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## United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Board

**First regular session 2024**

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda\*

### **Draft country programme document\*\***

#### **Bhutan**

#### *Summary*

The draft country programme document (CPD) for Bhutan is presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comment. The draft CPD includes a proposed aggregate indicative budget of \$4,268,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$18,252,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period March 2024 to December 2028.

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\* E/ICEF/2024/1.

\*\* In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1, country programme documents (CPDs) are considered and approved in one session, on a no-objection basis. This draft CPD, and a costed evaluation plan, will be presented to the Executive Board for review from 14 November to 4 December 2023. The final CPD will be posted to the Executive Board web page in English six weeks in advance of the 2024 first regular session and in the other designated languages four weeks in advance.

## Programme rationale

1. Bhutan is home to an estimated population of 777,000, with 32 per cent of people aged 0–19 years and relative gender parity across all age groups.<sup>1</sup> Most of the population lives in rural and often remote areas, which makes the delivery of universal quality social services challenging. However, urban population growth from 33.5 per cent to 39 per cent between 2017 and 2022<sup>2</sup> is also placing pressure on social services and on the ability to ensure affordable and adequate living standards.

2. The country has recently embarked on its next stage of transformation, which has resulted in substantial socioeconomic advancements over the past six decades. Bhutan is aiming to become a high-income country by 2034 – in line with its soon-to-be graduation from least-developed country status – while preserving the country’s natural and cultural heritage.

3. The economy has been strong over the past decade, averaging an annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of 6.1 per cent between 2010 and 2019 and experiencing a doubling of per capita income.<sup>3</sup> The adverse impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic led to a sharp contraction in 2020; however, the economy rebounded in 2021 and again in 2022.<sup>4</sup>

4. Despite this overall economic momentum, Bhutan remains highly susceptible to shocks, principally due to the country’s terrain, remoteness and fragile mountain ecosystems, limited trading markets and strong reliance on a handful of key sectors. Unemployment rates have risen sharply post COVID-19, more than doubling from 2.7 per cent in 2019 to 5.9 per cent in 2022.<sup>5</sup> Unemployment among youth was 28.6 per cent (female 32.8 per cent; male 24.4 per cent) in 2022.<sup>6</sup>

5. The country has achieved significant improvements in poverty reduction, with 12.4 per cent of the population living below the national income poverty line<sup>7</sup> and 17.8 per cent in moderate multidimensional poverty in 2022 (8.2 per cent urban; 23.9 per cent rural). Moderate multidimensional poverty was highest for children aged 10–17 years, with nearly 25 per cent of those children being poor.<sup>8</sup>

6. While Bhutan remains one of the few net carbon negative countries in the world, the pressure on the preservation of natural resources is increasing, with a growing demand in extractive industries and rapid urbanization posing new challenges for waste management and recycling, water shortages, as well as the country’s vulnerabilities to climate change. The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2022 places Bhutan at high risk of landslides and flash floods caused by glacial lake outbursts.<sup>9</sup>

7. Bhutan has successfully reduced the under-5 mortality rate, from 42 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2010 to 26 in 2021.<sup>10</sup> Maternal deaths declined from 117 to 60 per 100,000 live births between 2010 and 2020.<sup>11</sup> More than 98 per cent of births take

<sup>1</sup> Population as of 1 January 2021; United Nations, *2022 Revision of World Population Prospects*.

<sup>2</sup> National Statistics Bureau, Bhutan Living Standards Surveys 2017 and 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Calculated from annual budget reports.

<sup>4</sup> Office of the Prime Minister, “State of the Nation Report 2023”.

<sup>5</sup> National Statistics Bureau, Labour Force Survey Report 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Bhutan Living Standards Survey, 2022.

<sup>8</sup> National Statistics Bureau, Bhutan Multidimensional Poverty Index 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, “Pathways to Adaptation and Resilience in South and South-West Asia: subregional report” (2022).

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, 2023.

<sup>11</sup> World Health Organization (WHO), *Trends in Maternal Mortality 2000 to 2020: estimates by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group and UNDESA/Population Division* (2023).

place in health facilities,<sup>12</sup> yet primarily due to the quality of care, newborn deaths account for 55 per cent of under-5 mortality.<sup>13</sup>

8. Immunization coverage of more than 95 per cent has been sustained for more than a decade, with 13 different antigens now in the routine immunization programme.<sup>14</sup> The country has successfully mitigated the triple elimination of mother-to-child transmission target diseases (HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B virus).

