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For information

United Nations Children's Fund

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Report of the field visit to the Dominican Republic and Haiti by members of the Executive Board

I. Introduction

1. The following Members of the Executive Board of UNICEF participated in the visit: H.E. Mr. Miloš Vukašinović, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations; Mr. Daniel Okaija Okaiteye, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations; Mr. Nirmal Raj Kafle, Deputy Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations; Ms. Barbara Hughes, Director, Office of Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition, Bureau for Global Health, United States Agency for International Development; Ms. Lene Leonhardsen, Senior Adviser, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation; Ms. Natalia Arboleda, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations; Mr. Nicolas Pron, Secretary of the Executive Board of UNICEF; and Mr. Randall González Villalobos, Deputy Secretary of the Executive Board of UNICEF.

2. The field visit allowed the delegation to gain a first-hand understanding of UNICEF work at the country level and to view concrete examples of its cooperation with the host Governments and other partners, including the United Nations country team. Furthermore, the visit provided an opportunity for the members of the delegation to better understand the issues regarding children and women and the challenges they face in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

3. The delegation would like to express its gratitude to the Governments of the Dominican Republic and Haiti for the opportunities for substantive dialogue with senior government officials. The delegation was particularly honoured by its visits with the President of the Dominican Republic and the Prime Minister of Haiti and appreciated their clear commitment to their collaboration with UNICEF.

4. The delegation would also like to thank the UNICEF country teams in the Dominican Republic and Haiti as well as the UNICEF regional office for Latin America and Caribbean for the carefully prepared and well-organized visit, and for the ready availability of staff throughout. The delegation was particularly impressed by the dedication of government

* E/ICEF/2018/8.

officials at every level and of UNICEF staff in the two countries as well as with the hospitality and commitment of community members in all locations visited.

5. The programme was as follows:

(a) Visit to the Dominican Republic, 14–19 March, including meetings in Santo Domingo, Boca Chica, Puerto Plata and Elias Piña with the UNICEF country office team, senior-level government counterparts, members of the United Nations country team and key donor and civil society partners.

(b) Visit to Haiti, 19–24 March, including meetings in Port-au-Prince, Belladère/Lascohabas, and Les Cayes/Chardonnières with the UNICEF country office, senior-level government officials, members of the United Nations country team and key donor and civil society partners.

6. In both countries, the delegation visited UNICEF projects in several communities, both rural and urban and met with local government representatives, civil society organizations, users of health facilities, health workers, teachers, school administrators, students, members of community groups, religious leaders and UNICEF staff.

7. The present report summarizes the briefings received by the delegation members and concludes with the delegation's own observations.

II. Key issues facing children and women in the Dominican Republic

8. The Dominican Republic is an upper-middle-income country with a fast-growing economy, but with regional and socioeconomic inequities and many challenges regarding social inclusion. The state budget for social investment is insufficient, due partially to the difficulty of increasing the tax revenues. The current Government is committed to securing resources for such important areas as education. Of the 10 million people living in the Dominican Republic, 79 per cent live in urban areas and 35 per cent are under the age of 18 years.

9. The delegation visited three regions, holding meetings with high-level government officials, regional officials, civil-society leaders, members of the private sector and communities to get a broad view of the country context.

10. The delegation learned of the main challenges faced by children and women in the Dominican Republic, a country that continues to experience gender inequality and violence, with violations of children's rights still socially tolerated. The protection of children against violence, abuse and exploitation must continue to be a major priority.

11. Child protection issues are at the top of the UNICEF country agenda, as violence against children remains very high, including child labour, sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking and domestic and institutional violence. In the Dominican Republic, violence against girls and women, teenage pregnancy and child marriage and other practices continue to harm young girls or put them at risk.

12. The delegation learned about the situation of children of Haitian origin coming into the Dominican Republic. Migration from Haiti to the Dominican Republic has been a constant cause of tension between the two countries. There are challenges regarding the situation of migrants born in Haiti as well as that of descendants of migrants born in the Dominican Republic.

13. The delegation learned about the methodological approach used by UNICEF in addressing these challenges. In the Dominican Republic, UNICEF delivers services directly and supports public institutions with technical assistance to improve the quality of public services. The delegation was very impressed with the five-step methodological approach that

UNICEF uses to identify and analyse violations of children's rights, develop and evaluate initiatives to address them and then advocate for appropriate public policies.

Maternal and child health

14. The country's high maternal and neonatal mortality rates, 101.8 per 100,000 live births and 25 per 1,000 live births, respectively, indicate that further improvements could be made in maternal and child health.

