of the Executive Board on 10 February 2012.

Basic data[†]*(2009 unless otherwise stated)*

Child population (millions, under 18 years)	17.9
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	14
Underweight (% , moderate and severe, 2005-2006)	7
(% , urban/rural, poorest/richest)	5/8, 11/3
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births, reported 2005)	12 ^a
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female)	91/89
Survival rate to last primary grade (% , 2006)	99
Use of improved drinking water sources (% , 2008)	100
Use of improved sanitation facilities (% , 2008)	89
Adult HIV prevalence rate (% , 2009)	1.3
Child labour (% , 5-14 years old, 2006)	8
Birth registration (% , under 5 years, 2005-2006)	99
(% , male/female, urban/rural, poorest/richest)	100/99, 100/99, 99/100
GNI per capita (US\$)	3 760
One-year-olds immunized with DPT3 (%)	99
One-year-olds immunized against measles (%)	98

[†] More comprehensive country data on children and women can be found at www.childinfo.org/.

^a 48 deaths per 100,000 live births is the 2008 estimate developed by the Maternal Mortality Estimation Interagency 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/.

Summary of the situation of children and women

1. Thailand is on track to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The percentage of the population living in poverty dropped from 38 per cent in 1990 to 8.5 per cent in 2007, and the proportion of underweight children fell by half between 1993 and 2006. Most children are in school and it is possible to achieve universal primary school enrolment by mid-decade. The annual number of new HIV infections has fallen by 90 per cent since 1991. Thailand acceded to both Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in early 2006.

2. However, not all children have benefited from the progress equally. There remains persistent and structural inequality and pockets of severe poverty. Children are also disproportionately represented among the poor. About 1 in 8 children live in poverty compared to 1 in 12 adults, and it is estimated that some 2 million children live below the poverty line. Children in poor households are most concentrated in rural areas of the north and north-eastern provinces. Sixteen per cent of the poorest children are chronically malnourished while the rates of childhood obesity are increasing in all income groups. There is also a very high level of vulnerability for ethnic minorities, migrants, displaced persons, the unregistered and some 5 million people living in poverty.

3. While the proportion of children enrolling in basic education has increased, with a current primary net enrolment rate of 90 per cent, around 600,000 girls and boys still do not enrol in primary school or enrol late.¹ There is also substantial room for improvement in the quality of education.

4. The transformation of traditional family structures has led to new social problems, including drug abuse, violence, suicide, homelessness and sexual and economic exploitation. More than 1 million children are estimated to be in need of special protection; they include orphans, children with disabilities, children who live or work on the street, child labourers and an estimated 450,000 children affected by HIV/AIDS. Teenage pregnancy and abortion is also an emerging issue. While HIV/AIDS transmission is generally under control except among the most at-risk population groups, stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS continues.

5. On most health- and education-related indicators, there is little gender disparity between boys and girls. However, other forms of gender discrimination exist. There are different expectations for boys and girls in terms of their behaviour, roles and responsibilities. Gender discrimination is most evident in the rights of women and girls to protection and participation. Girls account for 87 per cent of victims referred to the Government's one-stop crisis centres set up to address cases of domestic violence. Also, there are very few women leaders in the political system.

6. Socio-economic pressure has led to large-scale internal migration with young people moving to urban areas for work, leaving their children behind to be brought up by grandparents or other caregivers. In the 0-17 age group, 25 per cent of children of the poorest and 24 per cent of the second poorest households were not living with their biological parents as of 2006, with yet unknown social consequences. Thailand's economy has also been relying increasingly on large-scale cross-border migration, especially from neighbouring countries due to the very rapid population and demographic changes the country has been going through, and the substantially higher level of socio-economic development in Thailand compared to its poor neighbours. Most of the estimated 2.5 million migrants, many of them in Thailand unofficially, are among the poorest in the country.

7. Thailand experiences an annual cycle of emergencies, including floods, droughts and forest fires, which disproportionately affect the poor. At the same time, the country has built good capacities to respond to most forms of man-made or natural disasters.

