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Draft country programme document**

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Summary

The draft country programme document (CPD) for the Lao People's Democratic Republic is presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comment. The draft CPD includes a proposed aggregate indicative budget of \$10,730,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$95,000,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2022 to 2026.

* E/ICEF/2021/23.

** In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1, country programme documents (CPDs) are considered and approved in one session, on a no-objection basis. This draft CPD, and a costed evaluation plan, will be presented to the Executive Board for review from 16 June to 6 July 2021. The final CPD will be posted to the Executive Board web page in English six weeks in advance of the 2021 second regular session and in the other designated languages four weeks in advance.

Programme rationale

1. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a stable, landlocked and mountainous country with a young and ethnically diverse population. It is home to an estimated 7.2 million people¹ of whom 42 per cent are aged 0 to 19 years.² Two thirds of the population live in rural areas, although the country is experiencing one of the fastest rates of urbanization in Southeast Asia. The country is especially at risk from disasters triggered by climate-related hazards, which are increased by its heavy economic reliance on natural resources.

2. The country's 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2021–2025 (NSEDP) was formulated under the shadow of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which is having a serious impact on the national development trajectory. The NSEDP priorities include reducing infant, under-five and maternal mortality and stunting; improving sanitation; achieving universal health coverage; increasing access to quality education, including early childhood education; strengthening skills education that matches the market demand; investing in digital technology in teaching and learning; expanding social protection and social services coverage and quality; and actions on environmental protection and disaster risk reduction.

3. Until the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the country was among the fastest-growing economies in the region over the past decade, which led to significant poverty reduction, particularly in rural areas, and improved living conditions. Nonetheless, a significant proportion of the population is still at risk of falling into poverty and the absence of adequate safety nets limits the ability of households to mitigate its impact.

4. The majority of children under 18 years old in the Lao People's Democratic Republic are multidimensionally deprived: 70 per cent suffer from at least two deprivations, and 50 per cent from three or more deprivations concurrently.

5. The under-five mortality rate decreased from 106.4 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 45.5 per 1,000 live births in 2019.³ Pneumonia, malaria, diarrhoea and malnutrition – which are all largely preventable or treatable – along with neonatal causes, are the leading reasons for under-five deaths. Location, wealth, ethnicity and level of maternal education continue to influence child survival. Under-five mortality is twice as high in rural areas than urban areas, and children in the poorest quintile are nearly three times more likely to die than those in the richest.⁴

6. Although the maternal mortality ratio declined from an estimated 544 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 185 per 100,000 live births in 2017⁵, it is still the highest among Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. The rate of adolescent pregnancy is among the highest in the region, with significant differences between rural and urban areas, among ethnic groups and by level of education.

7. Childhood malnutrition levels are very high in the most remote communities, with twice as many stunted children living in rural communities with no roads (43.3 per cent) compared with urban children (21.5 per cent).⁶ One key cause is inadequate feeding practices, with only one third of young children in the country exclusively

¹ United Nations, World Population Prospects, <<https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/>>, accessed on 16 March 2021.

² Ibid.

³ United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation 2019.

⁴ Lao Statistics Bureau, Lao Social Indicator Survey II (LSIS II) 2017, Survey Findings Report, 2018.

⁵ United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-agency Group (MMEIG) 2017.

⁶ Ibid.

breastfed for two months, and 17 per cent of rural and 41 per cent of urban young fed the minimum acceptable diet.⁷

8. Maternal malnutrition also influences the high child malnutrition levels, with 40 per cent of women suffering from anaemia. Women from poor rural communities enter pregnancy more undernourished and less healthy than those from better-off urban communities. Despite government commitment, a coordinated multisectoral and systems-based approach to improving nutrition remains lacking.

9. The disparities in health and nutrition outcomes are also reflected in service coverage levels, with critical child health interventions reaching only one third of the poorest groups. The main factors contributing to poor service utilization are: (a) physical and social distance from health facilities; (b) inadequate quality of care and capacities of service providers; (c) health services that are not sensitive and responsive to diverse cultural beliefs, languages and social norms; and (d) limited integration of services.