15. UNICEF reports that one of the main causes of maternal and child mortality is the poor quality of health-care services. The Minister of Health informed the delegation that the President has prioritized the reduction of maternal and neonatal mortality. Efforts aimed at improving services include the development, dissemination and use of high-quality standards and guidelines; the training of health workers in key areas (including possibly adding a midwifery cadre); and the strengthening of primary care. UNICEF and the Ministry of Health are collaborating on a programme to certify hospitals for the achievement of established standards of quality of service and care. The Minister noted that high numbers of Haitian women cross the border to give birth in Dominican facilities, in part because the maternity services are more readily available, free of charge and perceived as higher quality than those in Haiti. According to the Ministry of Health, Haitian women account for 25 to 30 per cent of maternal deaths.

16. The delegation visited the provincial Rosa Duarte Hospital, located in the border town of Comendador (aka Elías Piña). The hospital is participating in an initiative to humanize and improve the quality of health services to mothers and newborns, with the aim of reducing maternal and neonatal mortality. The initiative is being implemented in 10 hospitals around the country with UNICEF support.

17. The delegation was impressed with the commitment of the hospital staff, who have made good progress on implementing the seven components of quality care required for certification. In the area of "clean and quality delivery", for example, they have instituted a doula programme, training nurses to assist women in labour. Hospital staff report that this has significantly reduced the use of caesarean section and other clinical procedures.

18. The delegation noted the positive impact of the leadership shown by hospital staff and National Health Services, demonstrating that positive results increase when there is ownership of programmes at all levels.

Migration

19. The Dominican Republic faces two main challenges relating to migration: migration from the Dominican Republic, mostly to the United States of America, and migration to the Dominican Republic, mostly from Haiti. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the unregulated flow of migrants between Haiti and the Dominican Republic is the largest such movement within the Caribbean region.

20. Deportations of migrants from the Dominican Republic to Haiti is an issue of considerable concern. Dominican border security is under the responsibility of military forces and, until 2015, migrants were deported without an established process.

21. The delegation was informed that the 2013 Constitutional Court ruling regarding Dominican-born descendants of non-resident foreigners, which was made retroactive to 1929, left many people without Dominican nationality, and therefore subject to deportation.

22. To reduce the effects of the ruling, Law 169-14 was passed in 2014, dividing the affected people into two main groups: (a) the descendants of foreigners who were registered in the Civil Registry before 2007 (for whom the law restores Dominican nationality) and (b) the descendants of foreigners not registered in the Civil Registry before 2007, who could obtain legal status as residents provided that they were born in the Dominican Republic.

23. UNICEF assisted the Government to establish a formal deportation process, which includes a commitment not to deport children, pregnant women or elderly people, among other vulnerable groups. To ensure the fulfilment of this commitment, UNICEF has stationed observers in three of the four official deportation points along the border.

24. The delegation visited a reception centre for migrants in the process of being deported from the Dominican Republic to Haiti. The National Migration Director showed the delegation the reception centre and explained the process for the identification of migrants, particularly the process for people who have applied to remain in the country under the Plan for the Regularization of Foreigners, implemented in 2015.

25. UNICEF is working on the issue of migration in coordination with IOM to ensure protection for children and adolescents in transit between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The delegation was very impressed with this work, including the coordination between UNICEF, IOM and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, which has helped to protect thousands of children facing a difficult and uncertain legal situation. The delegation was also pleased to learn that, although the situation regarding migration is different on each side of the border, the UNICEF child protection teams in the Dominican Republic and Haiti worked as closely together as possible for the benefit of children.

Child protection

26. One of the aspects of UNICEF work in the Dominican Republic that most impressed the delegation was the child protection component, which is focused on violence against children and adolescents; birth registration; the detention of minors; and sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly in travel and tourism; the protection of migrant children; and the prosecution of child pornographers.

27. UNICEF supports the National System of Protection of the Rights of Children and Adolescents to prevent violence, sexual abuse and exploitation and helps to protect all children and adolescents by supporting the implementation of the National Road Map for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Children and Adolescents.

28. UNICEF has been working towards strengthening the national capacity to protect child victims and to prosecute the perpetrators of crimes relating to sexual violence against children, such as online child pornography. The close work and coordination of UNICEF with the Attorney General and the Office of the Specialized Prosecutor of High-Technology Offences and Crimes has shown results. The establishment of the first specialized unit focused on investigating online child pornography has led to 15 convictions, with 41 people brought to trial since mid-2015.