9. Malnutrition remains a public health concern, with Bhutan facing a triple burden: undernutrition with stunting affecting 23 per cent of children under the age of 5,<sup>15</sup> micronutrient deficiencies among adolescent girls and women, and emerging issues of overweight and obesity. While the proportion of households with food insufficiency is reported to be less than 2 per cent,<sup>16</sup> about 45 per cent of the Bhutanese population are unable to afford a healthy diet.<sup>17</sup> Despite government commitment, a coordinated multisectoral and systems-based approach to improving nutrition is not yet in place.

10. Almost all households have access to an improved water source; however, only 83 per cent have 24-hour access to drinking water.<sup>18</sup> Almost all households use improved sanitation facilities<sup>19</sup> and in 2022, Bhutan was declared open defecation-free. The focus now is to move beyond improved water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, with more than 25 per cent of households not using safely managed drinking water services and only half of the population using safely managed sanitation services.<sup>20</sup>

11. While data indicate that 97 per cent of schools and 89 per cent of monastic institutions have improved sanitation facilities, this does not reflect whether they are operational, gender-separated, or of sufficient quantity, or whether there is safe and sufficient water supply, all of which are a concern. The lack of quality WASH facilities in schools has a more negative impact on girls, especially for their menstrual health management.

12. Mental health issues in Bhutan are a growing concern, with a 60 per cent increase in mental health and behavioural disorders recorded between 2017 and 2021. Common and prevalent mental health disorders in the country are anxiety and depression. Suicide cases and episodes of self-harm have also been increasing.<sup>21</sup> Prevention and response services are limited and fragmented; however, the Government has indicated a commitment to deliver timely, reliable and effective interventions through multisectoral and coordinated efforts.

13. Bhutan has made progress in recent years in expanding access to services for early childhood care and development. The net enrolment ratio for children aged 3–5 years rose from 21.8 per cent in 2017 to 38.6 per cent in 2022, with almost gender parity.<sup>22</sup> To address the challenges of reaching remote areas with few children,

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<sup>12</sup> Bhutan Ministry of Health, Annual Health Bulletin (2022).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> UNICEF, WHO and World Bank, *Levels and trends in child malnutrition: UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Group Joint Child Malnutrition Estimates: key findings of the 2023 edition* (2023).

<sup>16</sup> Bhutan Living Standards Survey (BLSS), 2022.

<sup>17</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* (2023).

<sup>18</sup> BLSS, 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (2023).

<sup>21</sup> Bhutan Ministry of Health, Annual Health Bulletin (2022).

<sup>22</sup> Ministry of Education, Annual Education Statistics, 2022.

innovative approaches including home-based and mobile early childhood care and development centres have been initiated.

14. The country has seen a demographic shift in school enrolment, with female enrolment higher than male enrolment since 2012. This can be attributed to factors including the provision of free food and boarding facilities, establishment of multigrade schools, the review of school curricula, and initiatives to ensure more girls in leadership roles in schools.

15. Access to primary and secondary education has seen remarkable improvement. Bhutan is close to achieving universal primary education, with a net enrolment rate of 93.3 per cent (95.5 per cent female; 91.2 per cent male), and the remaining children either enrolled in monastic education or not in education. In 2022, the gross secondary enrolment rate for Grades 7 to 10 was 90.6 per cent (97 per cent female; 84.2 per cent male), reflecting a slight decrease from 2021.

16. Ensuring adequate learning outcomes remains a concern. In 2019, it was found that 15-year-old students had higher success rates in items requiring lower cognitive skills when compared with similar countries; however, there was a significant gap in performance in more demanding tasks. Reading literacy was 45.3 per cent, mathematical literacy was 38 per cent, and scientific literacy was 45 per cent.<sup>23</sup> Among the main contributing factors are an insufficient number of subject-matter qualified teachers, teaching-learning approaches, and the relative shallowness of the curricula.<sup>24</sup>

17. In late 2021, the King of Bhutan issued a decree to significantly reform the education system, placing a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics and maximizing technology and digitalization for teaching/learning. To drive the reform, the Government has commenced the development of a comprehensive National Education Policy, which UNICEF is supporting.

