

Turkey

Country programme document 2011-2015

The draft country programme document for Turkey (E/ICEF/2010/P/L.6) was presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comments at its 2010 annual session (1-4 June 2010).

The document was subsequently revised, and this final version was approved at the 2010 second regular session of the Executive Board on 9 September 2010.

Basic data[†]
(2008 unless otherwise stated)

Child population (millions, under 18 years)	24.2
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	22
Underweight (% , moderate and severe)	3
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	29 ^a
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female, 2006)	93/89
Survival rate to last primary grade (% , 2004)	94
Use of improved drinking water sources (% , 2006)	97
Use of improved sanitation facilities (% , 2006)	88
HIV prevalence rate (%)	...
Child labour (% , children 5-14 years old, 1999)	5
GNI per capita (US\$)	9 340
One-year-olds immunized with DPT3 (%)	96
One-year-olds immunized against measles (%)	97

[†] Data are taken from *The State of the World's Children* report. More up-to-date national data on several of the indicators and additional indicators are included in the text, and more comprehensive country data on children and women are available at www.unicef.org.

^a The 2005 estimate developed by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank is 44 per 100,000 live births. For more information see www.childinfo.org/maternal_mortality.html.

Summary of the situation of children and women

1. Turkey is a high-opportunity country and a potential regional power with a population of 72.6 million and the world's seventeenth largest economy. It is a candidate member of the European Union and a member of the G-20 group of countries. Its political importance is enhanced by its geostrategic location between Europe and the Middle East. It is a significant partner for many countries in its region and a donor for some. As a candidate for membership in the European Union, Turkey has an incentive to achieve high standards of human rights and welfare. As a regional leader, it has the potential and desire to act as a development partner and role model for central and southwest Asia, southeast Europe and the Middle East.

2. The population growth rate has declined to about 1.3 per cent, and life expectancy has increased to nearly 74 years. Lower population growth, a growing economy and the existence of strong state institutions combined with a strong social agenda have led to continuous improvements in basic indicators. With an under-five mortality rate of 23 deaths per 1,000 live births, Turkey has already surpassed achievement of Millennium Development Goal 4. Net primary school enrolment was 98.2 per cent (97.8 per cent for girls) in the 2009/2010 school year, according to the Ministry of National Education, compared to 93.5 per cent (88.5 per cent for girls) 10 years earlier.

3. Like other fast-growing economies, Turkey has been affected by the global financial crisis. In the first three quarters of 2009, gross domestic product declined by 8.4 per cent. Economic activity is now stabilizing, but at a lower level than before the crisis. Unemployment increased due to the recession and is set to remain

well above the pre-crisis average of about 10 per cent. For the 15-24 age group, unemployment averaged over 25.3 per cent in 2009, up from 20.5 per cent in 2008. In a May 2009 survey of 2,402 households in five cities, jointly conducted by UNICEF, the World Bank and the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey, 75 per cent of respondents reported a decline in income since October 2008. Among the poorest families, this figure rose to 90 per cent. Among the poorest 20 per cent of families in the urban centres, three out of four reported reduced food consumption; close to half said they had reduced the amount of food for their children. A second survey carried out six months later showed that average household incomes had continued to fall and that a third of families had continued to reduce their consumption of food.

4. People aged 10-19 constitute 17.5 per cent of the population. This represents an economic window of opportunity, as the proportion of people of working age is set to increase. However, Turkey can make use of this opportunity only if girls and boys acquire the right skills for employment. Currently, two fifths of the 14-17 age group — 2 million children — are out of school. Some are working or seeking work; the majority, mainly girls, are thought to be neither in education nor in the labour force, but very limited information is available about them. Whether in school or not, young people often lack life and livelihood skills and opportunities for self-expression and social participation. Urbanization, rapid social change and consumerism expose girls and boys to risks such as street life, substance abuse and contact with the law. Despite progress made in combating the worst forms of child labour, in agriculture child labour remains a serious issue. Violence and abuse against children, including sexual abuse, continue to be a challenge, as does early marriage. Since 2005, the Government has been working to reform its child protection and care systems. However, a more comprehensive child protection strategy is required with an emphasis on prevention and early identification of children at risk.