29. In the tourist town of Puerto Plata, the delegation met with community and civil society leaders, who were implementing child protection strategies; judiciary authorities, who were implementing investigations and prosecutions; and representatives of the tourism sector. A meeting with adolescents participating in a school-based sexual exploitation awareness-raising programme demonstrated the importance of involving youth in prevention programmes. The UNICEF partnerships with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and school authorities provided evidence regarding the potential of empowering youth: the adolescents were confident and clear in describing how they had learned to protect themselves and their peers and educate their communities.

30. The delegation also met with local authorities to discuss institutional efforts to prevent the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and to prosecute incidents of such abuse. The efforts being made by local authorities to prosecute perpetrators of sexual exploitation complement the prevention efforts aimed at young people, forming a holistic strategy of prevention.

31. A meeting with the representatives of hotel and tourism associations demonstrated their commitment to the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation

in Travel and Tourism. They train their employees to identify and report suspicious cases, and inform hotel guests about the hotel's policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation.

Education

32. The delegation met with the Minister of Education, who highlighted the close and effective cooperation between UNICEF and the Government. He provided an overview of the Government's work on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

33. In 2012, the Dominican Republic doubled its public investment in education and it now makes up 4 per cent of the gross domestic product. School feeding programmes are proving to be effective in motivating students to enrol in school and in retention.

34. Another effort by the Government in partnership with UNICEF is focused on improving the quality of teaching skills through teacher training programmes. UNICEF is also supporting the strengthening of curriculums and classroom teaching methodologies, with a particular focus on reading, writing and mathematics.

35. In Boca Chica, the delegation visited a project aimed at the prevention of violence and bullying in schools. The programme, overseen by the Ministry of Education and supported by UNICEF, has developed standards for co-existence and has trained staff in more than 32 schools. The initiative was in the early stage of implementation, and the delegation members would like to be informed of the evaluation results in the future.

36. Also in Boca Chica, the delegation visited an early childhood development programme developed under the auspices of the National Plan for Protection and Integrated Attention to Early Childhood, which is being implemented primarily by the National Institute of Integrated Care to Early Childhood, a governmental body. The programme provides services for children under the age of 5 years living in vulnerable communities. The delegation visited a family and a community-based programme and viewed the care and enrichment centre and the work of the *animadoras*, or community workers, who visit children in their own homes and guide the parents in good parenting practices, including early stimulation. The positive impact of the two projects in Boca Chica is undoubted.

Role of UNICEF in the Dominican Republic

37. The delegation was positively impressed with the commitment showed by each member of the Dominican Republic country team. The visit was a success in every way, thanks to the work and sense of duty and responsibility of every UNICEF staff member.

38. The delegation attended the launch of the study on social investment in children and adolescents, a key collaborative effort of UNICEF with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development to support the country's study on public investment in children. The launch demonstrated once again the good relations and cooperation between UNICEF and the Government.

39. The delegation met with provincial and regional authorities, local officials and technical experts. In every instance, delegation members were impressed by the excellent working relationship between UNICEF and its government counterparts, and by the strong commitment of the authorities to engage with local communities in taking successful innovative projects to scale. The delegation also consistently heard good feedback about the high quality of UNICEF technical assistance to the Government.

40. One of the issues that particularly impressed the delegation was the involvement of strategic private sector partners of UNICEF in the work to accomplish the goals of the country programme.

41. The work of UNICEF with the tourism industry to promote a code of conduct to prevent child exploitation is a great example of what can be accomplished by establishing

partnerships between United Nations agencies and the private sector. This example also complements the other strategic activities of UNICEF to prevent sexual exploitation, mentioned earlier.

42. The delegation was also highly impressed with the efforts of UNICEF to involve representatives of the private sector in the establishment of a business advisory council. The advisory council members whom the delegation met were extremely dedicated to protecting the rights of children and adolescents. The delegation felt that harnessing the views and contributions of different sectors was important, as the effort to protect such rights should involve everyone in a society.

III. Key issues facing children and women in Haiti

43. Haiti, ranked 163 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index, faces multiple vulnerabilities. The country is exposed to many natural hazards, including earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and droughts. In the past eight years, Haiti has experienced a major earthquake and several hurricanes, including, in 2016, Hurricane Matthew, a Category 4 storm that affected over 2 million people and left 1.4 million in need of humanitarian assistance. Natural disasters exacerbate the vulnerability of the population in a country in which 70 percent of children under 5 years of age live in poor households, and one out of four children under 5 years of age are stunted.

44. Haiti is a low-income country situated in a region in which most of the countries are classified as middle- and upper-middle-income and offer opportunities for employment and better access to quality health and education services. There are also child protection challenges posed by the trafficking and smuggling of children across the border to the Dominican Republic.