8. Under-implementation of national policies and plans is a major constraint to fulfilling the rights of disadvantaged children and women. Although a substantial body of child protection legislation has been adopted, it has not been matched by the allocation of adequate resources to ensure full implementation. There are a set of underlying barriers to effective social action for further realization of child rights, such as prevailing social values and attitudes, institutional inertia and resultant low prioritization. In its 2006 review of Thailand's Second Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Rights of the Child commended the country's progress on children's rights but, at the same time, highlighted the need to do more to ensure the rights of the most

¹ *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*, UNESCO, 2011.

vulnerable. The Committee also provided extensive recommendations for further strengthening of child protection systems.

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

Key results achieved

9. UNICEF advocacy as well as technical and financial support have contributed to the development of policies, systems and legislation that provide a more protective and enabling environment for children. A series of actions related to birth registration and nationality were taken, including amendment of the Nationality Law and Civil Registration Law; successful piloting of a new national birth registration system; and eventual lifting of Thailand's reservation on Article 7 (on birth registration and right to a nationality) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2011. These initiatives will benefit some 50,000 children currently not registered at birth annually and will contribute to ensuring universal birth registration and prevention of statelessness. Another example is enactment of legislation in 2010, mandating iodization of salt produced for human consumption. With proper implementation, this will benefit several million children by protecting them from iodine deficiency disorders. Other examples include an increase in the age of criminal responsibility and adoption of national early childhood development standards.

10. UNICEF contributed to a heightened awareness of children's rights through extensive support for child rights awareness training for some 30,000 government officials, teachers, police, justice workers, young people and journalists. UNICEF financial and technical support for the "Visioning for Children 2027" exercise helped formulate a long-term vision for the country's children. This nationwide exercise solicited views and opinions of some 20,000 people in all provinces, including children and young people, on challenges for child rights and their vision for the country's children. It created further awareness on child rights and ensured that children's issues are considered in the country's national development planning. Support was also provided for generating awareness, and capacity building of the media as a key ally for advocacy on child rights, through an annual Child-Friendly Media Award; journalists' training on ethical reporting on children; and incorporation of child rights-related issues into the curriculum of the Department of Journalism of a prominent university.

11. Advocacy as well as technical and financial support by UNICEF resulted in approval of Thailand's application to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for a \$42 million grant for children affected by AIDS and for other vulnerable children. This will benefit 113,000 children over the next five years. Funds raised through private-sector fundraising increased from \$3.2 million in 2007 to over \$9 million in 2010 and cover over 70 per cent of the country programme's other resources needs. Private-sector local fundraising also brought more than 80,000 individuals as regular supporters to promote the well-being of children.

12. UNICEF support to studies, surveys and evaluations led to improved understanding of the situation of children. UNICEF provided financial and technical support to the National Statistics Office to conduct a multiple indicator cluster survey in 2006 for collection of key data related to children and women. Its results were widely disseminated and utilized for advocacy, policy discussion and policy

development, particularly on those issues on which progress has been slow and/or there have been substantial disparities in achievement. Another multiple indicator cluster survey will be conducted in 2011 to assess the progress made since then. Between 2007 and 2008, a study entitled “Everyday Fears” was conducted in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGO) partners, interviewing some 2,300 children living in violence-affected southern border provinces. The study contributed to deeper understanding of children’s perceptions of violence and its effect on their lives and communities.

13. Through UNICEF technical and financial support, Thailand shared its best experiences in programming for children with other countries. More than 600 professionals from 24 countries participated in more than 40 training courses and study visits. This led to increased international and regional partnerships for children and application of Thailand’s lessons learned in other countries.