18. A study revealed that more than 60 per cent of children aged 13–17 years had experienced some form of physical violence at least once, and nearly one in eight children experienced sexual violence at least once, with a significant proportion at the hands of peers.<sup>25</sup> Contributing factors include the social norms that perpetuate corporal punishment, a lack of knowledge regarding the harm that violence has on children’s development and on alternative methods of discipline, as well as the limited availability of protection services for children.

19. Violence against women remains a concern, with research finding 4.5 per cent of women suffered intimate partner sexual violence and 15.8 per cent suffered emotional violence in their lifetime.<sup>26</sup> The same study also found a link in the intergenerational experience of violence. Cases of gender-based and domestic violence increased by 53.5 per cent during the 2020–2021 COVID-19 pandemic-related lockdowns, and then subsequently declined by more than 30 per cent in 2022.<sup>27</sup>

20. Good progress has been made in building a child protection system, with the establishment of Women and Child Welfare Committees in all 20 districts and 4 municipalities; Women and Child Protection Units and Desks under the Royal Bhutan Police in 17 districts; and a toll-free helpline for women and children, along with case

<sup>23</sup> Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment, “Education in Bhutan: findings from Bhutan’s experience in PISA for Development” (2019).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> National Commission for Women and Children and UNICEF, “National Study on Violence Against Children and Young People, 2016”.

<sup>26</sup> National Commission for Women and Children and UNDP, “National Study on Women’s Health and Life Experiences 2017”.

<sup>27</sup> Based on reports from crisis centres run by RENEW (non-governmental organization).

management volunteers in all 20 districts. However, the system remains fragmented and limited by inadequate financial and human resources, particularly professionalized social workers. As part of the civil service reform, in late 2022 the National Commission for Women and Children was subsumed under the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD), with its child protection and other service delivery responsibilities assumed by The PEMA<sup>28</sup>.

21. Adolescents face key challenges to develop to their full potential. Their readiness for work is constrained by poor learning outcomes, limited access to vocational learning and inadequate transferable, social and emotional skills. Barriers remain in access to sexual and reproductive health information and services; however, there has been a reduction in teenage pregnancies.<sup>29</sup> Out of the total married girls, 6.2 per cent were married before the age of 15 years and 20 per cent between the ages of 15 and 18 years. Women from poorer households, with less education or in urban areas are most likely to be married young.<sup>30</sup>

## Programme priorities and partnerships

22. Derived from the strategic priorities of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2024–2028, the country programme will contribute to achieving the goals of the draft 13th Five-Year Plan 2024–2029 aiming to secure rapid and inclusive economic growth, and ensure sustainable social development, leading to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The country programme was developed within the UNSDCF formulation process, including prioritization and planning consultations with the Government, civil society organizations, private sector, academia and other development partners.

23. The vision for the country programme is that every child and adolescent in Bhutan, especially the most vulnerable, survives, thrives, learns, is protected and develops to her or his full potential, free from poverty, in a safe and sustainable environment. This can only be achieved if:

- (a) The quality, accessibility and inclusiveness of essential social services for children and their families – particularly the most disadvantaged – are increased;
- (b) Parents, other caregivers, children and adolescent themselves practice healthy, caring, nurturing and protective behaviours, including using social services;
- (c) Communities and leaders provide a supportive environment for parents, caregivers, children and adolescents and promote positive social norms and reject harmful practices;
- (d) Families, communities and institutions are more resilient and better able to resist shocks; and
- (e) The Government at national and subnational levels has enhanced capacities to develop, resource and implement high-quality and child-centred policies and programmes.

24. With continued patterns of inequity affecting children and to support the commitment of the Government to strengthen decentralized planning and coordination of service delivery, and in line with a recommendation from the evaluation of the 2019–2023 country programme, UNICEF will identify opportunities

<sup>28</sup> The PEMA is the Nodal Agency for Mental Health in Bhutan.

<sup>29</sup> World Bank, “Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women ages 15–19) – Bhutan. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT?locations=BT>.

<sup>30</sup> UNICEF, “Statistical profile on child marriage: Bhutan”, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (2023).

for modelling convergent programming approaches in low-performing districts. This will involve a balance of capacity development for improved district-level planning, with coordinated investment in scaling up quality social service delivery and platforms, including enhancing community engagement mechanisms.

