

# Uruguay

## Country programme document 2011-2015

The draft country programme document for Uruguay (E/ICEF/2010/P/L.25) was presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comments at its second regular session (7-9 September 2010).

The document was subsequently revised, and this final version was approved at the 2011 first regular session of the Executive Board on 11 February 2011.

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*Basic data*<sup>†</sup>  
(2008, unless otherwise stated)

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Child population (millions, under 18 years)	0.9
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	14
Underweight (% , moderate and severe, 2002)	5
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births, 2004)	18 <sup>a</sup>
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female, 2006)	100/100
Survival rate to last primary grade (% , 2005)	92
Use of improved drinking water sources (% , 2006)	100
Use of improved sanitation facilities (% , 2006)	100
Adult HIV prevalence rate (% , 2007)	0.6 <sup>b</sup>
Child labour (% , children 5-14 years old, 2006)	8 <sup>c</sup>
GNI per capita (US\$)	8 260
One-year-olds immunized with DPT3 (%)	94
One-year-olds immunized against measles (%)	95

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

<sup>a</sup> The 2005 estimate developed by WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA and the World Bank, adjusted for underreporting and misclassification of maternal deaths, is 20 deaths per 100,000 live births. [www.childinfo.org/maternal\\_mortality.html](http://www.childinfo.org/maternal_mortality.html).

<sup>b</sup> According to official sources, the rate was 0.42 in 2008. *Source*: United Nations, Common Country Assessment of Uruguay 2009.

<sup>c</sup> Data differ from standard definition.

## Summary of the situation of children and women

1. Uruguay has had a tradition of social protection since the early twentieth century. Significant welfare achievements over the years include a reduction in income poverty and income inequality, now among the lowest in the region. The population profile shows an aging population with a demographic transition completed decades ago. Historically, the social protection system focused mainly on adult care and protection. As a consequence, despite the income poverty reduction from 31.9 per cent in 2004 to 20.3 per cent in 2008, the incidence of poverty among children is very high — 38.8 per cent of children under 6 years.<sup>1</sup> Income inequality among adults and children persists in spite of an important reduction in poverty income among the general population in the past years. Other characteristics of the country's poverty include its concentration in urban areas and high incidence among single-parent households headed by women and among those of African descent, who represent 9.1 per cent of the population.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Statistics Institute of Uruguay, *Estimaciones de Pobreza por el Método del Ingreso 2008*, Montevideo, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> In 2006 African descendents made up 50.1 per cent of those suffering from income poverty. *Source*: National Statistics Institute of Uruguay, UNFPA and UNDP, "Perfil demográfico y socioeconómico de la población uruguaya según su ascendencia racial", Montevideo, 2007, pp. 17 and 49.

2. Other critical issues that require consideration are the limited results of policies targeting young children, high dropout rates in secondary education, disparities in learning achievements, child abuse, persistent gaps between the legal framework and institutional practices related to juvenile justice, and institutionalized children.

3. Uruguay shows good child health indicators, with under-five mortality at 14 deaths per 1,000 live births, as well as relatively high coverage of pre-primary education. However, the situation of young children is still of significant concern. Child poverty, chronic malnutrition, anaemia and poor child development affect a significant proportion of children under five.<sup>3</sup> In past years, the Government strengthened public policies and increased social investment directed to young children. Nevertheless, not every child has guaranteed access to high-quality services. The new programme of cooperation represents an opportunity to contribute to national efforts to implement an integrated social protection system that includes early childhood.

4. Access to and completion of primary school has become almost universal, and preschool coverage has increased significantly. Although learning deficits and gaps between children from different socio-economic sectors persist in early and primary education, the most critical problem is high levels of dropout in secondary school. In 2008, 68.1 per cent of adolescents had graduated from compulsory lower secondary school and 37.1 per cent from upper secondary school — 32.2 per cent of boys and 41.8 per cent of girls.<sup>4</sup> Graduation rates have not changed significantly since 1990. The country has significant disparities between different social contexts and regions: 11 per cent of students graduate from upper-secondary school in the poorest neighbourhoods of Montevideo while 80 per cent graduate in the richest.<sup>5</sup> The education system still faces challenges, despite the reinforcement of policies during recent years, including an increase in public expenditure from 3 per cent of gross domestic product in 2005 to 4.5 per cent in 2009, according to the National Council of Public Policies and Ministry of Social Development; the approval of a new legal framework; and various innovations, particularly Plan CEIBAL, which aims to provide one laptop computer per child in all public primary schools.