Lessons learned

14. Reflecting Thailand’s status as a middle-income country, there has been strong emphasis on more “upstream” programming for UNICEF cooperation in Thailand, with greater emphasis on evidence-based programming, advocacy, policy development and legislative reforms. At the same time, the 2009 midterm review (MTR) and the 2010 Strategic Moment of Reflection (SMR) concluded that these strategies need to be more consistently applied across all the programme components. There is need for support to overcome challenges in translating policies, legislation and programmes into effective actions, including budget-related work and overall social investment in children. Advocacy efforts need to be strengthened through more systematic planning, greater use of communication for development and stronger involvement of media and other potential allies, such as private sector entities.

15. The 2009 MTR also assessed overall efforts for piloting and evaluation in the first half of the programming cycle and identified their weaknesses. Piloting was often not rigorous enough in design, implementation and evaluation. There was also room for improvement in the quality of evaluations, and their results were not always used strategically. Efforts to address these issues will be continued into the next country programme period. Greater emphasis will be given to developing national capacities for generating and using disaggregated data to detect inequalities and ascertain informed decision-making.

16. The 2010 SMR concluded that there needs to be a more systematic and strategic approach to building national capacities to ensure greater and more sustainable impact for children. This may include greater use of technical assistance through institution-based arrangements (as compared to stand-alone consultancies) and international collaboration, including South-South exchanges to derive the maximum benefit from global best practices.

The country programme, 2012-2016

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>
Social policy analysis, budget, evidence and monitoring	1 272	7 800	9 072
Promoting equity, social inclusion and protection	2 741	25 400	28 141
Advocacy, social action and resources mobilization	—	32 100	32 100
Cross-sectoral support	152	1 250	1 402
Total	4 165	66 550	70 715

Preparation process

17. Country programme preparation was based on: (a) an updated situation analysis, conducted in 2010; (b) a national institutional capacities assessment in 2010 that sought to identify critical strengths and gaps in Thailand's capacities to realize the rights of all children; (c) the 2009 MTR; (d) the 2010 SMR; (e) the outcomes of the national "Visioning for Children 2027" exercise with involvement of children and youth; and (f) the United Nations Partnership Framework (UNPAF) for 2012-2016 — an agreement of cooperation between the Government and the 19 resident United Nations agencies. The UNPAF is the equivalent of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Thailand. The UNPAF took into consideration national priorities as identified in Thailand's draft Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan.

Programme and component results and strategies

18. The country programme will support Thailand in the progressive realization of the rights of girls and boys, reducing inequities and vulnerabilities while moving towards achievement of key Millennium Development Goals and the country's Millennium Development Goals-Plus targets. The programme also contributes to strengthening national systems for monitoring and oversight of the situation of children and women and for advocacy for promotion and protection of their rights. Specific programme results are detailed under each programme component below.

19. The country programme will be based on the principles of a human rights-based approach to programming, gender equity and mainstreaming, and environmental sustainability. The main strategies to achieve results for children and women are more "upstream" in nature than previous cooperation: (a) evidence-based advocacy for child-friendly policies and action, especially for the most disadvantaged children; (b) leveraging national resources, including public social spending for children and women; (c) helping strengthen capacities of the key national institutions for monitoring the situation of children and women, law and policy development, standards-setting and implementation of policies and programmes; (d) partnerships and alliances with the Government, the United Nations country team, civil society, media, academics, private-sector entities and local donors; (e) increasing the participation of children, young people, women, families and communities;

(f) improved access to information and communication for development; (g) international collaboration, including South-South cooperation to facilitate two-way exchange of expertise, experiences and best practices between Thailand and other countries; and (h) knowledge management on child-related issues and actions.

20. Special emphasis will be placed on the importance of data and evidence. Piloting and evaluation of new and innovative approaches will be strengthened to provide a solid basis for what to advocate. Coordination among different programme components will be strengthened to realize synergies in generating evidence and form the basis for policy dialogue, communication for development, advocacy and capacity development.

21. Disaster risk reduction and response will be mainstreamed into all components of the programme and coordinated with the efforts of other actors through the inter-agency coordination mechanism.