25. UNICEF will focus on and accelerate support for a core set of critical national development priorities, including social protection; skills and competencies for adolescents to be prepared for the future; early childhood care and development; the 1,000 Golden Days Plus initiative; a more protective environment; mental health and psychosocial well-being; and climate and disaster resilience.

26. Learning from the recommendations of the recent Gender Programmatic Review, the country programme will concentrate efforts on addressing the discriminatory norms and structural barriers that lead to gender inequities in health and nutrition, WASH, education, protection and participation, particularly for adolescent girls.

27. The country programme aims to position UNICEF more strategically under the UNSDCF in relation to climate, the environment and disaster risk reduction, across all programmes. Key areas of action will include:

(a) Promoting the use of more environmentally friendly and resilient infrastructure and supplies;

(b) Strengthening institutional capacities in climate-resilient programming and emergency preparedness and response;

(c) Strengthening of shock-responsive welfare and social protection systems;

(d) Evidence generation on climate risks and resulting threats to children's well-being and access to services;

(e) Facilitating the greater engagement and leadership of young people in climate and environmental action; and

(f) Supporting preparedness and response plans in high-risk zones, along with the availability of pre-positioned emergency supplies.

28. The draft 13th Five-Year Plan places a high priority on digitization, and UNICEF will support the Government to maximize the use of digital technology to achieve results for children at scale, including transforming the quality and reach of social services. This was also a recommendation from the evaluation of the 2019–2023 country programme. Embedded in this approach will be the use of communication technology to enhance knowledge and learning, promote positive behaviours, and mobilize community action and feedback. UNICEF will share experiences from other countries and support the Government in digitalization of social sector data and data transformation, maximizing data technologies, data analytics and innovation, to advance and accelerate the attainment of national social development priorities.

29. The evaluation of the 2019–2023 United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework in Bhutan identified that the potential synergies of United Nations agencies were not being maximized. In response, UNICEF will actively pursue strengthened collaboration with other United Nations entities under the new UNSDCF across all four programme components.

### **Survive and thrive**

30. Contributing to UNSDCF outcome 1, the programme aims to reduce neonatal, early childhood, adolescent and maternal mortality, morbidity and malnutrition –

which primarily stem from preventable causes, including insufficient access to and use of safe WASH.

31. UNICEF will contribute to the promotion of health systems strengthening through promoting integrated community-based systems for the provision of climate-resilient, quality, promotive, preventive and curative primary health care, nutrition, nurturing care for early childhood development, mental health and WASH services. Emphasis will be placed on expanding the use of digital technologies for the delivery of services, and on capacity-building of service providers, to improve data management and monitoring of programme effectiveness and to enhance knowledge and behaviours.

32. The programme will focus on quality improvement, particularly in the primary health-care system for maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health care, strengthening of immunization services, disability prevention, mental health and psychosocial support, substance use, and environmental health centred around ensuring climate-resilient and environmentally sensitive health facility infrastructure, logistics and supply chain systems. These activities will be undertaken in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other development partners.

33. Technical support will continue to be provided for effective immunization coverage including e-microplanning, vaccine cold chain supply system strengthening, digitization of coverage and supply chain records, and behavioural change interventions.

34. UNICEF will continue to support strengthening implementation of the Bhutan Child Development Screening Tool in health facilities to ensure early detection of and response to development delays and disabilities.

35. Building on the lessons from the COVID-19 response, UNICEF will partner with WHO to support improving and expanding specialized mental health and psychosocial well-being services, particularly for children and adolescents, including workforce capacity development and the integration into primary health-care service delivery and community platforms. The development of a national campaign to reduce stigma around mental health will be supported, along with programmes to address, prevent and respond to substance use and abuse, particularly among adolescents and young people.

36. The programme will contribute to the implementation of the National Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan 2021–2025 in addressing the triple burden of malnutrition among children, adolescents and women. An integrated approach will be taken to (a) enhance the enabling environment for delivery of nutrition services and improved nutrition; (b) build the capacities of service providers; and (c) ensure that children, adolescents, their parents and caregivers have the knowledge, skills, resources and supportive environment to practice appropriate nutrition and dietary behaviours.

