

## 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: *European Commission*

Draft country programme document: *China*

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.

	Member state comments	UNICEF response
<b>General comments</b>	<p><b>Programme priorities.</b> The CPD lays out a comprehensive range of priority issues to advance child-centred Sustainable Development Goals in China. Among the programme priorities, we welcome the inclusion of online child safety as an issue of concern.</p> <p><b>Vulnerable groups.</b> The CPD identifies children with disabilities, migrant families and children left behind among the target vulnerable groups. We think it would be important to also make reference to ethnic and religious minority children, who face significant challenges across a range of areas including health, education or protection from abuse or exploitation.</p>	<p>UNICEF appreciates the comments made by the European Commission on the China draft country programme document (CPD). We have taken note of and replied to points raised and have amended the text of the CPD in discussion with the Government of China.</p> <p>The UNICEF China CPD aims first and foremost to uphold and protect the rights of all children in China, including all vulnerable groups that include ethnic and religious minorities. For example, UNICEF recently worked with counterparts to translate messages in Yi and Tibetan minority languages to ensure ethnic minority children received COVID-19 prevention information.</p> <p>In UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2018-2021, UNICEF commits: 'to realize the rights of all children, everywhere, and to achieve the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a world in which no child is left behind.' This commitment is embedded within the CPD that 'is aimed at supporting the Government to realize the rights of all children</p>

		<p>in China, including the most disadvantaged...’, and ‘...by 2025, the rights of more girls and boys, including the most disadvantaged, will be realized so that they survive, live in a safer and healthier environment and develop to their full potential.’</p>
<p><b>Comments on specific aspects of the country programme document</b></p>	<p><b>Child protection online.</b> We welcome the CPD reference to strengthening prevention and response to violence and exploitation also online given the high number of internet users aged 6 to 17 years in China (para 14, 41). It would be useful to further elaborate on how this would be pursued and the values and principles on which the internet governance system will be developed to better protect children online.</p> <p><b>Regional disparities.</b> The CPD makes reference to the persistence of significant regional disparities and gender inequities as key challenges facing children in China (para 4). It also identifies the need for a more child-sensitive social safety net staffed with qualified social workers and which can better address geographic and urban-rural disparities. It would be helpful that the document would further elaborate on how these goals would be addressed in an effective and systematic manner and how it will work with a wider range of relevant partners in these initiatives.</p>	<p>Given the high internet penetration rate among children and the rapid development of the ICT industry in China, there has been both public attention and policy focus on child online protection. UNICEF aims to build technical expertise and convene stakeholders in this area and to prevent and respond to risks that children encounter online, through two areas of support: (1) regulatory frameworks and industry standards, and (2) digital literacy and online safety education.</p> <p>Addressing geographic and urban-rural disparities is a core part of UNICEF’s work in China. The approach in social policy aims to leverage partnerships with stakeholders, including government partners, to ensure children and their families have increased access to equitable, adequate and affordable essential social services and social protection</p>