10. Access to basic drinking water services increased slightly from 70 per cent in 2011–2012 to 78 per cent in 2017, however, much of the water is contaminated. About one quarter of the population practices open defecation, with stark urban-rural inequities. Access to basic sanitation services increased from around 57 per cent to 71 per cent in the same period, with 54 per cent of the population having access to a hand-washing facility with soap and water, with urban-rural disparities.

11. Access to early childhood education has increased significantly across the country. Enrolment of five-year-olds increased from 70.9 per cent in 2015–2016 to 82.7 per cent in 2019–2020, with equal access for boys and girls. However, participation among three- and four-year-olds remains low.

12. The country has achieved universal coverage and gender parity in primary school enrolment. The construction and renovation of school buildings and classrooms have significantly increased access to education in remote rural areas. Primary school attendance has improved (with rates of 89 per cent and 90 per cent in 2019/20, respectively, for girls and boys) but the dropout rates remain problematic. At the secondary level, drop-out rates are more pronounced among girls.

13. In 2018, an estimated 60 per cent of schools had basic water supply and sanitation facilities. The lack of proper water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in schools has a more negative impact on girls, especially for their menstruation-related needs.

14. Ensuring adequate learning outcomes remains a concern. The 2019 Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics Assessment found only 2.5 per cent of Grade 5 students achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and 8 per cent in mathematics – which are insufficient to satisfactorily transition to lower secondary education. Among the main contributing factors are an insufficient number of teachers and high rates of teacher absenteeism.

15. Since 2019, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has been rolling out a new primary curriculum with one new grade per year, and a new pre-primary curriculum is planned for roll-out from 2021. Pre-service teacher training is being revised to better align with the new curricula, alongside strengthening the teacher trainee practicum requirements.

16. While progress has been made in establishing a child protection system, it is fragmented and limited by inadequate human and financial resources. Although the country has initiated steps to develop and professionalize social workers, restrictions

⁷ Ibid.

on new civil service positions have resulted in graduates moving to other employment.

17. Physical and psychological violence against children remains a significant concern. Despite an encouraging decrease in recent years, 70 per cent of children aged 1 to 14 years experienced at least one form of psychological aggression or physical punishment in their household.⁸ Due to cultural and gender norms, protection issues such as domestic violence, corporal punishment and sexual abuse often remain hidden within families.

18. Sexual exploitation and trafficking, particularly of adolescent girls and women, remains a concern. Despite a slight reduction in recent years, one third of women aged 20 to 49 years were married before the age of 18.⁹ Only three out of four children under 5 years old have had their births registered with a civil authority.¹⁰

19. Through a combination of border closures and other measures, the Lao People's Democratic Republic escaped any community transmission of COVID-19 until April 2021. However, the disruptions resulting from the containment measures, coupled with the impact of the pandemic on the local and global economy, are negatively affecting the country's prospects and deepening vulnerabilities. For many families, reduced economic activity and lack of remittances have resulted in decreased income and constrained access to food and basic social services.

20. In 2020, the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review made 226 recommendations and the Government supported 160 of them, including those related to (a) aligning national laws with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (b) incorporating the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities into the 9th NSEDP; (c) intensifying efforts to eliminate harmful child labour and to combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation; (d) implementing measures to guarantee the strict application of the family law prohibiting child marriage and polygamy; (e) enhancing access to quality health, nutrition, education, justice and child protection services.

21. A key lesson learned from the current country programme – including the response to the COVID-19 pandemic – has been the importance of systems strengthening in the context of the country moving towards graduation from least developed country status. At the midterm of the country programme, UNICEF commenced a phased process to reduce its service-delivery component and expand the emphasis on systems strengthening. This process will be accelerated, with a targeted focus on institutional strengthening at subnational levels across all social sectors.

22. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), 2022–2026 is designed to accelerate action towards the achievement of integrated social, environmental and economic development under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will be implemented during a pivotal period, with the country aiming to demonstrate success in ASEAN and become competitive in the 21st century economy, while balancing recovery from the unprecedented socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

23. Based on an analysis of the situation and priorities of the 9th NSEDP during the formulation of the UNSDCF, along with the Universal Periodic Review recommendations, and following a consultative process with the Government, the United Nations country team and other key partners, the country programme has

⁸ LSIS II Survey Findings Report, 2018

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

prioritized six deprivations and disparities where UNICEF can add the greatest value to assist the Government to make progress towards the child-related Sustainable Development Goals. These are: maternal, newborn and under-five morbidity and mortality; child, adolescent and maternal malnutrition; hygienic and sustainable environment; quality education and learning; protection from violence, exploitation or harmful practices; and multidimensional child poverty.

Programme priorities and partnerships

24. The country programme vision is that by 2026 more children and women in the Lao People's Democratic Republic – particularly the most vulnerable and at-risk – will have their rights realized so that they can survive, develop to their full potential and live in a safer environment. For this to be achieved, a series of core changes are necessary, including:

(a) The Government at national and subnational levels has enhanced capacities to develop and implement systems-based, high quality and child and adolescent-centred development.

(b) The quality, accessibility and inclusiveness of essential social services for children, adolescents and their families – particularly the most disadvantaged – are improved.

(c) Parents and other caregivers practice healthy, caring, nurturing and protective behaviours and protective social norms, including using social services, in a supportive community environment.

(d) Households and communities are more resilient and better able to resist shocks.

25. UNICEF is uniquely positioned to support the achievement of the national development targets and the Sustainable Development Goals for children in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which requires resilient health, nutrition, education, WASH and protection systems. Through strengthened collaboration under the UNSDCF, the UNICEF strategy will be to focus on systems strengthening to achieve equity in child outcomes, particularly by improving the quality of service provision; strengthening the social service workforce; strengthening data and evidence-driven approaches; utilizing multisectoral service delivery models; generating demand and building trust in services, and more efficient allocation and use of financial resources.

26. UNICEF will promote intersectoral approaches focusing on the two windows of opportunity as articulated in the Lao Generation 2030 initiative. For early childhood development, there will be a stronger focus on coordinated efforts to ensure safe, responsive and nurturing caregiving through parenting support, using health, protection and early learning platforms. For the second decade, stronger emphasis will be placed on more integrated programming towards strengthening the quality and relevance of education, adolescent girls' health and nutrition, protection from violence, exploitation and child marriage, and mental health. Critical approaches will be evidence-informed social and behaviour change communication, along with enhanced engagement of adolescents in programming, particularly on climate action.

27. UNICEF will strengthen the gender-responsiveness of the country programme to address gender roles, norms and power imbalances in laws and policies, systems and services, and individual attitudes and practices. This will involve embedding transformative approaches within the programme and addressing the most prevalent harmful gender practices – particularly exploitation, trafficking and child marriage, as well as adolescent girls' nutrition and education – in a more integrated manner.

Within programme monitoring, UNICEF will apply a gender lens in expanding efforts to analyse results, data and bottlenecks.

28. To enable the agenda for children to be a whole-of-society approach, UNICEF will engage with a wide range of actors, including children and youth, through advocacy and innovative communication approaches. UNICEF will continue to act as a leading voice for, with and about children, will expand engagement with the private sector and will ensure that government partnerships extend beyond the social sectors. Dialogue and cooperation on promoting children's issues will widen with the National Assembly the Lao Youth Union, youth networks, religious and community leaders and with ASEAN.

29. UNICEF will expand its use of innovative programming methods, including by harnessing digital tools to support the rapid achievement of results at scale.