37. UNICEF, in partnership with the World Food Programme, among others, will promote multisectoral high-impact nutritional interventions that optimize the primary health care and education systems. This includes protection and promotion of breastfeeding, quality feeding practices, nurturing care practices and counselling services that support optimal nutrition, growth and development, particularly during children's first 1,000 days. Emphasis will also be placed on improving the coverage and compliance of multiple micronutrient supplementation for children, pregnant women and nursing mothers to address anaemia, low birth weight and stunting. In response to the growing problem of overweight and obesity, UNICEF will support initiatives to promote the adoption of healthy dietary practices for children,

adolescents and their families, and advocate for restrictions on marketing of breastmilk substitutes and unhealthy foods.

38. The UNICEF contribution towards increasing the use of safely managed WASH services and practices will focus on supporting the Government to: (a) strengthen sectoral technical capacity, coordination and institutional arrangements, including the ability to adapt to climate-induced effects on water availability and WASH services; (b) continue to expand the use of climate-resilient WASH service-delivery models, including menstrual hygiene facilities, in schools, monastic institutions, and health-care facilities that take advantage of new technological innovations; (c) ensure that children, adolescents, their parents and caregivers, and communities have the knowledge, skills, resources and supportive community environment to practice appropriate WASH behaviours.

### **Education and learning**

39. Contributing to UNSDCF outcomes 1 and 2, the programme aims to support efforts to strengthen national and subnational systems to (a) expand quality early childhood education; (b) improve learning outcomes in a safe environment in the basic education system, including in monastic institutions; and (c) improve learning and skills development of adolescents and young people both in and outside the formal education system.

40. UNICEF will remain a key partner in facilitating the scale-up of effective early learning models that improve access to and quality of early childhood education. Advocacy will be undertaken for the regularization and professionalization of facilitator positions in early childhood care and development programmes and to ensure adequate budget allocation for their roles. UNICEF will continue to promote adherence to minimum and inclusive standards of facilities and environment in such facilities, including WASH. Expansion of alternative models for early learning, including mobile facilitators and home-based approaches, will be promoted in the most remote locations.

41. Building on its support for the development of the National Education Policy, UNICEF will contribute to ongoing efforts by MoESD to enhance digital learning and to increase the uptake of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics subjects, as well as the capacities of teachers to deliver the subject content. Technical support will continue to be provided for building the Ministry's capacity to periodically conduct national education assessments and to analyse and use the information for delivery improvement. To ensure that data are available for evidence-based planning, programming and decision-making, UNICEF will continue to strengthen the education management information systems for both formal and monastic education.

42. UNICEF will support MoESD to expand emergency preparedness, climate resilience and disaster risk reduction planning and response efforts in collaboration with adolescents, young people and their communities. Strengthening the promotion of healthy lifestyles and building the capacities of school counsellors to support mental health and psychosocial well-being will be a focus for UNICEF, as part of a multisectoral approach.

43. Improving the delivery of quality learning in monastic institutions will be addressed through support for teachers' continuous professional development in the teaching of English as a second language and in child-centred teaching-learning approaches using digital platforms, supportive supervision and curriculum development.

44. The expansion of the UPSHIFT skills-building and entrepreneurship programme designed to empower young people to engage positively with their communities and



to successfully transition to adulthood and work life will be pursued. UNICEF will advocate with MoESD and continue the partnership with the Bhutan Scouts Association to institutionalize the UPSHIFT programme in schools and youth centres across the country. Enhancing capacities of trainees in teacher training colleges will be supported to promote life and employability skills through active learning/teaching methodologies.

45. UNICEF will collaborate with other United Nations agencies to promote innovative partnerships between the private sector and skills training programmes for the provision of high-quality work-while-studying, internships, apprenticeships and on-the-job training opportunities for youth to make a meaningful transition to work or make academic choices that may lead to decent employment.

### **Child protection**

46. Contributing to UNSDCF outcomes 2 and 4, the programme will support Bhutan to build a stronger protective environment and system that supports vulnerable children, particularly girls, and women by preventing and responding to violence or harmful practices, particularly child marriage; strengthening access to justice; and ensuring mental health and psychosocial well-being.

47. These violations will be addressed through investments in the effective implementation of the legal and policy frameworks, advocacy to increase public financing for child protection, improving the quality of data and evidence on child protection, strengthening the social service workforce, efforts to enhance collaboration between government and civil society organization service providers, and social and behaviour change communication to address the harmful norms.