5. Disparities and inequality of opportunity based on geography, social background and gender are barriers to fulfilment of children's potential and rights. About 17 per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. Just 25 per cent of women are in the workforce, and only 9 per cent of members of Parliament are women. Child poverty stands at 23 per cent, 5.4 percentage points higher than the level for adults. The child poverty rate is 12.4 per cent in urban areas but 44 per cent in rural areas, where it has risen even in recent years. In 2008 the under-five mortality rate was 26 deaths per 1,000 live births — 16 in the western region versus 39 in the east. Similarly, stunting in the eastern region is twice the national average.

6. As many as 450,000 students (5 per cent of the total enrolled) may not be attending primary school regularly. Transition to secondary education is 84.6 per cent, according to the Ministry of National Education. The net enrolment ratio in secondary education is 64.9 per cent, with boys at 67.5 per cent and girls at 62.2 per cent. Among girls, the ratio was highest in 2008/2009 in the province of Bilecik, at 82.4 per cent, and lowest in Muş, at 15.9 per cent.

7. Yet the public social spending of Turkey is low compared to that of other countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, at about 17.1 per cent of gross domestic product. Just over 3.8 per cent goes to education, about 5 per cent to health and 8.3 per cent to social protection, including over 6 per cent to pensions. Despite significant progress over the past decade, Turkey may not

reach the targets for halving poverty (Millennium Development Goal 1), gender equality (Goal 3) and environmental protection (Goal 7) by 2015.

8. Children commonly miss out on getting the best start in life. Access to early childhood care and development (ECCD) services is very limited, and pre-primary enrolment is 38.5 per cent, with wide variation by region and socio-economic level. Low access contributes to poor school readiness, which is believed to contribute to high dropout rates, particularly in the east, which in turn contributes to the intergenerational transmission of poverty and deprivation. The Ministry of National Education is committed to achieving 80 per cent enrolment among five-year-olds and 50 per cent among four-year-olds by 2014. However, public spending on preschool remains low. One of the main challenges to achieving these national goals is the lack of community-based ECCD service models.

9. The Government has embarked on reform of the judicial system. Programmes have been developed to ensure that children in contact with the law are treated in line with international standards and the Child Protection Law of 2005. In 2005 the Law on Probation Services, Support Centres and Protection Boards was passed, supporting alternatives to deprivation of liberty for children. Work is under way to complete the infrastructure for implementing alternative measures. As of 2008, the average length of trial is 414 days in child courts and 502 days in child heavy-penalty courts. Anti-terrorism legislation still permits the trial and punishment of children over 15 as if they were adults. However, a bill amending the Anti-Terrorism Law and other legislation for the benefit of children is on the agenda of Parliament.

10. Turkey does not have an independent child rights monitoring mechanism. This issue was raised by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2003 in its concluding observations. In response, Parliament established a Child Rights Monitoring Committee in 2008 to monitor child rights violations nationwide. However, the Committee is not a substitute for an independent monitoring system, such as an ombudsperson.

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

Key results achieved

11. *Progress in child protection and child rights monitoring.* Among the aims of the new Judicial Reform Strategy (2009) is improvement of the juvenile justice system to bring it in line with international standards. This reflects advocacy by UNICEF and the organization's strong partnership with the Ministry of Justice. Training programmes for professionals and a case management model developed for prisons and detention centres have been institutionalized. The 2006-2010 country programme also contributed to strengthening the child protection mechanism, including a programme to implement minimum standards of care and protection, a complaints and referral mechanism, child protection centres in universities, and a local-level coordination strategy. UNICEF advocated for and supported the establishment of the Child Rights Monitoring Committee in Parliament. UNICEF also facilitated the development of a child rights syllabus for media professionals, which is now being implemented by the communications faculties of seven universities.