30. In natural disasters and public health emergencies, the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action will guide efforts to ensure that the rights of children are upheld. UNICEF will respond to humanitarian needs through an approach that contributes to systems strengthening, risk reduction and national ownership by: (a) delivering timely humanitarian assistance as a provider of last resort; (b) reaching the most deprived and vulnerable children and women; (c) strengthening government and community capacities to respond to crises and reduce vulnerability, and (d) applying the principles of accountability to affected populations.

31. The seven programme components contributing to UNSDCF outcomes are: (a) health (maternal, child and adolescent); (b) nutrition; (c) education; (d) child protection; (e) WASH; (f) social policy; and (g) programme effectiveness.

Health

32. This programme component will support improved maternal, neonatal and child health through increasing access to quality health services for children and mothers in a strengthened primary health-care system, in alignment with the 9th Health Sector Development Plan 2021–2025, and the second phase of the Lao Health Sector Reform Strategy and Framework, 2013–2025. While the focus is on pregnant women and children under 5 years old, UNICEF will also strive to improve support to adolescent health, including girls experiencing their first pregnancy.

33. UNICEF will continue to shift its programming support from direct service provision in targeted locations towards health system strengthening, expanding the coverage of quality primary health care complemented by a more resilient and sustainable community health approach, with special attention paid to underserved communities.

34. A key strategy for systems strengthening will be to increase accountability for planning, budgeting, execution and monitoring at subnational levels. Advocacy for increased domestic resource investments and political commitment to universal health coverage and for sustainability of the immunization programme will be intensified, in collaboration with development partners.

35. Working in collaboration with the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund, the enhanced systems-building approach will focus on delivery of the essential package of health services for maternal, neonatal and child health through: (a) strengthening the capacity of health technocrats at national and subnational levels to more effectively plan, budget and manage; (b) building a strong community health system with a more institutionalized community health worker programme; (c) improving and monitoring the quality of health care provided to women, adolescent girls and children at community and facility levels; (d) improving health data and information systems; (e) enhancing the efficiency of procurement and

supply chain management of essential health commodities, including vaccines and the cold chain; and (f) increasing knowledge and skills among male and female caregivers to practice appropriate childcare, hygiene, feeding and early stimulation, as well as to demand quality services.

Nutrition

36. This programme component aims to strengthen the capacity of the Government and the private sector to scale up a set of proven high-impact and multisectoral nutrition interventions across sectors to improve infant, child, adolescent and maternal diet, care and support practices to prevent and/or treat malnutrition. These interventions include: infant and young child feeding and care practices; child, adolescent and maternal micronutrient supplementation; diarrhoea prevention and treatment; safe WASH at home and in institutions; food fortification; production and promotion of locally produced diversified foods; and food regulation and safety, among others.

37. Working in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme, the UNICEF contribution will specifically focus on governance for nutrition across the food, health, WASH, education and social protection systems, including improved: (a) capacity to monitor and review nutrition service delivery; (b) allocation of resources for nutrition services; and (c) coordination of multisectoral platforms at national and subnational levels. This will be done through modelling, advocating for greater investments, and strengthening of existing systems to integrate nutrition across sectors, particularly at subnational levels, for routine and emergency services, including supply, training, supportive supervision and monitoring, as well as demand creation.

38. Evidence-informed behaviour change communication will be a key strategy for improving the diets of and care for children, adolescents and women.

Education

39. This programme component will support implementation of the 9th Education and Sports Sector Development Plan, 2021–2025, through a systems strengthening approach to ensure: (a) coverage and quality of early learning opportunities are expanded; (b) children access and complete nine years of basic education with improved learning outcomes and 21st century skills; and (c) the quality of teaching is improved.

40. To improve school readiness and foundational learning, UNICEF will support the Ministry of Education and Sports to further expand quality early childhood education programmes, particularly in remote areas, through community-based options that have clear standards and use play-based, age-appropriate approaches, and that promote Lao language acquisition, which is critical for further education. Parental engagement and support will be key to ensure children have a nurturing home environment and for expanding early childhood education programmes in rural areas.