45. Haiti needs to restore and strengthen its system for ensuring and enabling a protective environment for children. One in four children are living separately from their parents. More than 700 unregulated residential care facilities are operating in the country, hosting an estimated 30,000 children, 4 out of 5 of whom are not true orphans. The fact that 20 per cent of children are not registered at birth exacerbates their vulnerabilities and hampers their access to services. While 81 per cent of children are registered at birth, only 71 per cent have a birth certificate. This drops to 67.2 per cent with a birth certificate in rural areas and to only 58 per cent among the poorest quintile.

46. Eighty per cent of the schools in Haiti are private. This means that most parents must pay school fees, putting poor and marginalized children at risk of not being able to access education. The quality of the education provided is also poor, with such quality disproportionately affecting the rural areas. There is a lack of qualified teachers and those who are qualified prefer to work in urban areas.

47. The delegation observed that access to both health care and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services remained poor, despite the progress made the recent years. In rural areas, 36 per cent of the rural population still defecate in the open and only 73 per cent have access to an improved water source. This has exacerbated the challenge of cholera, which was introduced to Haiti in 2010.

48. During meetings with government counterparts, the delegation was informed that the budget allocations for basic social services were limited. For example, 4.5 per cent of the budget is allocated to the health sector and less than 2 per cent to social affairs. Education is better off, with an allocation of 16 per cent. The tax base in Haiti is small and a principal challenge for the Government is to work on broadening it.

49. The urban-rural disparity is significant, and is evident across all socioeconomic indicators. The rural population is at an extreme disadvantage, and such disadvantage is exacerbated in children, who experience multiple levels of vulnerability. Such multiple levels

of vulnerability were witnessed by the delegation during field visits to both urban and rural locations.

Child protection

50. To reduce the incidence of violence against and the abuse, neglect and exploitation of children, UNICEF provides support to the decentralization of critical child protection services and to the national child protection agency in its efforts to develop inter-sectoral protocols for the reporting and management of child abuse.

51. In close cooperation with Government and civil society, UNICEF is working to decrease the number of children in institutional care by 15 per cent and to develop alternative care options through a formal foster care system. The development of a juvenile justice system is also at the heart of the UNICEF protection programme.

52. UNICEF works with child protection in an integrated manner. For example, during the visit to a health centre in Chardonnières, in the South Department, the delegation witnessed how vulnerable children and those separated from their families were identified as part of the process of determining children's nutritional status. Identified children were supported with a reinsertion package to enter school and their mothers were helped with ways to start generating income.

Migration

53. As stated in the section of the report on the Dominican Republic, the unregulated flow of migrants between that country and Haiti is considered the largest such flow within the Caribbean region. Since 2015, it is estimated that 210,000 people, including children and women, have been affected by the decision of the Dominican Republic to deport people of Haitian descent.

54. The delegation visited the decentralized reception and care centre run by the national child protection agency in Belladère, in the province of Lascohabas. The Belladère border point is one of four official border crossings between the Dominican Republic and Haiti. UNICEF supports the national child protection agency and a police unit specialized in child protection at each border point, to identify unaccompanied children affected by deportations and children who might be at risk of trafficking.

55. The delegation was particularly impressed with the broad, multi-sectoral support provided to unaccompanied children by partners working in the interim care centre it visited. The centre provides emergency accommodation, family tracing and reunification support. The approach has evolved from an emergency care and assistance model to one in which some of the socioeconomic drivers of migration are being addressed. Many families are also assisted to access civil documentation and birth registration services.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

56. The delegation observed projects supported by UNICEF to establish water supply systems in Trianon, near the urban centre of Mirebalais, in the centre of Haiti, and in the rural community of Bon Pas, located in the Tiburon commune of the Chardonnières Arrondissement, in the southwest part of the country.

57. In Mirebalais, the representative for the regional water and sanitation department and the community management group explained that the approach supported by UNICEF was to first get the households in the communities to agree to pay a monthly fee for water. The sum of 50 cents per month per household that was agreed upon jointly with the community would go towards the maintenance of the system. Open defecation is an important problem in the area, and the water management committee negotiated an agreement with the community that every household accessing the water system would also have its own latrine.

58. The water supply system in Bon Pas is a project that UNICEF implemented jointly with the Netherlands Red Cross, the regional water and sanitation department and the community. The delegation attended the official opening of a reservoir that will supply at least 8,500 people. Before the opening of the new water supply system, only one public fountain was available, and it was at risk of contamination. It was evident to the delegation that the opening of the reservoir was a very special occasion for the three communities that would benefit from the system. The impact on the everyday lives of community members, especially women and girls, who previously had to walk long distances to access potentially contaminated water, will be substantial.