12. *Progress in primary education.* Cooperation between the Government and UNICEF has helped to increase access to primary education and reduce gender disparity. However, significant numbers of children (especially girls) do not attend school regularly, complete their education or make the transition to secondary school. Cooperation between the Ministry of National Education and UNICEF led to implementation, as of the 2008/2009 school year, of a second-chance education programme for children aged 10-14 who have never enrolled or who dropped out of school. So far, 40,000 non-enrolled children, of whom 66 per cent are girls, have participated. To increase the primary school completion rate, the Ministry is committed to developing a monitoring and follow-up model for children not attending and to rolling out nationwide minimum school standards that incorporate UNICEF child-friendly school criteria.

13. *Progress in health.* Turkey has achieved a 72 per cent decline in child mortality since 1990. Maternal mortality has also declined rapidly. Some 81 per cent of children aged 15-26 are fully vaccinated, and maternal and neonatal tetanus has been eliminated. Cooperation between the Government and UNICEF has contributed to an increase in exclusive breastfeeding of 20 percentage points between 2003 and 2008 and an 85 per cent increase in the use of iodized salt. While there remain important disparities in basic health and nutrition indicators to the detriment of rural areas and some regions, the Ministry of Health's health system transformation policy and the expansion of family medicine aim to reduce these disparities.

14. *Placing child poverty on the national agenda.* The European Commission works with European Union candidate countries to help in reforming their social welfare systems. Priorities for action are set out in Joint Inclusion Memoranda. The UNICEF child poverty review and UNICEF advocacy for the inclusion of child poverty in such Memoranda led, for the first time, to acknowledgement of child poverty as a distinct policy area requiring national attention.

Lessons learned

15. Training programmes developed under the current programme of cooperation were not always fully rolled out and incorporated into national training programmes for reasons related to planning, ownership, management capacity and compatibility. Based on these lessons learned, at the start of developing the training programmes for professionals working with children in prisons and detention and education centres, the Ministry of Justice agreed to incorporate training modules as an integral part of institutionalized regular training. The 2009 regional office review of juvenile justice commended these programmes as an example of good practice for mainstreaming and sustainability in capacity development. The key to this success was that the training modules were developed and delivered by and for the Ministry, using national consultants, while UNICEF provided technical support, management training and information to work more effectively with children.

16. The Girls' Education campaign, which began in 2003, had considerable success but also raised the question of how to ensure and maintain gender equality in education. The 2007 external review of the campaign drew the lesson that gender equality should be mainstreamed in education policy. Since then, the Government and UNICEF have worked together to include the monitoring of girls' enrolment and attendance as a key indicator in the minimum standards for primary schools

adapted from the Child-Friendly School concept, which are now being rolled out nationally. The process has also helped to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of National Education to collect and analyse data and use it for policy response.

17. Lack of prior agreement with partners undermined the usefulness of a study on domestic violence carried out in 2008. By contrast, monitoring of the impact of the economic crisis, which was conducted in full consultation with the State Planning Organization and in partnership with the World Bank and the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey, resulted in the rapid production and dissemination of its findings. These examples show that developing an evidence base for advocacy and policy formulation on sensitive issues requires more than research. Equally important are careful planning, buy-in by end users and careful choice of and cooperation with partners.

18. The European Union-funded “Children First” project of 2005-2008 supported much of UNICEF work in juvenile justice, child protection and education. UNICEF should concentrate on coordination, provision of technical support, facilitating the exchange of experience and monitoring and documentation. Drawing from these lessons, new modalities of partnership have been developed for the new joint UNICEF-European Union project on pre-school education, starting in 2010.