41. In collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other development partners, UNICEF will provide support to improve institutional capacities at national and subnational levels to accelerate reforms, plans, management and finances towards improved education sector performance, including promoting the greater relevance of learning for the future world of work. A focus will be on ensuring the system is more resilient and able to effectively respond to emergencies and the impact of climate change.

42. This will be accompanied by support for a needs-based continuous professional development system for basic education teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills, and for school principals to enhance their coaching, leadership and management

skills. UNICEF will promote more active engagement of parents and communities in school management and monitoring, using communication strategies for demand creation and participation.

43. Using lessons learned from the COVID-19 response, UNICEF will promote the expanded use of digitally supported teaching-learning and hybrid models aimed at achieving better learning outcomes, as well as to streamline data collection.

Child protection

44. This programme component will support the Government to ensure that children are safer and better protected from violence, exploitation and harmful practices. The key strategy is to strengthen the child protection system, consisting of its enabling environment, quality preventive and responsive services, and protective individual and social attitudes, in support of the National Vision towards Child Protection System Strengthening, its supplementary National Plan of Action for Child Protection System Strengthening and the National Strategy for Social Service Workforce Development.

45. Building on modelling done in Attapeu Province in 2019–2021, UNICEF, in cooperation with other development partners, will support the Government to scale up the new integrated child protection system and service delivery model to additional provinces. Capacity-building of the Government and its partners will be undertaken to deliver protective and responsive services, including risk identification, case management, referrals, legal aid and psychosocial support. Professionalizing the social service workforce by establishing a national registration, certification and licensing system will be prioritized. Joint interventions on birth registration, child marriage, early pregnancy and violence against children in schools will be promoted through a multisectoral action plan with the health, education and social welfare sectors.

46. UNICEF will enhance national capacities to gather and analyse data through the development of a child protection information management system, and generate knowledge on online protection, child marriage and early pregnancy, children on the move and children in institutions.

47. Partners will be supported to scale up an ongoing parenting programme to better engage and equip parents, caregivers and children with knowledge and skills, and to provide a supportive environment to use positive discipline, create safer and caring family environments, overcome gender-based discriminatory and harmful practices, and increase help-seeking behaviour. UNICEF will support adolescent empowerment through life-skills training on risk identification and prevention, formation of peer networks, and promotion of participation in decision-making and community activities, linked with continued education and technical and vocational education.

WASH, environment and climate resilience

48. This programme component will support public and private system strengthening at national and subnational levels to deliver sustainable, climate-resilient quality water and sanitation services, ensuring that children and their families have the knowledge, skills and resources to use safe WASH practices, in line with the National Policy on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (2019) and the National Strategy for Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (2019–2030).

49. Within this systems strengthening approach, UNICEF will support the Government and the private sector to develop and implement sectoral strategies and plans that prioritize remote communities, aimed at increasing: (a) access to climate-resilient, sustainable basic water supplies and improving water quality; (b) access to basic sanitation and reducing open defecation; (c) hand-washing with soap; (d) WASH

cost-recovery mechanisms; and (e) WASH in health facilities and schools, including menstrual hygiene.

50. UNICEF will shift from direct service delivery to providing strategic direction through modelling, advocating for greater sector investment while undertaking targeted capacity development with greater private sector engagement. National and decentralized capacity-building will focus on climate mitigation and adaptation, emergency preparedness and response, integrating behaviour change into health outreach programmes, equitable cost recovery and financing, developing multisectoral strategies and sectoral coordination.

51. The feasibility of pro-poor financing and smart subsidies for sanitation and equitable cost-recovery mechanisms for rural water supplies will be investigated, and options for private sector engagement explored, complemented by developing tools to support families to select and sustainably manage household toilets. UNICEF will promote a more coordinated approach to rural sanitation among development partners, supported by social protection mechanisms.