59. Representatives of the Government and the community expressed their enormous appreciation for the partnership with UNICEF, the Netherlands Red Cross and the Association of Volunteers for International Service (AVSI) Foundation, an international NGO. Partners have worked with the water management committee to ensure that the capacity is in place to maintain and undertake simple repairs of the system. Each household will also pay 80 cents per month to access the water. The funds, which will go towards maintenance, increase the sense of ownership for the community.

60. During the visit to Bon Pas, it became evident to the delegation that the intervention of UNICEF in remote, rural and marginalized communities, where the socioeconomic indicators are very poor, had the potential to make an enormous difference in people's lives. The water system projects in Bon Pas and Mirebalais have provided access to safe water for 19,500 people by improving the protection of the water source and making the piping system more resistant to flooding; laying around 14 km of water pipe (for both systems together); and building or rehabilitating reservoirs and kiosks.

Cholera

61. UNICEF currently supports four international NGOs nationwide to deliver rapid responses to suspected cases of cholera through a network of 55 NGO teams working together with 13 Ministry of Health rapid-response teams. Together, they deliver a full package of services: oral prophylaxis to patients and their families; house disinfection; oral rehydration salts; water purification tablets and soap for the affected household and for an average of 12 surrounding houses. The alert-response strategy was initiated in January 2014, with the activation of the Ministry of Health and NGO rapid-response teams. For the past three years, UNICEF has invested in technical support and close monitoring to strengthen the joint operationality of those teams. Today the result can be seen in the drastic reduction of suspected cases of cholera.

62. During the visit to a hospital in Croix-des-Bouquets, near Port-au-Prince, the delegation learned about how the hospital works with the alert-response mechanism to rapidly identify homes and neighborhoods affected by cholera. It was evident how tremendously important the rapid-response teams were to ensure an effective response. Securing funding to maintain the teams until cholera has been eliminated in Haiti is of the utmost importance.

63. The delegation also learned that the UNICEF approach to fighting cholera was truly multi-sectoral, involving coordination among several ministries, UNICEF teams and NGOs. It will be difficult to fight cholera unless the long-term WASH challenges that the Haitian population faces are addressed. The UNICEF strategy is therefore focused on long-term WASH interventions in communities in which there have been recurrent cholera outbreaks.

64. The work of UNICEF and partners has led to substantial achievements in containing cholera, and 2017 was the first year, since cholera was introduced in 2010, in which the epidemic was controlled throughout the year. In addition, three geographic departments accounted for almost 80 per cent of all suspected cases. For the first time since the launch of the alert-response strategy, no fewer than 70 rapid-response teams were maintained throughout 2017 and into 2018, allowing them to reach an unprecedented national response rate of 95 per cent of all suspected cases within 48 hours.

Maternal and child health and malnutrition

65. The South Department was one of most severely affected by Hurricane Matthew. The community health centre of Chardonnières, founded in 1953 by the Sisters of Sainte Anne, a Roman Catholic congregation, serves 9,909 people and offers nutrition services, immunization, family planning, prenatal care and laboratory services. UNICEF support of the Ministry of Public Health and Population and of the health centre through the AVSI Foundation has resulted in the increased coverage and utilization of an integrated package of preventive and curative nutrition interventions in the communities surrounding the health centre.

66. The approach of UNICEF is to ensure that women and children who visit the health centre are also screened for other vulnerabilities, such as exploitation and abuse, as part of the integrated child protection component. The most vulnerable households are supported to establish a strategy for income generation and are provided with a school re-insertion package for out-of-school children.

67. The delegation learned the importance of training community members on diversifying their nutritional intake, including obtaining important micronutrients for children and other household members from plants that grow in their communities. They are taught to identify, grow and cook with such plants. Due to the long distances between communities and the clinic, community members are also taught how to recognize children at risk of malnourishment.

68. Since the beginning of the Hurricane Matthew emergency response in December 2016, the health centre of Chardonnières has treated over 50 children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and 160 children with moderate acute malnutrition; over 2,000 children under the age of 5 years have been screened; 80 mothers have been trained to screen for SAM; and over 430 children (6–24 months) and 800 pregnant and lactating women have received iron and multiple micronutrient supplements.