The country programme, 2011-2015

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>
Disparity reduction, social inclusion and protection	2 380	22 800	25 180
Youth empowerment and protection	900	15 200	16 100
Cross-sectoral costs	900	—	900
Total	4 180	38 000	42 180

Preparation process

19. In response to the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/64/253) of 5 August 2009, entitled “Development cooperation with middle-income countries”, and General Assembly resolution 63/223 of 19 December 2008, Turkey was assigned to plan for a prototype United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) that is fully ‘owned’ by the Government and fully aligned with national priorities. Under the leadership of the State Planning Organization, the United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy (UNDCS) was developed. It is anchored firmly on the Ninth Development Plan (2007-2013) of Turkey, the UNDAF midterm review and the validation of development challenges. Strategic in nature, the UNDCS allows the United Nations system to respond flexibly to the changing needs of the Government. The CPD is closely linked to the UNDCS. It was discussed and endorsed by the Child Intersectoral Board, the governmental body responsible for coordination and oversight of the country programme of cooperation.

Programme component results and strategies

20. The goal of the 2011-2015 country programme is to support the efforts of Turkey to achieve disparity reduction, social inclusion and protection along with youth empowerment and protection. This structure signals the overriding importance of improving conditions for the more disadvantaged children and the need for a new emphasis on the 14-18 age group.

21. Component I, on disparity reduction, social inclusion and protection, will ensure that by the end of 2015 disparities in well-being and opportunity among children of different geographical and social backgrounds, and between boys and girls, are reduced in a sustainable manner; national policies and strategies to combat child poverty are in place; and fiscal resources for social protection are increased. Component II, on youth empowerment and protection, will ensure that, within the same time frame, a sustainable improvement is underway in the employability, life skills and participation opportunities of all girls and boys 14-18 years old; that a national youth employment strategy and national action plan for youth employment are in place; and that strategies to increase secondary education enrolment and completion are developed and are being implemented. This component will also ensure that by the end of 2015 the national child protection system and justice for children are being implemented in compliance with international standards.

22. Component I will be achieved through adoption of national policies and strategies to combat child poverty; creation of increased fiscal space for children and families; capacity development at national and subnational levels to provide quality and inclusive education, health, protection and social protection services; and effective monitoring of child rights. Component II will involve building a broad partnership to generate knowledge and evidence-based models for improving policies, systems and behaviour to enhance the life and livelihood skills of young people, whether in or out of school, and their opportunities for participation in society. This component of the country programme will also ensure that children in contact with the law are treated in a manner that is fully compliant with international standards.

23. Turkey is making substantial progress in aligning its policies, legislation and standards with the European Union Acquis Communautaire, but gaps may occur between adoption of new policies and the capacity to translate them into effective programmes. UNICEF will therefore be more engaged in child-related policy formulation and in supporting the Government in developing implementation models.

24. Building new alliances with a wide range of partners will be key to the success of the country programme. Partners will include various commissions in Parliament, civil society, academia, non-governmental organizations, foundations, the private sector and the media, as well as other international bodies and agencies. Another central strategy will be the use of the convening role of UNICEF to facilitate multipartner and cross-sectoral coordination and integrated programming and strategic planning. To ensure sustainability, UNICEF and its partners will use Communication for Development approaches to raise awareness, stimulate support and participation, encourage complementary efforts and enhance the abilities of duty-bearers and rights-holders to claim and realize children's rights.

25. Many countries in the region and beyond are looking to Turkey to share experiences in education, youth engagement, protection, democratic governance and rule of law. In the spirit of South-South cooperation, the programme of cooperation will support documentation of successful models and the facilitation of experience exchange. This will also contribute to the global pool of knowledge and experience.

26. Other strategies to be employed, as appropriate, to achieve the programme goals are (a) support for the Government in strengthening disaggregated data collection and analysis for evidence-based policy making; (b) technical support for development of replicable child-friendly models to deliver quality services to children at national and local levels, with an emphasis on monitoring and evaluation systems; (c) capacity-building of individuals and institutions, including professionals, local authorities, community leaders and civil society; (d) advocacy for legislative change; (e) awareness-raising; and (f) leveraging resources for children.

27. Social inclusion, human rights, gender equality and awareness of climate change will be mainstreamed. Efforts will be made to actively engage children and young people in programme implementation and in addressing these cross-cutting issues. Special attention will be paid to the management and dissemination of knowledge, including documentation of experiences. Research may also be carried out to generate evidence in areas not specifically addressed under the programme components.

