UNICEF: Children should be at the heart of budgets

Quito, 11 November 2015. The National Assembly discussed the General Budget of the State for 2016 in a public act. At this event, UNICEF’s Representative in Ecuador, Grant Leaity, stressed the need to protect the budget for children, despite the fact that there are fewer resources. Children should be at the heart of budgets. This is the best investment a country can make”, he sustained.

The event was held in the Salón José Mejía Lequirica on 11 November, with the title “National Meeting on Social Investment in the Pro-forma Budget 2016: an approach based on children, adolescents and gender”, and organized by the Commission on Economic and Tax Regime, the Parliamentary Group for the Guarantee of the Rights of Children, Adolescents and Youths and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

The representatives of the Assembly reaffirmed the commitment to investment in children. The president of the National Assembly, Gabriela Rivadeneira, said that: investment in social matters and children cannot be blocked. “The budget is prepared thinking of the people, improving their quality of life and promoting benefits for the priority sector”, she emphasized.

Similarly, Assembly members Virgilio Hernández President of the Economic and Tax Regime and Marisol Peñafiel, Coordinator of the Parliamentary Group, who led the organization of the public
presentation of the budget: both authorities insisted that the budget will prioritize attention for children and investment in social areas, especially health and education.

From the Executive branch, Vice Minister of Social Development Etzon Romo, specified that the services for early childhood will be covered (CIBV and CHN), and there will be a budget for reducing maternal and child mortality. The Ministry of Finance clarified that a total of 3,833.91 million dollars will be destined for children and adolescents.

The event had the participation of more than 300 people, including representatives of children and adolescents, students in the Economics department of the Universidad Central, social organizations, public institutions and citizens in general.

At the end of the session several recommendations were received, in areas such as the need to break down the pro-forma of the General Budget of the State; effectively and adequately applying the guiding classifiers for spending in policies for equality, for highlighting the investment to be made in children and for creating an inter-institutional mechanism for strengthening the development of budgeting methodologies and indicators for closely tracking the assignations for children and adolescents, keeping them under control, highlighting this investment, and permitting its evaluation.

Additionally, of special importance among the recommendations by the public in attendance is the need to include a specific line item for the prevention of violence against children.

Grant Leaitly emphasized the importance of publicly sharing the budget with the citizens, and periodically evaluating their execution and results. He furthermore acknowledged the leadership of the Assembly members in this initiative, and reaffirmed UNICEF’s support for the Assembly and National Government in reaching their goals and ensuring the necessary investment in children.

About UNICEF

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