Education

69. In the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew, over 80 percent of the approximately 1,990 schools evaluated were damaged or destroyed, mostly in the departments of South, Nippes and Grand'Anse, putting the education of more than 300,000 children at risk. The UNICEF contribution accounted for more than 88 per cent of the furniture distributed to schools, and the organization provided 60 per cent of the school kits and materials distributed to classrooms. While over 90,000 children were able to return to school after UNICEF interventions, the risk of school exclusion was exacerbated in the areas affected by the hurricane. In addition, at least 350,000 children remain out of school throughout the country.

70. The delegation visited the Remy Zamor National School in Laval, near Les Cayes, in the South Department. UNICEF support contributed to the resumption of educational services after the hurricane and the reduction in the number of out-of-school children in the area, helping to reduce the outmigration of the affected population. UNICEF also supported education recovery programmes in all the affected departments to ensure access to school in a protective environment to all children aged 5 to 18 years affected by the crisis.

71. The achievements relating to UNICEF support at the Remy Zamor National School include the repair of the security fence; the painting of the building to make it attractive for children; the repair of the washroom facilities; and the distribution of school materials to 346 children (123 girls). Children and teachers also received psychosocial support.

72. In addition to responding to immediate needs after the hurricane, UNICEF, as part of the new country programme, has reoriented its strategy to deepen the focus on the quality of education and on ensuring that children enter school at the right age, while at the same time catering to overage children with alternative and accelerated learning programmes. This

strategy is in line with the priorities outlined by the Minister of Education in his meeting with the delegation.

Other considerations

73. The delegation appreciated that the Prime Minister, the ministers of several key ministries and other high-ranking officials took the time to meet with them. This enabled the delegation to get a broad understanding of the Government's priorities and to learn more about the challenges it faces in terms of coordination with partners and the running of the country.

74. The Prime Minister underlined that UNICEF was an important partner for the Government and that its work was in line with the Government's vision. This view was echoed by the Minister of Education, the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour and the Directors General of the Ministry of Health and the National Directorate of Water and Sanitation.

75. The Prime Minister outlined the key priorities for the country:

(a) Road infrastructure: building more than 4,000 km of roads, which could increase access to basic social services;

(b) Health: providing basic social services for all communes. Currently, Haiti has 575 communes, but only 50 have clinics with qualified health personnel. To cover the entire population, 123 health centres would have to be built, at a cost of \$80,000 each;

(c) Reforestation: building 14 centres with responsibility for reforestation in key areas of the country, with students in each school responsible for planting a certain number of trees;

(d) Energy: building a dam to generate electricity, to which less than 20 per cent of households currently have access. This strategy, which will increase the number of households with access to clean energy, will be a priority over the next four years.

76. Upon receiving a question from the delegation regarding the repatriation of Haitians from the Dominican Republic, the Prime Minister underlined that the issue was being handled at the Presidential level.

77. The delegation appreciated the sincerity of the Minister of Planning, who raised the issue of development funds not being channeled through the Government. UNICEF explained that of the 90 partners of UNICEF Haiti, 23 were Government institutions and 65 were NGOs, of which 32 were international and 33 local. The Minister of Planning also underlined that interventions were fully aligned with the Government's Plan for the Development of Haiti and were included in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework signed by the Ministry of Planning. The delegation encouraged the Government to continue to exercise its leadership through effective coordination mechanisms to ensure that all aid was in line with the Plan for the Development of Haiti.

General observations on the field visit to Haiti

78. In summing up the visit to Haiti, the delegation underlined the following:

(a) In order to fight cholera in a sustainable manner, it was necessary to further strengthen the link between short-term emergency and long-term WASH interventions and to ensure predictable funding;

(b) The level of migration, including cross-border and internal displacement, coupled with the large number of children not living with their parents, was an important protection challenge for Haiti. UNICEF had already taken measures to integrate child protection into several of its health and education programmes. Given the unique child protection challenges of Haiti, all programmes should aim to integrate child protection components;

(c) Haiti is extremely vulnerable to natural disasters. The endemic poverty exacerbates this vulnerability and decreases people's resilience. The frequency of emergencies makes it very difficult for people to cope and often the little progress made is wiped out with the next disaster. The success of the UNICEF country programme for Haiti will depend upon its ability to successfully link short- and long-term programming and to operationally transition between emergency and long-term programming.

79. The following recommendations were made by the delegation:

(a) The needs in Haiti are great. The country office should advocate to keep Haiti high on the agenda of the United Nations. UNICEF could consider organizing a local-level donor conference to attract non-traditional donors (including the private sector in Haiti), which normally would not contribute with funding. The appointment of local Haitian Goodwill Ambassadors to raise the profile of UNICEF work in Haiti could also be continued;

(b) The effect of cross-border migration and the number of deportations of Haitians who hold Dominican Republic citizenship has created tensions between the two countries. Measures should be explored to support and facilitate cooperation between Haiti and the Dominican Republic on these issues and find ways to decrease tensions when they arise.