48. UNICEF will continue to support accelerated approaches to build a high-quality, well-resourced and effective child and women protection system across the country, which includes developing human resource capacities, accountability mechanisms, strengthened preventive and responsive services, data management and analysis. The development of an interoperable social welfare information management system will be supported.

49. Schools will be considered as integrated protective platforms to provide child-friendly services; promote child rights norms and positive peer-to-peer behaviours; and provide safe spaces for counselling, guidance, referrals and support.

50. Working in collaboration with UNFPA, UNDP and WHO, norms and practices which protect children and women from violence and abuse will be promoted through social and behavioural change approaches. Partners will be supported to better engage and equip parents, caregivers and children with knowledge and skills, and to provide a supportive environment to use positive discipline, create safer and caring family environments, overcome gender-based discriminatory and harmful practices, and increase help-seeking behaviours.

51. Strengthening the capacity of the justice system to serve children, including restorative justice approaches and scaling up alternatives to detention, will be prioritized. Improving support for child survivors and witnesses of crime and supporting the legal empowerment of children and adolescents in contact with justice and welfare systems will be an additional focus.

### **Social policy**

52. Contributing to all UNSDCF outcomes, the programme will support national systems to reduce the proportion of children living in income and multidimensional poverty and improve the resilience of households to shocks and stresses. UNICEF

will prioritize two strategically linked areas: (a) enhancing the quality and use of disaggregated data and evidence on children at national and subnational levels for child-centred development planning, financing and implementation; and (b) building a comprehensive, shock-responsive and child-sensitive social protection system, in support of the specific draft 13th Five-Year Plan goal.

53. UNICEF will engage with the Government and Parliament for planning and measurement of child-focused expenditures to identify needs and gaps and monitor spending in the social sectors. Child-centred multisectoral district development planning and budgeting processes will be supported, including through establishing mechanisms for the meaningful participation of children, adolescents and youth, community feedback systems and performance measurement tools.

54. Significant gaps remain in the availability of key data and evidence on children as well as capacities for analysis and use. In cooperation with other United Nations agencies, UNICEF will continue to support the National Statistics Bureau, focusing on strengthening digitalized administrative data systems, producing high-frequency data, and ensuring disaggregation down to the lowest levels of governance. UNICEF advocacy and technical assistance for undertaking the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) will generate disaggregated data and allow identification of deprivations through a child-multidimensional poverty study.

55. Towards the objective of the Government to establish a comprehensive, shock-responsive social protection system, UNICEF, in collaboration with other development partners, will provide support to develop its regulatory framework and policy, including system architecture and coordination mechanisms. Technical assistance will be available for the development of the social protection information management system and grievance redress mechanism. UNICEF will facilitate knowledge-sharing platforms and organize South-South collaboration to learn from experiences in the development of comprehensive social protection frameworks. UNICEF will also assist with the design and implementation of specific non-contributory social protection programmes, and communication initiatives to ensure that people are aware of and able to access the social protection mechanisms.

#### **Programme effectiveness**

56. This component will contribute to multiple UNSDCF outcomes by ensuring that the country programme is effectively designed, coordinated, managed and supported to meet quality programming standards in achieving results for children, including the coordination of multisectoral approaches; social and behavioural change; gender; climate action and disaster preparedness; evidence and data; communication; and operational support.

## Summary budget table

<i>Programme component</i>	<i>(In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
	<i>Regular resources</i>	<i>Other resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
Survive and thrive	1 446	6 254	7 700
Education and learning	760	6 490	7 250
Child protection	642	3 358	4 000
Social policy	420	1 000	1 420
Programme effectiveness	1 000	1 150	2 150
<b>Total</b>	<b>4 268</b>	<b>18 252</b>	<b>22 520</b>

## Programme and risk management

57. The country programme will be implemented within the UNSDCF in partnership with the Government, under the leadership of the Ministry of Finance, and operationalized through United Nations joint workplans. UNICEF serves as a member of all UNSDCF results groups and leads the social development group.

