Delegations are kindly invited to use this template to share their comments on the draft country programme document being presented to the Executive Board during the forthcoming session.

Delegation name: United States

Draft country programme document: Sao Tome and Principe

In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1, draft country programme documents are considered and approved in one session, on a no-objection basis. All comments received by the Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board before the deadline stated above will be posted on the Executive Board website.

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<th>Delegation’s comments</th>
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<td><strong>General comments</strong></td>
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<td>- We encourage UNICEF to implement climate adaptation and resilience strategies in their WASH programming for adolescents and children in vulnerable communities and outline what programming will occur related to these issues.</td>
<td>UNICEF acknowledges and appreciates the comments from the USA on its draft country programme for 2023-27 and welcomes the opportunity to provide additional information that could not be adequately covered in a 6000 words document. UNICEF acknowledges the importance of mainstreaming climate adaptation and resilience strategies in our WASH programming for adolescents and children in vulnerable communities. Climate adaptation and resilience strategies are considered in the CPD, including risk-based programming for resilient systems to respond more efficiently to risks and impacts caused by climate change:</td>
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Para 17 (e) states, “Risk-based programming is crucial for resilient social systems to respond more efficiently to risks and impacts caused by climate change.”

More specifically, the WASH component will include approaches to build resilience, as local risks and environmental conditions are considered, as mentioned in para 30, p.7-8.

Para 30 “The WASH component will promote behaviour change towards the adoption of appropriate practices (household water treatment and storage, demand for water and sanitation and services, and the elimination of open defecation). This will be implemented through the Community Led Total Sanitation approach, which supports communities playing an active role in service delivery. This approach also builds resilience, as local risks and environmental conditions are taken into account. The programme will start by analysing the baseline situation of climate-related issues affecting children, focusing on but not limited to WASH.”

The programme will start by establishing and analysing the baseline situation of climate-related issues affecting children, focusing on - but not limited - to WASH.
Comments on specific aspects of the draft country programme document

(Delegations providing comments may wish to include details, such as the page number, paragraph number, or page of the annexed results and resources framework.

- In #7, the U.S. recommends highlighting high rates of child, early, and forced marriage, in addition to high numbers of adolescent pregnancies. According to UNICEF, 3 in 10 young women are married in childhood.

- In #12, the U.S. recommends the inclusion of gender-based violence. For example, “Violence, including gender-based violence, is widespread.”

- In #41, the U.S. government recommends addressing gender-based violence specifically. For example, “...intersectoral links for reducing early pregnancies and gender-based violence...”

UNICEF very much agrees on the importance of highlighting high rates of child marriage, in addition to high numbers of adolescent pregnancies. The Country Programme Document provides data on the selected areas of priority (early pregnancy, violence against children, and in particular, sexual violence). Other areas where UNICEF will intervene indirectly could not be adequately covered in a 6000 words document but will also be addressed as part of the country programme. Please note that education, health and child protection system strengthening efforts are expected to indirectly contribute to reductions in child marriage.

UNICEF appreciates USA’s recommendation to include GBV in the mentioned paras and acknowledges the importance of gender across all areas of interventions.

However, due to the 6000 words limit of the document, we cannot include additional words to the draft country programme document.

UNICEF is committed and will continue to mainstream gender across all programme components as an overall strategic approach to promote behavioural change and to advocate for gender and child-sensitive policies, programmes and interventions to enable children, including adolescents, to realize their rights. This is stated in para 18 p5:

Para 18; “In order to speed up efforts to achieve the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNICEF will shift to a more strategic approach to improve access to, and availability of, quality social services, to promote behavioural change, and to
advocate for gender and child-sensitive policies to enable children, including adolescents, to realize their rights.”

These efforts will include prevention and response to all forms of violence, including gender-based violence and will be part of the programme implementation plans.