80. Haiti is the only low-income country in a region of middle- and upper-middle-income countries. Despite differences in terms of background and culture, this geographical proximity could be capitalized on through the strengthening of South-South partnerships. Partnerships between governmental and private entities could potentially strengthen government institutions and improve children's protection and access to quality services.

IV. Observations

81. The delegation welcomed the opportunity to witness the activities of UNICEF in the Dominican Republic and Haiti and appreciated very much the dedication, hard work and efficiency of UNICEF staff and the organization's partners.

82. The delegation congratulated and praised the UNICEF teams in both countries for their good work and their substantive achievements in a complex context in which people suffer multiple vulnerabilities. The delegation also congratulated the country teams for their close working relationships with the host Governments and their ability to balance the need to work through NGOs and to strengthen the host Governments' capacity by channelling funds through government structures. The delegation expressed its deep gratitude for the hard work and careful thought that the country teams put into organizing the Executive Board's visit and for the deep sense of professionalism and good spirit with which the visit was conducted.

83. The delegation noted with satisfaction the excellent cooperation between UNICEF and the government institutions in the development of norms and standards and the formulation of key policies affecting children.

84. The delegation was impressed with the sharp focus of UNICEF on its comparative advantage: providing strategic policy advice for national programmes. Being a relevant partner was possible not least because UNICEF has attracted top-level international staff as well as dedicated and skilled local staff.

85. The delegation appreciated the clear focus of UNICEF on the most vulnerable population groups and the most disadvantaged geographical areas. Furthermore, the delegation noted the importance of the efforts made to strengthen the disaggregation of data to reveal social disparities as a basis for advocacy and programme planning.

86. The delegation welcomed, as an important strategy for achieving results for children, UNICEF efforts to influence policies, legislation and public spending towards the most disadvantaged.

87. The delegation noted the importance of maintaining a minimum level of core programme resources in order to sustain the capacity of UNICEF to provide high-level technical advice and to influence policies.

88. The engagement of UNICEF with partners, civil society, communities, faith-based organizations and the private sector was a good example of the added value and the multiplier effect that the organization can achieve by acting as a catalyst and bringing partners together.

89. The delegation noted the good cooperation within the United Nations country teams, as reflected in the large number of joint programmes in the two countries. The delegation was informed by UNICEF staff that close cooperation among agencies on policies took place at the central level. The delegation congratulates UNICEF for the partnerships established at all levels with the ministries and with the local authorities at the provincial and community levels to achieve results for children through evidence-based advocacy and action.

90. The delegation observed that both national Governments were open to ideas and willing to commit resources for programmes and projects that could enrich children's lives.

Annex

Summary of the programme of the field visit to the Dominican Republic and Haiti

Dominican Republic

Wednesday, 14 March 2018

- United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) security briefing
- Working session at the UNICEF country office
- UNICEF representative, Ms. Rosa Elcarte: introductory overview of the mission, agenda, question and answer session
- Presentation of Dominican Republic situation analysis
- Presentation of UNICEF country programme 2018–2022 for the Dominican Republic
- Dinner meeting with the Resident Coordinator and the United Nations country team

Thursday, 15 March 2018

- Meeting with the Minister of Health, Dr. Altagracia Guzmán; the Vice-Minister of Quality of Care, Dr. Neftali Vasquez; and the Director of Maternal and Child Health Development, Dr. Juan Carlos de Jesus
- Meeting with the Minister of Education, Mr. Andrés Navarro García, and other officials from the Ministry of Education: the Vice Minister of Planning and Educational Development, Mr. Víctor Sánchez; the Vice Minister of Technical and Pedagogic Issues, Ms. Denia Burgos; the Director, International Cooperation Office, Ms. Rosa Maria Kasse; and the Director, National Institute of Integrated Care to Early Childhood, Ms. Berlinesa Franco.
- Group A field visit: Education – Early childhood development: Visit to a community centre for integrated early childhood development activities in Boca Chica, provided by the Government and supported by UNICEF.
- Group B field visit: Education – Eradication of violence in schools: Visit to a school in Boca Chica with initiatives to prevent violence in schools. Observe the Ministry of Education’s programme, supported by UNICEF, to prevent violence and bullying in schools.
- Reception with government partners, the diplomatic community, international cooperation agencies, non-governmental partners, United Nations agencies