5. An issue that continues to receive public attention is adolescent involvement in criminal offences. Media and other groups influencing public opinion usually overemphasize the participation of adolescents in criminal activity, deepening the stigma against them. Over time, several proposals have been made to lower the minimum age of legal responsibility. This would undermine the juvenile justice system established by the Code of Childhood and Adolescence of 2004, which is based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, deprivation of liberty is still commonly applied as a measure to “re-educate” adolescents in conflict with the law. Adolescents deprived of their liberty — mostly boys — face substandard living conditions in detention centres. The Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or

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<sup>3</sup> One third (34 per cent) of children living below the poverty line are at risk or have a developmental delay. Source: UNICEF, “Observatorio de los derechos de la infancia y la adolescencia en Uruguay 2009”, Montevideo, 2009, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education and Culture, “Anuario Estadístico de Educación”, Montevideo, 2009, p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF, op. cit. p. 62.

punishment recently submitted a report covering the situation in jails, including those detaining adolescents, which had a great impact on public opinion.

6. Physical and/or psychological violence against children within families was put on the public agenda by research conducted by the Ministry of Social Development in 2009. It found that 8 out of 10 adults in Montevideo and the metropolitan area have inflicted some type of violence on at least one child under their care. The high prevalence of child abuse in Uruguay demonstrates the degree to which violence is still accepted as a correctional or educative practice.

7. Though the HIV/AIDS epidemic is still concentrated, with a global prevalence rate of 0.6 per cent, concerns remain regarding stigma and discrimination suffered by affected populations, lack of prevention initiatives directed at adolescents and mother-to-child transmission. Congenital syphilis is also a concern.

8. In 2007, the Committee on the Rights of the Child urged the Government to take action on the following issues (among others): (a) more effective implementation of the Code of Childhood and Adolescence; (b) development of a comprehensive National Plan of Action for children, increasing the public budget to implement policies; (c) improvement in education quality to reduce repetition and dropout rates; (d) development of a comprehensive data collection system on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (e) fulfilment of a specialized system of juvenile justice; (f) regulation of the system for alternative care, including efforts to de-institutionalize children; and (g) monitoring of cases and the extent of violence, sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation. In 2008, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women urged implementation of national campaigns on the risks and consequences of trafficking of women and girls. The major issues regarding women are violence within families, unequal access to quality jobs and low participation in the political system.

9. Consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, at the end of the last government administration all public institutions responsible for child policies developed a participatory process for building a National Strategy for Children and Adolescents (ENIA) 2010-2030. This initiative has been recognized by the Government and the opposition parties as a road map for child policies. Implementation of ENIA constitutes an excellent opportunity to place children in the mainstream of public policy.

10. The Government has convened the opposition parties to build national agreements on four strategic areas: education, public security, climate change and energy. Ongoing negotiations on education policies represent an excellent opportunity for the country programme, with UNICEF fulfilling a role as intermediary, since national actors recognize it as an effective partner in facilitating dialogue.

11. Civil society organizations (CSOs), the private sector and academic institutions have played an increasing role in promoting, protecting and monitoring child rights. Despite some difficulties in seeing beyond their own interests, the private sector and unions have begun to develop a vision of social responsibility, progressively transforming themselves into relevant actors in economic, political and social debates.

## **Key results and lessons learned from previous cooperation, 2005-2010**

### **Key results achieved**

12. The most meaningful result was support to the development of ENIA 2010-2030. This strategy summarizes the political and technical consensus on key priorities for children. It also represents an important step in meeting international commitments assumed by the country. UNICEF, jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), actively promoted the development of ENIA and participated in the process. UNICEF also supported the technical secretariat, produced documents and facilitated the inclusion of adolescent voices and opinions through a survey.

13. The health, nutrition and development status of young children were assessed and priorities were identified, and a national integrated early childhood development plan was designed. Additionally, support was provided to local governments of the largest Uruguayan provinces (Montevideo and Canelones) in integrated early childhood development (IECD) programmes. Efforts were also made to raise public awareness regarding the importance of investing in early childhood to break the poverty cycle.

14. Technical assistance was provided to education authorities in formulating the public budget and the sector plans in 2005. Several innovations were rolled out between 2005 and 2009: (a) the Community Teachers programme, aiming to provide learning support to children at home, which has been implemented to reduce repetition rates in 30 per cent of urban primary public schools; (b) the Promotion of Universal Basic Secondary School Education programme, launched to prevent dropout in lower secondary schools; and (c) development of tools to foster adolescent participation in secondary schools. Finally, significant progress was made in positioning the quality of secondary education and high school dropout as priorities on the national agenda.