Relationship to national priorities and UNDCS

28. The country programme is based on the Ninth National Development Plan for Turkey, covering 2007-2013, and the National Action Plan for European Union Accession. These documents are complementary and inform one another. The vision articulated in the National Development Plan calls for Turkey to be “a country of information society, growing in stability, sharing more equitably, globally competitive” and in full compliance with the accession standards and norms of the European Union. The Plan has five main axes: (a) competitiveness; (b) employment; (c) human development and social solidarity; (d) regional development; and (e) quality and effectiveness of public services. The programme of cooperation between Turkey and UNICEF will contribute mostly to the third axis, which encompasses education, health, income distribution, social inclusion and the fight against poverty. The programme of cooperation is fully aligned with the UNDCS and will contribute to its outcomes.

Relationship to international priorities

29. Turkey is on track to meet a number of the Millennium Development Goals, but achieving Goals 1, 3 and 7 by 2015 will be a challenge, and attainment of Goal 2 is uncertain, as data on primary school completion are not yet published. Turkey is also targeting the demanding standards and norms of the European Union in areas such as educational achievement, justice and protection for children and overall child well-being. The country programme will contribute to the achievement of these goals and targets and enable the Government to comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the concluding remarks of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the principles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities. The country programme will address all the focus areas of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan.

Programme components

30. **Disparity reduction, social inclusion and protection.** Children's well-being and opportunities vary by geographical and social background and gender. Inequality of opportunities exacerbates and prolongs child poverty. The health system in Turkey has greatly increased survival opportunities for children, but regional disparities in health outcomes remain. Similarly, Turkey has made great progress in enrolment and gender parity in primary education, but non-attendance and dropout are still challenges, especially among girls, while pre-primary enrolment is low and there is a significant gender gap at the secondary level. This component will address dimensions of disparity and work to improve the quality of care and services.

31. This component will also focus on social protection policies analysis, public finance review and monitoring of budget allocation and expenditure for children. The goal is to generate evidence leading to the adoption of more effective policies to ensure the social inclusion of disadvantaged children and families. Simultaneously, efforts will be made to strengthen child rights monitoring systems, including advocacy for the establishment of a children's ombudsperson.

32. Within this component, UNICEF will also support the Government in extending public services to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged families and in strengthening child protection mechanisms at national and local levels. UNICEF will contribute to bringing about the changes in systems and behaviour necessary to achieve higher rates of primary school completion and transition to secondary education, especially among girls. Initially this will focus on supporting the monitoring of data and causal analysis. In view of the importance of ECCD for improving the prospects of children born into disadvantaged communities and families, UNICEF will support (a) the integration of ECCD into the health care system, including the early identification of developmental difficulties and disabilities; and (b) the changes in behaviour and systems — including the adoption of a community-based model — needed to increase the numbers of girls and boys participating in quality preschool education, especially children from disadvantaged backgrounds. UNICEF will contribute to (c) systemic change in child protection by supporting the Government to develop a model to consolidate and integrate services and implement minimum standards for children without parental care.

33. Key partners will include the State Planning Organisation, the Ministry of Finance, National Education, Health, Labour and Social Security, ISKUR (Turkish Employment Organization), the General Directorate for Social Services and the Child Protection Agency (SHCEK), Parliament, the Human Rights Presidency, local government, and civil society, including academia. Dialogue will be strengthened with the World Bank, UNDP and the EU. Some other resources funding is expected to be available for parts of this programme component. In particular, funding for the expansion of preschool education is expected to come mainly from other resources (EU).

34. **Youth empowerment and protection.** Ensuring the active participation of every young person in public decision-making is important for democracy, European Union accession, economic growth, disparity reduction and human development.

Unemployment, particularly among youth, is a major challenge. Attention needs to be paid to increasing secondary education enrolment and developing and upgrading young people's skills.