Relationship to national priorities and the UNPAF

22. The country programme of cooperation supports the goals set in the 2012-2016 Eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan, particularly two of its main priority areas: promoting a just society; and building human resources to promote a life-long learning society. It will also support Thailand's Millennium Development Goals-Plus and other relevant national plans.

23. The UNPAF guided preparation of the proposed country programme, which is closely linked to the following UNPAF outcomes: (a) social reform for equity and empowerment, which encompasses social protection, strategic information, human rights and access to justice; (b) global partnerships, including increased South-South cooperation; and (c) climate change mitigation (child-related components).

Relationship to international priorities

24. The country programme supports the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals as well as the principles and goals of *A World Fit for Children*. The programme is consistent with the priorities of the 2006 to 2013 Medium-Term Strategic Plan of UNICEF. The emphasis on reducing disparities and reaching the most marginalized children responds to the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and reflects a rights-based approach to programming and the organization's focus on equity.

Programme components

25. **Social policy analysis, budget, evidence and monitoring.** This programme component will help to strengthen national capacities for social policy and budget analysis, research and monitoring for better policy advocacy and informed decision-making. It will also provide support to the other two programme components to ensure the evidence base. Special focus will be placed on the most disadvantaged children and on identifying and highlighting disparities in progress towards realization of their rights. The programme will support: (a) monitoring of budget and expenditures for children at the national and subnational levels and assessment of their impact; (b) the National Statistical Office and other concerned actors to generate and disseminate high quality and disaggregated data on the situation of children and women and promote its analysis and use; (c) the National Economic

and Social Development Board and other relevant bodies in formulating social protection policies and measures for children and ensuring responsiveness to the situation of vulnerable children and women in national socio-economic planning; (d) the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in developing policies that promote and protect children's rights and in monitoring implementation; (e) the concerned government and civil society organizations in conducting quality studies and surveys on major issues concerning children, including early childhood development, social protection, children with disabilities, violence against children and women, teenage pregnancy, migration, climate change and other priority issues; and (f) systematic measurement of progress towards the achievement of the country programme results through application of the 2012-2016 Integrated Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Plan.

26. Expected results to be achieved by 2016 are: (a) major social and economic policies are analysed and their impact on children is communicated to policy makers and the public for informed decision-making; (b) the situation of children and women, especially of children with multiple deprivations, is systematically monitored and analysed; (c) research is conducted on major priority issues affecting children and women for dissemination and advocacy; and (d) capacities of the critical institutions are strengthened for national policy development, planning, monitoring and evaluation related to children and women.

27. The main partners will be the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the National Economic and Social Development Board, the National Statistics Office and other selected line ministries, academic institutions and civil society organizations. In planning and implementation of this programme, close cooperation is envisaged particularly with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) through the joint partnership and team approach in "strategic information" and "social protection" result areas under the UNPAF.

28. **Equity, social inclusion and protection.** This component will contribute to strengthening national systems for accelerated disparity reduction and increased protection of children from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. Special attention will be given to the rights of children in the poorest families, those living in remote areas and in the southern border provinces, children with disabilities, orphans and other children with multiple deprivations. Children concerned will include non-Thai children living in Thailand. The main issue areas are: (a) birth registration; (b) access to quality early childhood care and development services; (c) access to primary and lower secondary education and improving their quality; (d) development of a holistic child protection system to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect through development of related laws, policies, regulations and services in a coordinated and holistic manner; and (e) access to essential child health and HIV/AIDS services.

29. Expected results to be achieved by 2016 are: (a) a new national birth registration system adopted and implemented for universal birth registration; (b) quality early childcare and development services provided to all children; (c) enrolment of all children in primary school by age seven; (d) development and implementation of policies and strategies for substantial improvement in the quality of education developed; (e) access to essential health, social services and information by children affected by HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable children living

in HIV high-prevalence communities; and (f) formulation, adoption and progressive implementation of a holistic national child protection system.