Friday, 16 March 2018

- Brief meeting with the Minister of the Economy, Planning and Development, Mr. Isidoro Santana
- Launch of a study on social investment in children in the Dominican Republic, supported by UNICEF, with the Minister of the Economy, Planning and Development; the Minister of Finance, Mr. Donald Guerrero; and the First Lady, Ms. Cándida Montilla de Medina
- Courtesy visit to the President of the Republic, Mr. Danilo Medina
- Lunch with the Business Advisory Council for UNICEF
- Meeting with the Deputy Attorney General and Prosecutor for the Specialized Unit for High-Technology Offences and Crimes, Mr. Rodolfo Espiñeira Ceballos, regarding the prosecution of online child pornography

Saturday, 17 March 2018

- Field visit to Puerto Plata
 - Encounter with adolescents participating in awareness-raising programme to prevent commercial sexual exploitation
 - Meeting with local authorities for a discussion on their efforts to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents
 - Lunch with local hotel partners to learn about their efforts to implement the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism

Sunday, 18 March 2018

- Briefing on issues around migration, including background, situation and sensitive issues around the deportation of Haitians from the Dominican Republic to Haiti

Monday, 19 March 2018

- Field visit: Health – Visit to Rosa Duarte Hospital, which is implementing the initiative on hospitals for quality care and the humanization of health attention to mothers and newborns. Observe the Ministry of Health's effort, with UNICEF support, to improve the quality of health services to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality.
- Field visit: Migration – Visit to a transitory migration reception centre for people in process of deportation from the Dominican Republic to Haiti.
- Lunch meeting with child protection actors regarding their coordination and efforts at the local level to protect children in transit between the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Haiti

Monday, 19 March 2018

- Security briefing by UNDSS
- Welcome by UNICEF Haiti Representative, Mr. Marc Vincent
- Field visit 1: Child protection
 - Meeting with the Social Welfare and Research Institute (IBESR), the Brigade for the Protection of Minors (BPM) and the Mayor of Belladère, at the IBESR/BPM office
 - Visit to the interim care centre for unaccompanied minors returning from the Dominican Republic
 - Meeting with families returned from the Dominican Republic
- Field visit 2: water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)
 - Visit to the water supply system of Trianon, Mirebalais
 - Visit to the project site and meeting with water committee members and beneficiaries

Tuesday, 20 March 2018

- Meeting with the Prime Minister, Dr. Jacques Lafontant
- Meeting with UNICEF staff
- Meeting with the Minister of Planning and External Collaboration, Mr. Aviol Fleuriant.
- Meeting with the Minister of Education and Vocational Training, Mr. Pierre Josué Agénor Cadet

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- Meeting with the Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Mrs. Stephanie Auguste
 - Meeting with the Director General, IBESR, Mrs. Arielle Jeanty Villedrouin
 - Meeting with the Director General, Ministry of Public Health and Population, Mr. Laure Adrien
 - Meeting with the Deputy General Director, National Directorate of Water and Sanitation, Mr. Charles Edouard-Jean
 - Meeting with the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Mission for the Support of Justice in Haiti, Dr. Mamadou Diallo; the Resident Coordinator; the Humanitarian Coordinator; and the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme
 - Reception with the diplomatic corps at the residence of the Ambassador of the United States to Haiti, Mrs. Michele Sison.

Wednesday, 21 March 2018

- Field visit 3: Health/WASH
 - Visit to the health centre, Chardonnières
 - Meeting with the protection committee and beneficiaries
 - Opening of the water supply system, Bon Pas, Tiburon
 - Meeting with the water management committee and beneficiaries

Thursday, 22 March 2018

- Field visit 4: Education
 - Visit to the Remy Zamor National School, Les Cayes
 - Meeting with officials, UNICEF sub-office
 - Meetings with the Departmental Delegate, Mr. Max Serge Daniel; the Departmental Director of Health, Mr. Jean Bernard Fevrier; the Departmental Director of Education, Mr. Jean Milord Dorval; the coordinator of IBESR, Mr. Bertrand Meridien; and the Departmental Director for the Ministry of Planning, Mr. Ronald Felix
 - Debriefing with UNICEF, Les Cayes sub-office staff

Friday, 23 March 2018

- Field visit 5: Cholera
 - Visit to the cholera programme, Tabarre/Croix-des-Bouquets
 - Meet and greet with the United Nations country team, Port-au-Prince
 - Meeting with the non-governmental and civil society organizations, Port-au-Prince
 - Debriefing with UNICEF Haiti Senior Management Team
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