35. Under this component, UNICEF and its partners will work to identify and implement the changes in policies, systems and behaviour necessary to ensure fulfilment of young people's needs for life and livelihood skills and opportunities for self-expression and participation in society. The differing requirements of girls and boys, of children in and out of school, and of children from different geographical regions, social backgrounds and personal circumstances will be identified and taken into account. UNICEF will continue to support the design and introduction of a national youth policy embodying all these considerations. The barriers to participation in secondary education will be studied, including the relevance of secondary education to young people's needs, and appropriate policies will be identified. There will be special emphasis on linking learning outcomes to labour market needs. As youth policy is a new area for UNICEF, a strong research component will be required in the early years of the programme cycle.

36. UNICEF will continue to support the transformation of the justice system for children to bring it in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Child Protection Law and the strategic plan of the Ministry of Justice. This will involve identifying and combating barriers to the implementation of child-specific judicial procedures and monitoring the introduction and implementation of institutional care standards for children deprived of their liberty.

37. The Ministries of Youth and Sports, National Education, Justice, Interior and Health will be the key national partners for this programme component. Work on youth policy will require collaboration with the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, International Labour Organization, European Union, State Planning Organization, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the private sector and other participants. Partners for justice for children will include universities, relevant professional institutions and civil society organizations, and funding is expected to come mainly from other resources (the European Union).

38. **Cross-sectoral costs** will cover charges related to staff performing cross-cutting functions, travel, security, staff training and administrative support.

Major partnerships

39. Partnerships with civil society will be an essential strategy for implementation of the country programme. Previous UNICEF country programmes have shown the potential to tap into the expertise of universities and research institutions in Turkey, and the cooperation will increase in this country programme. Partnerships will be developed further to share resources in generating quality, up-to-date, reliable and disaggregated child-related data. Civil society will participate in advocacy for child rights monitoring, policy development and child budgeting. Local administrations and local civil society organizations may all be partners in those parts of the programme requiring services at local level and the design of service models.

40. The programme of cooperation between Turkey and UNICEF is linked to the work of other United Nations agencies through the UNDCS as well as to joint programmes and thematic groups and issues, such as youth, HIV/AIDS and gender. Cooperation with the World Bank will increase for monitoring the impact of

economic developments, social policy, youth policy and ECCD. Research and knowledge partners may also include the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Council of Europe. The European Union is expected to remain a key partner, especially in pre-primary education and juvenile justice. New modalities of cooperation with it will include leveraging resources and maximizing results for children through Government partners and civil society.

41. The Turkish National Committee for UNICEF will continue to provide support through advocacy, fund-raising and leveraging of resources. This cooperation and partnership will be guided by the Joint Strategic Plan developed by the UNICEF Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division, the National Committee and the country office. Within the Joint Strategic Plan, support from the private sector and private foundations will be sought in the spirit of corporate social responsibility.

Monitoring, evaluation and programme management

42. The main national body for coordination of the country programme will be the Child Intersectoral Board, composed of all Government ministries and agencies concerned with children. The composition of this Board will be renewed in line with developments in Turkey. The State Planning Organization will play a more active role.

43. Monitoring and evaluation activities will be undertaken in parallel with monitoring of the UNDCS results framework and will be coordinated through annual and five-year integrated monitoring and evaluation plans. The monitoring and evaluation process will be linked to national self-assessment and planning in advance of preparation of the Tenth National Development Plan. Progress will be monitored through joint annual programme reviews with the Government based on implementation of multi-year rolling workplans. A midterm review of the country programme will be carried out in 2013.

44. Information for tracking key indicators, disaggregated by gender, geography and age group, will be obtained from diverse sources including the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat), line ministries, other official national sources, the records and reports of Parliament, the Parliamentary Child Rights Monitoring Committee, the Human Rights Presidency and civil society. Data will also be monitored through international sources such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and European Commission Progress Reports. Close collaboration will be pursued with Turkstat and State Planning Organization to institutionalize indicators on child protection and well-being and on improved monitoring of child poverty.