15. Key achievements in child protection include an inter-institutional agreement to create a system of juvenile justice indicators, signed by the Supreme Court of Justice, Ministry of Interior and Institute for Children and Adolescents in Uruguay. The agreement requires each institution to provide information on these indicators annually. A National Integrated System for Protection against Violence was created in 2007, and Parliament passed a law prohibiting physical and humiliating punishment of children.

16. The role of the corporate sector was strengthened, and local fund-raising significantly contributed to the country programme. A Consultative Council of Businesses was created, which played an important role in disseminating information and analysis on the situation of children and women among business leaders. This Council has also worked to encourage corporate social responsibility practices among major companies.

### **Lessons learned**

17. Knowledge generation (analysis and data collection) and systematization and dissemination of innovative experiences have become key strategies. Although the country has qualified technical resources, relevant partners recognized the need to

fill gaps in key areas that are usually not as well covered by official sources or academic studies: children and justice, adolescents' opinions and violence against children, among others. The new country programme should reinforce promotion of knowledge exchange and innovative practices among countries.

18. During the midterm review carried out in 2007, the Government and CSOs highlighted UNICEF technical assistance as a key resource on child rights monitoring and policy design, saying it contributed significantly to the promotion of agreements and national consensus on issues affecting children and women. It was also pointed out that UNICEF has a significant role in the changes that occurred in the public agenda, further highlighting its capacity to establish partnerships and alliances.

19. Considering the political stability and the quality of democracy in the country, it is crucial to support not only the Government but also Parliament and the judiciary. Previous cooperation has shown that, to be effective, advocacy should be built on a close and sustained relationship with a wide range of partners.

20. Promotion of cultural changes and transformation of social behaviours and practices remain long-standing challenges. These changes should complement the legal reforms and public policies developed by the country to fully guarantee the rights of children and women.

21. United Nations reform in Uruguay, through inter-agency work, has contributed to strengthening government alignment and programmatic coherence and reducing potential overlap. The challenge is to reinforce the shift towards a new cooperation profile of the United Nations as a complete system in upper-middle-income countries like Uruguay. The contributions of the United Nations system should be further based on its capacity to be a key partner in developing public policies for human rights and human development.

22. During implementation of the country programme, the relationship with the corporate sector was strengthened, including the understanding that the situation of children can be improved by involving the business community in implementation of national development priorities and strategies. Though UNICEF has close relations with academia, more efforts are needed to mainstream child rights into the core of university curricula and activities. The role of UNICEF as a knowledge leader on children for the media and others also deserves to be strengthened.

## 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>
Public policies for social inclusion and equity	1 650	2 250	3 900
Child protection and institutional reform	1 000	1 600	2 600
Partnership and social mobilization for children	500	2 000	2 500
Cross-sectoral costs	600	400	1 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 750</b>	<b>6 250</b>	<b>10 000</b>

### **Preparation process**

23. The components of the country programme are based on: (a) key results and lessons learned that emerged from the midterm review; (b) the observations, conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child; (c) strategic priorities agreed among the Government, opposition political parties, CSOs and academic institutions during the dialogue carried out in the framework of ENIA, as well as the goals and targets included in its Plan for the period 2010-2015; (d) the process of formulating the Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2011-2015, and lessons learned from the Delivering as One initiative pilot; and (e) meetings with the governmental authorities, CSOs, the private sector, academic institutions and parliamentarians.

### **Programme components results and strategies**

24. The overall goal of the country programme is “By 2015, significant strides forward have been made in the fulfilment of child rights, by strengthening of public policies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals with equity, providing support to align the mission and goals of public institutions to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and fostering social alliances for children and the reduction of disparities”. The expected country programme results are: (a) the quality of public policies in IECD and education has been improved and disparities in access and learning achievement are reduced; (b) children and adolescents benefit from a legal framework and the mission and goals public institutions aligned to the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (c) civil society, the media and the private sector are engaged in mobilizing and leveraging resources for children.

25. The following strategies will be applied to achieve the programme results: (a) promotion and support to broaden the dialogue on public policies for children; (b) monitoring and evaluation of public policies to feed into evidence-based advocacy for pro-child legal and institutional reforms; (c) strengthening of national and local capacities to develop and implement appropriate policies for children; (d) facilitation and dissemination of innovative policies and approaches; (e) promotion of new partnerships and alliances with emphasis on knowledge centres and fostering of South-South cooperation and knowledge exchanges among countries in the region to promote child rights.