52. UNICEF will work with the United Nations Development Programme to strengthen district disaster preparedness and response through a capacity gap analysis of social service constraints, and will support the Government to formulate guidelines for preparedness strategies for schools and health facilities, and for refining disaster risk reduction education in schools.

Social policy

53. This programme component will support national systems to ensure that fewer children are living in income and multidimensional poverty and their households are more resilient to shocks and stresses. UNICEF will prioritize four strategic focus areas: (a) enhancing the quality and use of disaggregated data and evidence on children at the national and subnational levels; (b) promoting a strengthened and more child-centred public finance management system; (c) building a more comprehensive, gender- and shock-responsive social protection system; and (d) strengthening subnational social sector development planning and implementation.

54. UNICEF will support the Government to track progress of the provincial commitments on reducing multidimensional child poverty linked to the Lao Generation 2030 initiative, including the use of knowledge management and harmonized dashboards for data presentation and dissemination, and invest in capacity strengthening for more efficient and transparent budgeting and planning for health, nutrition, child protection and education for children.

55. With the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 placing a strain on the national budget, after supporting the development of investment cases for health, nutrition and education, UNICEF will advocate for an increase in or maintenance of budgetary allocations to these critical sectors.

56. In partnership with the International Labour Organization, the World Bank and others, UNICEF will continue to support the Government to strengthen its social protection management information system, grievance redress mechanism and the costing of the national social protection strategy. UNICEF will collaborate with key partners to advocate for the expansion of an integrated child grants systems, including in emergencies, based on the lessons learned from its implementation in two provinces.

Programme effectiveness

57. Programme effectiveness will enhance the delivery of programme results through planning, monitoring and reporting; research and evaluation and the publication of data; advocacy, communication and community engagement, mainstreaming gender equality and disability-inclusive programming across sectors; supply procurement and operational support; and partnership development. It will include efforts to strengthen disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness, along with systematic cross-sectoral work, particularly in the areas of early childhood development, adolescent programming, and digital approaches to achieve results at scale.

Summary budget table

<i>Programme component</i>	<i>(In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
	<i>Regular resources</i>	<i>Other resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
Health	2 000	18 500	20 500
Nutrition	100	20 400	20 500
Education	2 000	18 500	20 500
Child protection	1 150	9 000	10 150
WASH, environment and climate resilience	1 050	16 000	17 050
Social policy	2 100	8 600	10 700
Programme effectiveness	2 330	4 000	6 330
Total	10 730	95 000	105 730

Programme and risk management

58. The country programme will be coordinated as part of the UNSDCF and implemented in cooperation with the Government, under the leadership of the Ministry of Planning and Investment.

59. The country's vulnerability to natural disasters and epidemics poses serious threats to the lives of children and to the achievement of planned results, as experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNICEF will mitigate this risk by strengthening its technical assistance to support the Government in response and recovery, investing further efforts as part of the United Nations country team on preparedness and risk reduction. Risks of sexual exploitation and abuse will be mitigated through implementation of annual prevention and response plans for staff and partners.

60. This country programme document outlines the UNICEF contributions to national results and serves as the primary unit of accountability to the Executive Board for results alignment and resources assigned to the programme at the country level. Accountabilities of managers at the country, regional and headquarters levels with respect to country programmes are prescribed in the organization's programme and operations policies and procedures.

Monitoring and evaluation

61. Programme monitoring and evaluation will be conducted in consultation with the Government, based on the results and resources framework. Outcome indicators will be monitored as possible through national administrative systems or surveys. Output indicators will be assessed during reviews with implementing partners, benefiting from joint field visits. UNICEF will work with other United Nations agencies to monitor UNSDCF progress. Under the UNSDCF, UNICEF will partner with other agencies to enhance government capacity to fill data and evidence gaps and monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

62. UNICEF will collaborate with national statistical systems to improve the coverage, quality and analysis of disaggregated data, including the 2022 Lao Social Indicator Survey and subnational nutrition data platforms. Planned evaluations will be used to generate evidence for learning and impact monitoring and to make strategic shifts where required.