58. Potential risks to the country programme include the vulnerability of Bhutan to natural disasters and to regional or global economic crises, with the possibility that funding for some social sectors may not be adequately prioritized by the Government due to other essential needs. UNICEF will work with United Nations partners to increase investments in systems strengthening for emergency preparedness and response, develop joint fundraising strategies and accelerate efforts to identify innovative funding opportunities, particularly through green financing windows, as well as public-private partnerships towards child-centred social development. Risks of sexual exploitation and abuse are mitigated through implementation of a prevention and response plan for staff and partners.

59. This CPD outlines UNICEF contributions to national results and serves as the primary unit of accountability to the Executive Board for results alignment and resources assigned to the programme at the country level. Accountabilities of managers at the country, regional and headquarters levels with respect to country programmes are prescribed in the organization's programme and operations policies and procedures.

## Monitoring, learning and evaluation

60. The results and resources framework forms the basis for programme monitoring. Under the UNSDCF, annual reviews of the country programme with the Government and implementing partners will assess progress and identify risks and opportunities to inform work planning. Feedback from targeted populations will be captured through focus group discussions, continued leadership of a youth advisory group under the UNSDCF, and mainstreaming of accountability to affected populations approaches.

61. As a UNSDCF priority, UNICEF will continue to support the Government to strengthen evidence generation and filling disaggregated data gaps on the situation of women and children and to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

62. Evaluations, as outlined in the costed evaluation plan, will be used to position UNICEF as a strategic thought partner of the Government on sector-wide approaches beyond the country programme, in addition to being used to analyse programme relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

## Annex

### Results and resources framework

#### Bhutan – UNICEF country programme of cooperation, March 2024–December 2028

<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child:</b> articles 2–40, 42 and 44</p> <p><b>National priorities:</b> Draft 13th Five-Year Plan: Economic development outcome 1; social development outcomes 1–3; security outcome 1; governance outcomes 1, 2</p>
<p><b>UNSDCF outcomes involving UNICEF:</b></p> <p>1: By 2028, Bhutan has sustainable and diversified economic growth, decent employment and livelihoods and shared prosperity.</p> <p>2: By 2028, people in Bhutan benefit from strengthened quality, inclusive and lifelong social services and practices.</p> <p>3: By 2028, Bhutan’s environment remains sustainably managed and its people are more resilient to disaster risks and climate change.</p> <p>4: By 2028, Bhutan has more inclusive, transparent and accountable governance and rule of law.</p>
<p><b>Related UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 Goal Areas:</b> 1–5</p>

UNSDCF outcomes	UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
						RR	OR	Total
1	<p><b>1. Survive and thrive</b></p> <p>By 2028, more children, including adolescents, and women benefit from quality, comprehensive and affordable health, nutrition and WASH services and practices, including in emergencies.</p>	<p>Percentage of children &lt; 1 year receiving diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis-containing vaccine</p> <p>B: 97% (2022)</p> <p>T: 99%</p>	Health Management Information System (HMIS)	<p>The Government and other stakeholders have strengthened capacity to plan, deliver and monitor equitable and quality maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health services, and to improve health practices.</p> <p>The Government and other stakeholders have strengthened capacity to plan, deliver and monitor coordinated multisectoral</p>	<p>Ministry of Health, MoESD, Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, National Medical Services, Faculty of Nursing and Public Health, Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences, Dratshang Lhentshog /Central</p>	1 446	6 254	7 700
<p>Percentage of (a) mothers (b) newborns receiving postnatal care within two days of birth*</p> <p>(a) mothers</p> <p>B: 76.9% (2022)</p> <p>T: 90%</p> <p>(b) newborns</p> <p>B: 78.4% (2022)</p> <p>T: 90%</p>	HMIS							