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

26. The national priorities included in ENIA have been considered in preparation of the new country programme. Priorities established in ENIA cover a broad scope of social policy areas, and they include issues crucial for achieving higher levels of child rights protection: (a) family support policies; (b) early child development programmes; (c) strengthening and transformation of the public education system; (d) health promotion policies; (e) development of opportunities for social inclusion; (f) promotion of democratic participation and children’s and adolescents’ voices; (g) strengthening of child protection system; and (h) transformation of the relationship among children, adolescents and adults.

27. The country programme has been formulated considering its strategic contribution to the UNDAF 2011-2015, as agreed between the Government and the United Nations country team. The key results of the programme will contribute to achieving the outcomes related to the UNDAF national development priorities: “Strengthening national strategies to develop high-quality human capital (focusing on IECD, health and education) aimed at reducing economic inequity and main disparities (inter-generational, gender, racial and territorial)”; and “Strengthening of quality of democracy based on capacity development of public institutions, the promotion of citizenship participation, and the monitoring of human rights according to conventions ratified by Uruguay”.

#### **Relationship to international priorities**

28. The country programme is focused on supporting achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, especially those related to poverty reduction, universal basic education, child and maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS. It will also contribute to priorities identified in the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan for 2006-2013. The country programme will further support the implementation process towards Goal 2021 in the area of education, as agreed by the Organization of Ibero-American States in order to increase access to preschool and universalize primary and secondary education.

#### **Programme components**

29. The country programme is composed of three components: (a) public policies for social inclusion and equity; (b) child protection and institutional reform; and (c) partnerships and social mobilization for children.

#### **Public policies for social inclusion and equity**

30. This component will contribute to strengthening national capacities to reduce the main social development inequities. It will focus on two critical issues: (a) the limited impact of policies devoted to early childhood despite growing social investment; and (b) the high rate of dropout in secondary school and low and unequal learning achievements in primary and secondary education. Through this programme component, UNICEF will contribute to achieving the following result by 2015: “Quality of public policies in IECD and education has been improved and disparities in access and learning achievement reduced”.

31. Regarding IECD priorities, support will be provided to national efforts to develop a comprehensive social protection system for children under five years old and their families, as established by ENIA. This system will integrate health, nutrition, social security and family-friendly interventions. Specific contributions will be made to the further design and implementation of the system by (a) validating innovative interventions carried out at the sub-national level; (b) obtaining political consensus for design and implementation; and (c) supporting the first phase of implementation.

32. Support will also be provided to the formulation and implementation of a midterm plan to increase graduation rates from secondary school — through increasing coverage, curricular reforms, dropout prevention programmes and back-to-school interventions to reduce child labour, as well as promotion of policies to improve learning achievements in primary schools in the poorest areas. At the end



of the country programme, at least 20 per cent of public secondary schools will be covered by this plan, and policies to improve learning achievements will reach 20 per cent of urban public primary schools.

### **Child protection and institutional reform**

33. The second programme component will contribute to aligning the legal framework and mission and goals of public institutions to principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, other human rights conventions and international treaties ratified by Uruguay. Based on a situation analysis and the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, this component will focus on three key issues: (a) lack of child rights monitoring mechanisms, with particular attention to the situation of institutionalized children, violence and adolescents in conflict with law; (b) gaps between the legal framework and institutional practices; and (c) significant levels of violence against children and women. This component will support efforts from public institutions and civil society organizations to achieve the following result: “Children and adolescents benefit from a legal framework and public institutions aligned to the Convention principles”.

34. On the first key issue, efforts will be made to ensure the establishment of sustained mechanisms for child rights monitoring. Expected results at the end of the period are: (a) an independent mechanism is in place to monitor the fulfilment of child rights, and (b) the country produces updated information on the situation of children and adolescents. To achieve these results, technical assistance will be provided to strengthen capacities of specialized institutions (Human Rights Institute and Honorary Consultative Council on the Rights of Children). Alliances will be increased between the Government and other stakeholders in Uruguayan society.

35. In reference to the second issue, support will be provided to public institutions to fully implement a juvenile justice system and develop the alternative care system, seeking to de-institutionalize children. The following results are expected: (a) a plan is developed to close gaps between the legal framework and the practices of the juvenile justice system; (b) the juvenile justice system is characterized by due process, a strong legal defence and greater use of alternatives to deprivation of liberty; and (c) reform is implemented to progressively reduce the number of children under institutional care.

36. Regarding the third issue, advocacy will continue and technical assistance will be provided to incorporate the prevention of violence against children and women in the design of key social policies, in close collaboration with U.N. Women. At the end of the country programme, the health and education sectors (at least) should be implementing integrated prevention and care programmes addressing violence. Specific attention will be given to providing technical assistance in policymaking processes and in promoting positive and gender-sensitive child-rearing practices among families.