Annex

Results and resources framework

Lao People's Democratic Republic – UNICEF country programme of cooperation, 2022–2026

<p>Convention on the Rights of the Child: Articles 1 to 40</p> <p>National priorities: 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2021–2025</p>
<p>United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2022–2026, draft results framework) outcomes involving UNICEF:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, have more equitable and inclusive access to and will benefit from better quality health, nutrition, food, shelter, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and education and learning, including during emergencies. By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, will benefit from more inclusive, resilient, transformative, and sustainable socio-economic and demographic opportunities to reduce poverty and inequalities. By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, will be better served by public institutions at all levels in a transparent and inclusive manner, able to exercise their rights and obligations and the institutions shall be strengthened and more accountable while the rule of law and international human rights commitments made by Lao PDR are upheld. By 2026, people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, and institutions will be better able to sustainably access, manage, preserve, and benefit from natural resources and promote green growth that is risk-informed, disaster and climate-resilient.
<p>Related UNICEF Strategic Plan Goal Areas: 1–5</p>

UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
					RR	OR	Total
More neonates, infants and children, including adolescents, and women, have equitable access to and benefit from strengthened high quality health interventions and improved behaviours.	Percentage of children <1 year receiving diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis-containing vaccine at national level B: 91% (2020) T: 100%	Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS)	Government authorities have strengthened capacity to legislate, plan and budget to improve the quality, resilience, universality and sustainability of the health system.	Ministry of Health (MOH) Lao Women's Union Lao National Front	2 000	18 500	20 500
	Percentage of children aged 0–59 months with	LSIS	The health-care system is strengthened to deliver quality high-impact and equitable	Lao Youth Union			

UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
					RR	OR	Total
	<p>symptoms of pneumonia taken to an appropriate health provider</p> <p>B: 44.8% (2017) T: 66%</p>		<p>maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health interventions and services.</p> <p>Children, adolescents, pregnant women and families have improved skills and knowledge to demand for and contribute to their health and well-being.</p>				
	<p>Percentage of newborns receiving postnatal care within two days of childbirth</p> <p>B: 47.1% (2017) T: 70%</p>	LSIS					
More infants, children, adolescents and women have equitable access to and benefit from high-impact multisectoral nutrition interventions.	<p>Percentage of children aged 6–23 months who received foods from four or more food groups</p> <p>B: 45.3% (2017) T: 55%</p>	LSIS	<p>Government authorities have an enhanced institutional and administrative framework for convergent scale-up of quality multisectoral high-impact nutrition interventions and services.</p>	<p>MOH</p> <p>Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES)</p> <p>Ministry of Agriculture</p>	100	20 400	20 500
	<p>Percentage of infants 0–5 months exclusively breastfed</p> <p>B: 44.9 (2017) T: 60%</p>	LSIS	<p>Government authorities and their partners have strengthened capacity to deliver convergent quality high-impact nutrition interventions and services.</p>	<p>Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MOLSW)</p> <p>Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI)</p>			
	<p>Prevalence of anaemia among women of reproductive age (15–49 years)</p> <p>B: 39.8% (2017) T: 34.8%</p>	LSIS	<p>Children, adolescents and pregnant women have improved skills and knowledge on nutrition and their care practices.</p>	<p>Scaling Up Nutrition</p>			
More children, including adolescents, especially the most disadvantaged, are better prepared for	<p>Gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education</p> <p>B: 82.8% (2021) T: 88%</p>	Lao Education and Sports Management Information System (LESMIS)	<p>Government authorities have strengthened legislation, planning, monitoring and management capacity to expand and improve the quality and</p>	MOES	2 000	18 500	20 500

UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
					RR	OR	Total
school and have improved learning outcomes and skills to achieve their full potential.	Percentage of Grade 5 children achieving the minimum level of proficiency in reading/Lao language and mathematics B: Language 2.5% (2019) Mathematics 8% (2019) T: Language: 40% Mathematics: 30%	Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics Assessment (SEA-PLM)	inclusiveness of education for children, including adolescents. Education service providers have improved capacity to support schools and early childhood education programmes to deliver quality, and inclusive education with improved learning outcomes.				
	Primary and lower secondary school completion rate B: Primary: 80.6% Lower secondary: 69.3% T: Primary: 86% Lower secondary: 75%	LESMSIS	Children, including adolescents, and their families, have improved knowledge and skills to demand and contribute to improving quality and equitable early childhood and basic education and learning.				
Children are better protected from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and harmful practices, and benefit from a strengthened child protection system, services and positive behaviours.	Percentage of children 1–14 years who experience violent disciplinary practices B: 69% (2017) T: 59%	LSIS	Child protection systems and structures have strengthened frameworks, tools, and evidence to plan, coordinate, monitor and resource the delivery and expansion of quality child protection services.	MOLSW Juvenile Justice Coordination Committee National Commission for the Advancement of Women, Mothers and Children Lao Women's Union Lao Youth Union Ministry of Home Affairs	1 150	9 000	10 150
	Percentage of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 18 B: 32.7% (2017) T: 25%	LSIS	Government and other service providers have strengthened capacity to deliver integrated, gender- and emergency-responsive child protection and childcare services.				
	Number of children who experienced violence reached by health, social work/social services or justice/law enforcement services	Government reports	Parents, caregivers, children, including adolescents, and their communities are better equipped to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and harmful practices.				

UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
					RR	OR	Total
	B: 1,853 (2020) T: 10,000						
More children and their families, particularly in rural and poor urban areas, are using resilient, safe water and basic sanitation facilities and practise safe hygiene behaviours with reduced natural disaster, climate and environmental risks.	Access to basic sanitation facilities B: 71% (2017) T: 85%	LSIS	Government authorities have strengthened capacities to legislate, plan and budget to improve the quality, resilience and sustainability of WASH services.	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	1 050	16 000	17 050
	Access to basic water supplies B: 78% (2017) T: 95%	LSIS	Government authorities have strengthened capacities to improve the coverage, quality and resilience of WASH services in institutions and communities.	MOES MOH MOLSW National Disaster Management Office			
	Percentage of population washing hands with soap B: 54% (2017) T: 75%	LSIS	Children and their families have improved skills and knowledge to enhance their WASH practices. Government authorities have strengthened capacities to mitigate natural disaster and climate risks to children.				
More children benefit from quality child-sensitive policies and social protection programmes, which reduce their vulnerability to multidimensional poverty and the impact of economic shocks and disasters.	Percentage of children living in multidimensional child poverty B: 50.4% (2018) T: 38%	Multidimensional Child Poverty Report	The Government has strengthened capacity to generate and use quality data for child-sensitive, equity-focused and gender-sensitive plans and budgets.	MPI Lao Statistics Bureau MOLSW	2 100	8 600	10 700
	Number of children covered by social protection initiatives B: 0 (2020) T: 2,500	Social Protection Management Information System	The Government has strengthened capacity to design, deliver and monitor equity-focused, child-centred, gender- and shock-responsive social protection programmes and policies.	National Assembly			

<i>UNICEF outcomes</i>	<i>Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)</i>	<i>Means of verification</i>	<i>Indicative country programme outputs</i>	<i>Major partners, partnership frameworks</i>	<i>Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
					<i>RR</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>Total</i>
Programme effectiveness	Percentage of key performance indicators meeting scorecard benchmarks B: 56.5% (2020) T: 100%	Insight	Planning, monitoring and reporting Communication and partnerships Cross-sectoral approaches Evaluation	MPI United Nations	2 330	4 000	6 330
Total resources					10 730	95 000	105 730