

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: **[Norway]**

Draft country programme document: **[Somalia]**

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	The program document is well linked with the newly approved UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Somalia and the National Development Plan 9 for Somalia.	UNICEF appreciates Norway's country level engagement and welcomes the comments on the alignment with and contribution to the UNSDCF and NDP
	To reduce the reliance on service provision through NGOs UNICEFs continued focus on strengthening the government at central, federal and local level is highly relevant. Building on experiences from the previous period it would be interesting to know more about when UNICEF has experienced most success in capacity building , particularly given the highly political context and the building of a federal state	During the current country programme, UNICEF has supported multiple capacity building areas. Our experience shows that while challenging, capacity development is possible when politically feasible opportunities are seized. Three areas worth highlighting. (1) Increased ownership and leadership of government in social protection: UNICEF supported a comprehensive policy which places as first priority strengthening institutional development and national delivery systems. The policy has led to increased attention by donors and the first large World Bank investment on social sector with UNICEF supporting Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs on the development of the Unified Social Registry and the Delivery Systems for the first national social transfer programme, Baxnaano. (2) Leadership of the Office of the Prime Minister over improved inter-ministerial collaboration and Federal and Federal Member States' consultation on the Social Development Roadmap: UNICEF's support to the OPM was complemented with a training of key government officials by the Harvard Center for International Development on Building State Capabilities using the Problem Driven Iterative Approach present senior government official with a different approach to building state capabilities. (3) Increased ownership and funding on decentralization: Through the UN Joint Programme

		<p>on Local Government and Decentralized Service Delivery, UNICEF has provided technical support to decentralization policies and training of local district officials, and financial support for local authorities to take on devolved functions with increase allocations of local budgets.</p>
	<p>Bridging the gap between humanitarian and development assistance and building resilience is a much-needed approach.</p>	<p>In bridging the gap between humanitarian and development, the country programme will place a strong focus on building both institutional and community capacity to ensure families and children are more resilient and hence better equipped to resist the multiple recurrent shock they experience in Somalia. An integrated programme approach for building resilience will be utilised, bringing together health, nutrition, education and WASH, including through joint programming with key actors in communities for nutrition and livelihood in partnership with WFP and FAO.</p>
	<p>On education, UNICEFs focus on early childhood is very relevant. The needs in the education sector are substantial in Somalia and stronger lead from UNICEF in the sector could be considered. The focus on teacher training is welcome, and it is imperative that the <i>quality</i> of teacher training is considered.</p>	<p>UNICEF is committed to strengthening its leadership in and contribution to the education sector in Somalia, which is now even more critical with the impact that Covid-19 has made on education and learning. Ensuring school readiness through early learning – both at home and in structured settings – is a key element. UNICEF agrees fully that the quality of teacher training is paramount and will be a focus.</p>
	<p>UNICEF is one of GPE’s grant agents in Somalia. There is no mention of UNICEF’s engagement in the development and implementation of a new education sector plan. Unicef has in the past played a central role in this and could play an important role in ensuring a context sensitive and feasible plan, with clear priorities.</p>	<p>As noted above, UNICEF Somalia is committed to provide strengthened leadership in the education sector and this will include technical support for the new education sector plan. Within this support, UNICEF will be promoting a risk-informed approach, education in emergencies and alternative education pathways and delivery. We have duly clarified UNICEF’s role in the education sector plan in paragraph 49.</p>
	<p>UNICEF is seen as a strong partner in a local governance program supported by the government. UNICEF is one of many UN organisations cooperating in the program.</p>	<p>UNICEF appreciates the comments in relation to its key role in the joint UN programme on local governance and decentralisation. We will continue to benefit from the strategic donor engagement surrounding the JPLG and in particular maintaining social service delivery models at the core of the JPLG programme design for improved social contract in communities across Somalia.</p>

	<p>To Norway, access to and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are important to fulfill the health and wellbeing of adolescent, youth, girls and women.</p>	<p>UNICEF takes note of Norway's priority in the area of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.</p> <p>In the next CPD, UNICEF will focus on improving adolescent girls access to reproductive health and rights. In the current context, 99% of girls are victims of FGM, more than 30% of girls are married under the age of 18, many of whom are married before they reach the age of 15 and the social, political and economic participation of girls and women is marginal. The social-cultural context defines girls as future wives and mothers. We will implement a dual track strategy that builds the skills, knowledge and bravery of girls to resist norms that undermine their rights and potential; whilst at the same time we will strengthen an evidence based social norms change programme which transforms the beliefs and attitudes of men and boys, as well as religious leaders, in respect of the roles of women and girls. Normative change will be promoted and taught within schools as within community structures. The UNICEF strategy aims to delay the age of marriage, reduce the prevalence of FGM and reduce rates of intimate partner violence, sexual assault and rape.</p>
	<p>When supporting government institutions, it is imperative that economic support is not given directly to the respective institution, but through the government system/single treasury account. The PMF capacity in the various institutions is very weak and the risk of mismanagement is big. UNICEF should consider PFM components to be included in their capacity building efforts based on needs.</p>	<p>UNICEF is an active stakeholder in the UN Risk Management Accountability Quality Assurance Group and instrumental in making sure that the establishment of the single treasury account happens through a solid plan of actions, starting from the execution of a Macro Assessment that will highlight the areas of gaps to address as matter of priority. In addition, the overall assessment will enhance further the robustness and stability of the single treasury account to ensure effective aggregate control systems put in place at Ministry of Finance level. This centralization will improve the focus on the consolidated system and will heighten the quality of the capacity building process that will be developed based on the macro assessment results.</p>