UNSDCF outcomes	UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
						RR	OR	Total
		Prevalence of anaemia among adolescent girls and women (15–49 years) B: 34.9% (2015) T: 20%	National Health Survey (NHS)	approaches to improve child, adolescent and maternal nutrition.	Monastic Body, civil society organizations, United Nations agencies			
		Percentage of children aged 6–23 months fed a minimum number of food groups B: 15.3% (2015) T: > 30%	NHS	The Government and other stakeholders have strengthened capacity to plan, deliver and monitor equitable, sustainable and resilient approaches to increase the use of safely managed water and sanitation and safe hygiene practices.				
		Proportion of the population using safely managed sanitation services B: 50.5% (2022) T: 70%	Joint Monitoring Programme					
1, 2	<b>2. Education and learning</b> By 2028, more children, including adolescents, and especially the most vulnerable, benefit from an inclusive, quality and resilient early learning and education, including in emergencies, which contributes to continued and improved learning and acquisition of skills for their future.	Net enrolment in early childhood care and development* B: 38.6% (2022) T: 100%	Annual Education Statistics (AES)	Education service providers demonstrate improved capacities to expand and deliver quality, equitable and inclusive early learning, particularly for the most vulnerable.	MoESD, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment, National Commission for Women and Children, Dratshang Lhentshog /Central Monastic Body, Scouts, civil society organizations, United Nations agencies	760	6 490	7 250
	Net enrolment in basic education* B: 91.6% (2022) T: 100%	AES						
	Percentage of schools implementing skills-building, civic engagement and entrepreneurship programmes B: 22% (2022) T: 66%	Programme reports	The education system is strengthened to transform the delivery of quality learning in primary, secondary and monastic schooling that improves learning outcomes, particularly for the most vulnerable.					

UNSDCF outcomes	UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
						RR	OR	Total
				Education service providers and other partners demonstrate strengthened commitment to ensure that children and youth, especially girls and those most vulnerable, acquire transferable skills through alternative or flexible learning programmes.				
2, 4	<b>3. Child protection</b> By 2028, all children including adolescents, and especially the most vulnerable, are safer and better protected from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and harmful practices, including in emergencies.	<p>Percentage of children in conflict with the law subject to a diversion order or a non-custodial measure B: 37% (2022) T: 66%</p> <p>Percentage of (a) children and (b) women who reported experiencing violence, exploitation, abuse and/or neglect provided services and support from social welfare, justice/law enforcement, health or other social services. (a) children B: 100%; 2 243 (2022) T: 100%</p> <p>(b) women B: 100%; 1 170 (2022) T: 100%</p>	<p>Administrative data</p> <p>Administrative data</p>	<p>Child protection systems and structures have strengthened evidence, legal, policy and institutional frameworks to plan, coordinate, monitor and adequately resource the delivery and expansion of quality child protection services.</p> <p>Government and other service providers have strengthened capacities to deliver quality, inclusive and integrated child protection services.</p> <p>Parents, caregivers and children, including adolescents, and their communities</p>	MoESD, National Commission for Women and Children, Royal Court of Justice, Office of the Attorney General, Royal Bhutan Police, Dratshang Lhentshog/Central Monastic Body, Pema Secretariat, civil society organizations, United Nations agencies	642	3 358	4 000

UNSDCF outcomes	UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
						RR	OR	Total
				are better informed, equipped and supported to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation and harmful social norms and practices.				
1-4	<b>4. Social policy</b> By 2028, more children, including adolescents, and their families benefit from quality child-sensitive policies and social protection programmes, which reduce their vulnerability to multidimensional poverty.	Percentage of children living in moderate multidimensional poverty. B: 20.7% (2022) T: 15%	Bhutan Multidimensional Poverty Index 2022	The Government has strengthened capacity to develop and deliver a comprehensive child-sensitive and shock-responsive social protection system.	Office of the Cabinet Affairs and Strategic Coordination, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Health, MoESD, National Statistics Bureau, Parliament, Local Governments, civil society organizations, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, United Nations agencies	420	1 000	1 420
		Existence of a functioning comprehensive and shock-responsive social protection system* B: No (2022) T: Yes	Programme reports	The Government at all levels has strengthened capacities to generate, analyse and use data and evidence for child and adolescent-centred policies, programmes and financing.				
	<b>5. Programme effectiveness</b>	Percentage of key performance indicators meeting benchmarks: B: 95% (2022) T: 100%	InSight	Planning, monitoring, and reporting  Communication  Climate resilience and emergency	United Nations country team	1 000	1 150	2 150



<i>UNSDCF outcomes</i>	<i>UNICEF outcomes</i>	<i>Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)</i>	<i>Means of verification</i>	<i>Indicative country programme outputs</i>	<i>Major partners, partnership frameworks</i>	<i>Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
						<i>RR</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>Total</i>
<b>Total resources</b>						<b>4 268</b>	<b>18 252</b>	<b>22 520</b>

\* Outcome indicator aligned with the UNSDCF indicator.