30. The main partners will be the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice. UNICEF will also work closely with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in education; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration for protection of refugee, displaced and migrant children; members of the United Nations HIV/AIDS Theme Group and organizations involved in the implementation of the Global Fund Round 10 proposal for children affected by AIDS; and academic institutions and NGOs for related research and piloting.

31. **Advocacy, social action and resource mobilization.** This component will contribute to heightened importance of children in national awareness and on the policy agenda, including the existence of substantial inequities in their situation and call for national action to narrow the gaps. It will achieve this objective by: (a) deploying a mix of advocacy and social mobilization strategies, such as systematic work with mass media and communication for development; and (b) formation of strategic partnerships and alliances with the Government, media, private sector entities and civil society organizations.

32. A mutually reinforcing relationship is envisaged among the three programme components. This programme will provide strategic communication support for achievement of the results under the other two programmes. In addition, this programme will further strengthen local fundraising for the country programme's budget in other resources as well as for global regular resources, in line with Thailand's status as a middle-income country. The communication efforts for local fundraising will be used as an opportunity to enhance understanding and support for realization of child rights both in Thailand and globally.

33. Expected results to be achieved by 2016 are: (a) increased awareness of public and decision-makers of inequities in realization of children's rights; (b) more positive social norms and practices for child rights; (c) reduced tolerance to violence, neglect and abuse of children; (d) reduced stigma and discrimination against disadvantaged children; (e) promotion of good parenting outcomes; (f) adoption and implementation of child-friendly business practices by corporate-sector networks and associations; and (g) realization of children's rights through financial contributions by individuals and others to programmes for children.

34. The main partners will be the Government, media, private sector entities, civil society organizations and individuals contributing to programmes for children.

35. **Cross-sectoral support costs.** These will cover implementation costs not attributable to individual programme components, including cross-sectoral programme monitoring and contributions to the resources necessary for coordination within the United Nations Country Team.

Major partnerships

36. The main partnerships are described above. The expected results for the proposed country programme are consciously set at higher and more strategic levels with a view to facilitating an integrated approach, reducing transactional costs and aligning more closely with the major priorities of the Eleventh National Economic

and Social Development Plan. This is expected to enhance quality dialogue with the concerned national partners, strengthen their sense of ownership of the country programme, and promote cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation among them. The new UNPAF, which is more focused with clearer prioritization, is also expected to help realize strategic and results-oriented coordination among the concerned agencies, including UNICEF.

Monitoring, evaluation and programme management

37. The main coordinating national body for the implementation of the country programme will be the ~~Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency of the~~ Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Programme components will be managed with the relevant ministries and agencies: the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (oversight and monitoring of the situation of children and women and child protection); the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Public Health and the national HIV/AIDS Management Committee; the National Economic and Social Development Board; and the National Statistical Office. UNICEF contribution to the well-being of children in the southern border provinces of the country will be made in close coordination with relevant national partners.

38. Monitoring of the overall progress for children and women, including those who are most disadvantaged, will be conducted through collection and analysis of data on their situation through planned national surveys, subject-specific studies and surveys, and regular statistics from the Government and non-governmental sources. Progress towards planned results of the country programme and the contribution of UNICEF to it will be measured through annual reviews, midterm review and specific programme performance assessments, as well as through the UNPAF monitoring process. The role of evaluations and the evaluation function will be strengthened by prioritizing evaluations of higher quality and of a strategic nature. Efforts will continue to strengthen national evaluation capacities, including support to the national evaluation network.

39. The Integrated Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Plan will be fully applied as a tool to strengthen monitoring and evaluation activities. Special attention will be given to ensuring availability of disaggregated data for more detailed analysis and understanding of progress on equity-related dimensions, including gender. The situation analysis of children and young people will be updated in 2014 with a view to providing inputs to the international Millennium Development Goals reporting in 2015. A 2014 midterm review of the programme in conjunction with a review of the UNPAF will take stock of the progress made and the lessons learned in the first half of the country programme period and need for adjustments until 2016.