

Office of the Secretary of the UNICEF Executive Board
Template for delegations commenting on the draft country programme documents
2024 first regular session

Draft country programme document commenting period: 14 November to 4 December 2023 [18:00 hours Eastern Standard Time]

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

Delegation name: *United States of America*

Draft country programme document: *Bhutan*

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.

	Delegation's comments	Response(s)
General comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United States supports the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) through a regional award which includes Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka with regional exchange & cooperation with India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh. How is this considered in the CPD for Bhutan? • Due to its geological and environmental conditions, Bhutan is vulnerable to natural hazards such as earthquakes, storms, forest fires, landslides, Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF), drought, disease outbreaks, and urban fires. How is UNICEF 	<p>UNICEF Bhutan acknowledges and appreciates the positive feedback and comments on the draft country programme document from the Government of the United States of America.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2024-2028, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office will provide coordinated leadership in relation to facilitation of regional exchanges and cooperation in relation to Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Preparedness and Response. • The nodal government agency for disaster management is the Department of Local Governance and Disaster Management within the Ministry of Home Affairs. In order to enhance capacity to prepare for and respond to natural disasters from a child-centred and sensitive

	<p>planning to capacitate National Disaster Management Authorities (NDMAs) to meet all hazards?</p>	<p>approach, UNICEF has initiated discussions with the nodal agency and the <i>Desuung</i> (the community of volunteers in Bhutan established by His Majesty the King). This support will be undertaken as part of a coherent approach by the UN Development System in Bhutan.</p>
<p>Comments on specific aspects of the draft country programme documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF’s investment in maternal/child mortality/morbidity/malnutrition, early childhood education, and child protection is a welcome development. • UNICEF mentions in the CPD that it will be working in resilience and strengthening institutional capacities in climate-resilient programming and emergency preparedness and response; however, these efforts are not explained in as much detail as other sectors. More information on UNICEF’s resilience and disaster preparedness programming would be welcome to find synergies and form coherent inter-agency strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF appreciates this feedback and recognition. • We could not elaborate on specific approaches within the Country Programme Document (CPD) due to strict word limitations of it being an official Board document. However, in addition to the response above in relation to the national disaster management authority, in the new country programme UNICEF will continue to strengthen its collaboration with sectoral agencies on disaster preparation and risk reduction by strategically integrating Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) within sectoral programme cooperation. <p>For example, in response to the findings of a Regional Study titled The Heat is On! Towards a Climate Resilient Education System in Bhutan; which revealed gaps in the current education system in Bhutan in terms of addressing impacts of climate change on children, UNICEF will support the mapping of existing curriculum for climate change topics/content. Embedding climate change concepts and actions into the education system will inform critical interventions to enhance the quality and relevance of education, both through curricular studies and by way of climate-change-based projects and strengthen students’ resilience. Ultimately, the aim is that formal education becomes more relevant in solving local problems, including through climate-change based actions. At the</p>

		<p>same time, as Bhutan is prone to major natural disasters, support to the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD) in relation to disaster risk management will be expanded, preparing schools to respond to disasters. The work undertaken in the current country programme to strengthen the capacity of MoESD to respond to disasters will be sustained, and UNICEF will provide technical support for the revision and updating of the education sector's disaster management and contingency plan and strategy.</p> <p>In line with UNICEF's latest Sustainability and Climate Action Plan, climate action will form an important area of country level programming, including low carbon/sustainable WASH, use of renewable energy in health facilities, etc. For example, UNICEF will provide technical assistance to enhance the institutional capacity of the WASH sector to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the effects of disasters, and adapt to climate-induced effects on water availability, water quality and WASH service delivery. UNICEF will support the use of solar systems for health facilities to ensure sustainable supply systems for quality and effective health services coverage. This will include sharing expertise on how to ensure energy efficient, climate resilient and country-contextualized supply and logistics management systems for safe and effective management of vaccines. The readiness of health systems and healthcare facilities will be assessed to respond to the health burdens resulting from identified major climate and environmental impacts such as air pollution, heatwaves, disease outbreaks, landslides and floods.</p> <p>UNICEF Bhutan would appreciate the technical and other forms of support from the Government of the United States of America to accelerate these, and other</p>
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