ISSUE

South Sudan is an oil-producing country, and in 2010, 97 per cent of the government’s budget was reliant on oil revenues. At the same time, the majority of the population lives below the poverty line and only nine per cent of the national budget was allocated to the social sector in 2011, with highly inequitable geographical distribution.

“I want our opinion to be considered in any decision taken in our communities.”

Esther, 16-year-old girl
Booms in oil and other mineral resources have often been associated with negative economic and social development outcomes in many African countries. South Sudan, being a newly independent country, has an opportunity to manage its oil revenues effectively and use them to meet basic needs and offer the peace dividend that the population is yearning for. However, the impact of the recent oil shutdown has led to austerity measures in the new nation.

Also critical is understanding the situation and needs of children and women in South Sudan. This evidence has to be linked to the gaps in national programmes and budgets, and can be used to advocate for adequate resource allocation for children, and better governance and budget management from the government. Child-sensitive social protection programmes also play an important role in mitigating the effects of poverty on children and families.

In 2007, UNICEF supported a comprehensive situation analysis of children in South Sudan, which analysed key socio-economic indicators such as poverty and education and the impact of deprivation on children. In 2006, UNICEF provided support to the Sudan Household Health Survey (SHHS) that, for the first time, established a baseline on a number of key social indicators for South Sudan. A follow-up survey or SHHS 2 was carried out in 2010 to update indicators and establish emerging trends.

**UNICEF IN ACTION**

The UNICEF Policy Research, Advocacy and Partnership for Children’s Rights Programme uses the following strategic approaches to ensure sustained and positive impact on the situation for women and children in South Sudan:

1. Provision of evidence on child vulnerability and socio-economic conditions in South Sudan, and the gaps in social protection policies, systems and programmes. This is done through desk reviews of existing policies and partner safety-net pro-
Programmes, and in-depth analysis of SHHS 2 indicators to inform UNICEF programming.

2. Advocacy for the social protection of children and their families, including but not limited to the Child Benefit Cash Transfer.

3. Increased knowledge and improved skills of partners at all levels on equity-based and child-friendly budgeting, child and gender-sensitive planning and reporting on social development programmes and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

4. Support for the development of sector information management systems, systematically feeding data into the South Sudan Info database and effectively used in monitoring and reporting on progress made on the MDGs.

5. Counterparts at central and state-level planning departments (Ministry of Finance and Planning and partner sector ministries) have improved knowledge on child, youth and gender-sensitive planning of and reporting on social development programmes and MDGs.

6. The Government of South Sudan’s budget and sector plans, and the development plans of five states are child focused and have clear results on equity.

The programme has contributed to the following key achievements:

- Organization and implementation of two rounds of Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys in 2006 and 2010.
- Implementation of the National Population Census in 2008 and the Household Poverty Survey in 2009, which provided key data on social indicators for South Sudan.
- Strengthened capacity of the South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics to ensure effective functioning of the institution and data repository for government and its partners.
- Development and functioning of the South Sudan Info database, which is accessible live online and allows for monitoring of progress on international, national and sub-national priorities, including the MDGs.

UNICEF works in partnership with UNDP, WFP and UNFPA, among other UN agencies, as well as the Government of South Sudan’s National Bureau of Statistics, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Recreation, and the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission.
Challenges

There are key challenges in implementing interventions in policy, advocacy and social protection for children. Continued insecurity in areas affected by conflict, combined with few roads, can make even basic tasks a major challenge. This, coupled with an ever-changing humanitarian situation, negatively impacts programme implementation and hinders the achievement of planned results for children. Capacity gaps in policy formulation is another major challenge.

PLANNED RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

Over the period 2012–13, UNICEF aims to build on the achievements of the previous years to contribute to improving the lives of women and children in South Sudan. The overall programme result is to ensure that investment and social protection for children in their early years are enhanced.

To achieve this result, efforts will be made to ensure the implementation of the following:

• Advocacy for the creation of an independent child commission to implement the Child Act, and ensuring that budget analysis and networking on the evolving policy environment are informed by quantitative and qualitative evidence.

• By the end of 2013, sustained advocacy will have been conducted and the necessary tools developed to support the operationalization of a Child Benefit Cash Transfer programme in line with the South Sudan Development Plan.