

Office of the Secretary of the UNICEF Executive Board

Template for delegations commenting on the country programme documents

2021 First Regular Session

Country programme document posting period: 17 November to 7 December 2020

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

Delegation name: *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia*

Draft country programme document: *North Macedonia*

In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1, 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 will be made public on the Executive Board website, and considered by the requesting country, in close consultation with UNICEF.

General comments	
	<p>The UNICEF draft Country Programme Document (CPD) for North Macedonia gives a thorough overview of recent achievements and also ongoing challenges the country is facing. In general, we can support the programme priorities, which all contribute to enhancing the protection and promotion of children's rights in a comprehensive manner. As the EU has recently decided to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia, we expect significant progress by the end of the programme in the fields mentioned (e.g. improving professional training of child-related professions, increasing awareness of children's rights in general, ensuring equally good availability of social services in all parts of the country, improving collection of relevant data etc.). Very pleased to note that one of the aims is to strengthen elements of the healthcare system particularly affecting children and their families through increased digitalisation. Also important that the programme aims to increase visibility of child rights across different sectors and increase youth's civil society engagement, including via using modern communication methods.</p>

<p>Comments on specific aspects of the country programme document</p>	<p>Developing and flourishing: We see value in advancing digitalisation also in the field of education. For example, one priority could also be advancing digital competences of children to improve the quality of education and modernise curricula, teacher training and digital platforms provided for children. Distance learning should be an integral part of the modernisation of the education system. It will not only provide better access to education but also build emergency preparedness for crises situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic that forced schools into lockdown.</p>
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