### **Partnerships and social mobilization for children**

37. The third programme component aims at strengthening the commitment to child rights by civil society and the private sector. This component will focus on (a) building on the growing involvement of the private sector and business leaders in social responsibility actions; (b) using the potential of the private sector as an

important partner to leverage resources for children and women in the context of a growing economy; and (c) addressing the inadequate treatment of child rights issues in the media and the persistence of cultural barriers and prejudices that hinder child rights fulfilment. This programme component will contribute to achieving the following result: “Civil society, the media and the private sector are engaged in mobilizing and leveraging resources for children”.

38. Regarding the first area, UNICEF will promote child rights mainstreaming in the corporate social responsibility agenda. Expected results are: child-related issues are included in social responsibility evaluation systems; and an increased number of initiatives developed by corporations benefit children and adolescents. As per the second area, partnerships will be strengthened with the media and private sector to maximize a progressive increase in local fund-raising, both from corporations and from individual donors. Corporate alliances will be the focus of long-term partnerships.

39. Concerning the third area, attention will be given to fostering cultural changes and a more positive role by media in favour of children. This will be achieved through (a) regular communication activities on the situation of children; (b) development of strong alliances with the media and journalism colleges; (c) empowerment of children and adolescents to express their opinions; and (d) awareness-raising programmes on the positive contribution of adolescents to society.

#### **Cross-sectoral costs**

40. The cross-sectoral component covers the cost of operations and cross-cutting issues, such as planning, monitoring and evaluation. It contributes to the Southern Cone Operation Centre, the hub that manages key administrative functions for UNICEF country offices in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. This component also supports efforts made by the Delivering as One initiative to reduce transactional costs.

#### **Major partnerships**

41. Partnerships with governmental institutions, Parliament, civil society, academic institutions, the media and the private sector will be maintained and strengthened. Within the Delivering as One framework, United Nations system coherence and cooperation will be reinforced, especially with UNDP, UNFPA, U.N. Women and other organizations, specifically the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization; Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; and International Labour Organization. The main governmental partners will be the ministries of the Social Cabinet: Social Development (responsible for coordinating implementation of ENIA), Education, Health, Housing, Sports and Economy, and the Office of Planning and Budget. UNICEF will also develop a close relationship with the Honorary Consultative Council on the Rights of Children and the recently created Human Rights Institute. Moreover, cooperation will be sought with the National Administration of Public Education, Uruguayan Institute for Children and Adolescents, and the Programme for Childhood, Adolescence and Family in Risk supported by the Inter-American Development Bank. Judicial institutions (Supreme Court, Attorney General and police staff) and the national Congress will be key

counterparts, particularly for activities involving monitoring of child rights and institutional reform. UNICEF will develop a strong cooperative relationship with, among others, the two major local governments: Montevideo City Council and Canelones City Council.

42. To facilitate changes in systems, attitudes and behaviours as part of promoting a human rights culture, UNICEF will develop strong partnerships with CSOs, the private sector, academic institutions and the media. In this direction, the Consultative Council of Businesses will be strengthened as a mechanism to disseminate the corporate social responsibility approach among business leaders and major companies in Uruguay. Media organizations will also be strategic partners in promoting a positive image of adolescence to combat stigma, among other objectives.

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

43. Support will be provided for strengthening monitoring and evaluation of the situation of children, based on a human rights approach. Monitoring will also contribute to the development of quality assessment tools focusing on national strategies, policies and plans for children and the production of quality, disaggregated data. UNICEF will pursue strategic alliances with the National Institute of Statistics, universities, centres of excellence and CSOs, coordinating with the United Nations system, as well as key cooperation institutions including the Inter-American Development Bank and Organization of American States. Technical assistance will be provided to improve data collection and analysis, especially in areas lacking information, while promoting the use of evidence-based data for evaluation and assessment. Within the UNDAF framework, the Government and UNICEF will hold a midterm review to jointly assess progress on country programme achievements.

44. Monitoring and evaluation is a key tool for the country programme and the UNDAF. It will require strengthening practices for planning, information generation and dissemination of quality and disaggregated official data. This will benefit from special efforts in the first two years of the country programme. A five-year integrated monitoring and evaluation plan will define monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, major studies, surveys, evaluations and research. To aid in monitoring and advocacy, a situation analysis on children, adolescents and women will be prepared during the first year of the country programme and updated in 2013. A midterm review will be carried out in 2013 to evaluate advances and introduce the adjustments necessary to achieve the expected results. In addition, review mechanisms will be applied as well as regular field trips, periodic internal assessments and reviews with partners.