

Office of the Secretary of the UNICEF Executive Board
Template for delegations commenting on the draft country programme documents
2023 second regular session

Draft country programme document commenting period: 13 June to 3 July 2023 [18:00 EST]

Delegations are kindly invited to use this template to share their comments on the draft country programme document being presented to the Executive Board during the forthcoming session.

Delegation name: **United States of America**

Draft country programme document: **Malawi**

In accordance with Executive Board decision [2014/1](#), draft 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 stated above will be posted on the Executive Board website.

	Delegation's comments	Response(s)
General comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is UNICEF considering opportunities to incorporate nutrition-sensitive social protection into their work in Malawi?	<p>UNICEF Malawi would like to express sincere gratitude to the USA Government for its support towards integrated interventions to address child deprivations in Malawi. The support from USA government has been instrumental towards improving the quality of life of children in Malawi.</p> <p>UNICEF has been supporting actions to strengthen the synergy between social protection and nutrition agendas in Malawi to address malnutrition and child poverty. Working with the government and development partners, UNICEF is supporting the incorporation of nutrition sensitive social protection as a priority in both the national nutrition policy and the social protection policy. This integration at the policy-level aims to ensure that decision-makers, programme managers and practitioners in Malawi intentionally develop synergies between social protection and nutrition within relevant policies, systems and programmes in all contexts, including humanitarian and fragile contexts, to improve child and maternal nutrition and address child poverty. Further to policy-level integration, UNICEF is supporting the government to develop a nutrition sensitive social protection operational framework. This strategic</p>

		document aims to provide a unified implementation level framework that operationalizes the two aforementioned policies. UNICEF plans to sustain this approach into the new Country Programme.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please share more about UNICEF’s efforts to improve integration of nutrition and WASH within UNICEF. Are there opportunities for joint planning and monitoring visits? 	In the new Country Programme, WASH, nutrition and health will be supporting the achievement of a shared outcome result. Integrated approach fosters collaboration and coordination among sectors to deliver greater results in addressing child deprivations. In Malawi, improved WASH interventions form part of the 13 high impact SUN interventions as defined in both the Multisectoral National Nutrition Policy and Multisectoral Nutrition Strategy. This integration is evident in many ways. Adoption of improved WASH is promoted at district and community levels using nutrition delivery platforms, such as the community-based care groups. Similar nutrition platforms are also used to promote the adoption of low-cost climate-resilient WASH infrastructure. Within UNICEF the nutrition and the WASH sections co-develop project proposals, jointly implement programmes – e.g. WASH provides technical support through the health institutions and nutrition community groups - and undertake joint monitoring visits both in emergency and development contexts.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is UNICEF doing to increase focus on not only providing quality water systems, but also ensuring strategies are in place for long term sustainability? 	In Malawi, one of the critical challenges is maintaining WASH infrastructures functional after construction/implementation. As a result, access to quality water and sanitation facilities and services still remains a gap and this is a main contributor to the recurrent water-borne diseases such as cholera and polio that the country continues to face. Sustainability challenge is partly due to the weak engagement with the private sector, the weak decentralization, and the ineffective technical support for the districts and communities. Also, the fragmentation of interventions aggravates the lack of engagement by local authorities and communities in the operations and maintenance. To enhance the sustainability of WASH services, the new Country Program will promote district-wide approach that will enhance (i) WASH sector investment; (ii) market promotion and private sector engagement of the districts or councils’ authorities; and (iii) water service operators and districts’ water boards to control, sustain and improve WASH services.
Comments on specific aspects of the draft country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We note the CPD references the 2016 Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) (paragraph 6). Are there 	The recent global socioeconomic shocks, the pandemic, natural disasters and health emergencies that Malawi’s children have experienced are expected to have had an impact on the child-related impact/outcome level indicators. The Government’s planned DHS 2024 will provide more recent estimates.

<p>programme documents</p>	<p>other data sources that could be used by UNICEF to properly identify the number of people in need? These numbers may have changed after the impact of COVID on the world economy, as well as three tropical cyclones between 2019 and 2023.</p>	<p>We would like to clarify that the stunting, underweight and wasting data in paragraph 6 are quoted from the 2019/20 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, and not the DHS 2016, as incorrectly referenced in the footnote 13. This was an error which UNICEF is correcting.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could UNICEF please provide more detail on their work to support the operationalization of the Malawi National Social Protection Program III (paragraph 36), particularly how UNICEF is engaging with the World Food Programme and UNHCR to integrate their work with the Government of Malawi in the refugee camps? 	<p>UNICEF is currently supporting the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) in the development of the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) which operationalizes the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP). UNICEF support focuses on strengthening the flagship Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP), the shock-sensitive social protection (SSSP) and the cash-plus resilience programming that address the most vulnerable, while strengthening the related delivery systems, such as social registry and e-payments. In this regard, UNICEF works closely with the WFP on the preparedness and response to, and the recovery from predictable shocks, including during the lean seasons, strengthening the government social protection systems for household resilience to withstand shocks. Although Malawi’s social protection approach prioritizes equity and inclusion as guiding principle, the limited fiscal space challenges the Government’s efforts to expand the social protection to certain vulnerable groups like refugees. The development of the new NSPS provides an opportunity to address this gap, while working with the UNHCR and benefitting from its work such as its study on the social protection system coverage of Population of Concern (PoCs).</p>