

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: *United Kingdom*

Draft country programme document: *Panama*

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	
Comments on specific aspects of the country programme document	<p><i>(Delegations providing comments may wish to include details, such as the page number, paragraph number, or page of the annexed results and resources framework.</i></p> <p>Para 39. Could the Bicentennial Pact on Closing the Inequality Gap launched on 26 November be noted in this para as it is an important mechanism for dialogue and citizen participation in government?</p> <p>Para 46. It would be good to include civic education as one of the model programmes to increase youth awareness on what their role is to ensure government accountability, push for transparency as well as to increase their knowledge on the electoral process and constitutional guarantees.</p> <p>Para 52. It would be useful to include here how UNICEF might engage Las Justicias de Paz or courts at the local level as a key stakeholders for ensuring access to justice.</p> <p>Para 54. Again it would be good to reference the judicial system here as their role is fundamental to guarantee justice for survivors of abuse. The Office of the Ombudsperson should be highlighted as well, and in particular the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture which</p>

	<p>as the remit to guarantee proper treatment and to prevent human rights abuses in migrant shelters, child shelters, orphanages, prisons and other institutional settings.</p> <p>Para 61. The emphasis here on disaggregated data is very much welcome.</p> <p>Para 63. It would be good to address how best practices in data collection might be utilised in support of this activity in order to strengthen the government’s ability to implement evidenced-based policies and to properly monitor and evaluate progress.</p> <p>Annex, Outcome 3. Suggest to include Ministry of Government, Ombudsperson’s Office, Ministry of Security and the Judicial System as key partners given their role as key guarantors of protection and justice.</p>
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Response from the UNICEF Regional/Country Office

UNICEF appreciates the comments made by United Kingdom on the Panama country programme document (CPD), which are are pertinent and timely.

Para 39. Could the Bicentennial Pact on Closing the Inequality Gap launched on 26 November be noted in this para as it is an important mechanism for dialogue and citizen participation in government?

UNICEF appreciates and agrees with the specific comment. It wasn’t included before because it was launched very recently. Paragraph 39 has been amended to read:

“Successful results depend on the assumption that the Government will maintain its willingness to implement early childhood policies and strengthen mechanisms for intersectoral dialogue and coordination, the Bicentennial Pact would be an opportunity to include early childhood development as a priority for the country.”

Para 46. It would be good to include civic education as one of the model programmes to increase youth awareness on what their role is to ensure government accountability, push for transparency as well as to increase their knowledge on the electoral process and constitutional guarantees.

UNICEF agrees with the comment. Paragraph 46 has been amended to read:

“To expand platforms and mechanisms for developing transferable skills in community contexts, UNICEF will work with the Government and partners to implement inclusive and equitable culture and sports programmes along with civic education initiatives, that will enable adolescents to develop such skills as critical thinking, cooperation, respect for diversity, prevention of gender-based violence and building a culture of equality”

Para 52. It would be useful to include here how UNICEF might engage Las Justicias de Paz or courts at the local level as a key stakeholders for ensuring access to justice.

The role of the “jueces de paz” is not 100 per cent clear yet in terms of how they will provide protection to children. It is still regarded as quite new to the judicial system, as initially, it belonged to the Ministry

of Government. However, we have addressed your comment in this regard and included them in the CPD as another stakeholder. Paragraph 52 has been amended to read:

“In terms of response, UNICEF will develop the capacity to respond to and care for people who have experienced violence, within the framework of strengthening the child protection system. It will advocate for an adequate regulatory framework and the effective and coordinated implementation of reference and family support mechanisms, including working and engage with peace judges among other institutions at local level”.

Para 54. Again it would be good to reference the judicial system here as their role is fundamental to guarantee justice for survivors of abuse. The Office of the Ombudsperson should be highlighted as well, and in particular the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture which as the remit to guarantee proper treatment and to prevent human rights abuses in migrant shelters, child shelters, orphanages, prisons and other institutional settings.

UNICEF agrees on the comment. The Office of the Ombudsperson has been highlighted as stakeholder in paragraph 54 of the CPD. However, please note that the mechanism for the prevention of torture is not commonly used for matters related to migrants, and we regularly cooperate with the Ombudsperson’s office along with the OHCHR to monitor the situation.

Para 61. The emphasis here on disaggregated data is very much welcome.

UNICEF appreciates the comment. It is key to continue working on having disaggregated data. It remains as one of the big challenges for the country. The strength of the information systems is key to properly inform the design of policies, programmes and services for children.

Para 63. It would be good to address how best practices in data collection might be utilised in support of this activity in order to strengthen the government’s ability to implement evidenced-based policies and to properly monitor and evaluate progress.

UNICEF expects to share experiences from other countries, we usually establish south-south cooperation mechanisms when needed. UNICEF also partnered with UNFPA to technically assist the INEC in the preparation of the next census. UNICEF is advocating to have a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) because the last one took place eight years ago. This is quite challenging because the country's focus now is on the census that has been delayed several times. Probably we will have a window of opportunity in 2022 for the MICS and ECD related questions in the census. While this happens, UNICEF continues working with the statistics office of different ministries to gather and use valuable information to address children's needs in sectors such as education, health, social protection, and protection against violence, among others.

Annex, Outcome 3. Suggest to include Ministry of Government, Ombudsperson’s Office, Ministry of Security and the Judicial System as key partners given their role as key guarantors of protection and justice.

Well noted. These partners have been included in the Results matrix.