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## United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Board

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Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda\*

### **Draft country programme document\*\***

#### **Oman**

#### *Summary*

The draft country programme document (CPD) for Oman is presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comment. The draft CPD includes a proposed aggregate indicative budget of \$0 from regular resources and \$4,368,522 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2022 to 2025.

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\* 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. Oman, with a gross national income per capita of \$14,110 in 2019, became a high-income economy in 2007.<sup>1</sup> Economic growth, political stability and socially progressive policies over the past five decades have transformed Oman from an underdeveloped country with almost no basic services in 1971 to a modern state providing free health care to all citizens and free education to all children, including expatriate children. Oman was the first Gulf Cooperation Council member state to give women the right to vote.<sup>2</sup> Oman has achieved low infant and under-five mortality rates<sup>3</sup> in a relatively short time, ranking near the top globally in terms of the speed of reduction in under-five mortality since 1990. Oman has also attained near-universal primary and secondary education,<sup>4</sup> and gender parity in education.<sup>5</sup>

2. The country's total dependency ratio is declining; a reduction that is expected to continue until at least 2030, providing opportunities to accelerate economic growth.<sup>6</sup> Reaping the full potential of the demographic dividend will require equipping youth with enhanced skills, especially in technology and knowledge solutions. In 2020, expatriates accounted for 39 per cent of the population of 4.5 million people.<sup>7</sup> As part of efforts to become more self-reliant, the Government is prioritizing the strengthening of the workforce.

3. The country's unique contrasts shape the programming context. While Oman is a high-income country, unfinished business, or development challenges, still require downstream support, such as technical support for enhancing institutional and human workforce capacities. Despite excellent service coverage in health and education services, various indicators highlight the need to address behavioural issues and other challenges for children.

(i) Pregnancy outcomes need improvement: Neonatal mortality accounts for the bulk of young child deaths.<sup>8</sup> Almost half of under-five deaths occur during the neonatal period. An increasing rate of low birthweight (from 8.25 per cent in 2005 to 11.7 per cent in 2019),<sup>9</sup> high rates of anaemia among pregnant women (29.3 per cent) and pregnant adolescents aged 15 to 19 years (80.9 per cent)<sup>10</sup> are of concern. These trends highlight the need to improve the quality of the continuum of maternal and newborn care and maternal health-seeking behaviour.

(ii) Child nutrition has not shown progress. The prevalence of stunting (11 per cent) and wasting (8.7 per cent) among children under the age of 5 years has increased from 2009 rates (10 per cent and 6.7 per cent, respectively). One in four

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<sup>1</sup> World Bank Atlas Method (current United States dollars) for classifying economies.

<sup>2</sup> Al Kitbi, E., *Women's Political Participation in the GCC States*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Oman has an infant mortality rate of 7.9 per 1,000 live births and an under-five mortality rate of 10.1 per 1,000 live births. National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), Annual Report 2020, Muscat.

<sup>4</sup> 2019 net enrolment rates: 97.2% primary, 98% lower secondary and 90.1 upper secondary. UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

<sup>5</sup> Gender parity indices of 0.995 for primary, 0.980 for lower secondary, and 0.997 for upper secondary education. Ministry of Education, *Education Statistical Yearbook 2018/19*, Muscat, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office, 2019, *MENA Generation 2030 – 'Country Fact Sheet for Oman'*, Amman, April 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Government of Oman, *Census 2020 of Population, Residences and Establishments*, Muscat.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Health, *Annual Health Report, 2019*, Muscat, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Oman National Nutrition Survey (ONNS), 2017.

children is anaemic. The exclusive breastfeeding rate for children under six months old is low (23.2 per cent).<sup>11</sup>

(iii) The early childhood development index is low, at 68 per cent.<sup>12</sup> Coverage of services is also low: enrolment in early childhood education programmes for 3- to 5-year-olds was reported at 50.2 per cent (2017/18).<sup>13</sup> Some 79.0 per cent of five-year-old boys and 85.7 per cent of girls were enrolled in preschool.<sup>14</sup>

(iv) Learning outcomes among schoolchildren are below expectations; overall, boys underperform compared to girls.<sup>15</sup>

(v) The employability of young people is a pressing issue. Some 28,000 Omanis are projected to enter the labour market each year.<sup>16</sup> Currently, however, many do not have employability skills. The share of private sector jobs held by nationals was only 16.1 per cent in 2019.<sup>17</sup>

(vi) Gaps in the child protection system include the lack of country data on violence against children, inadequate prevention and response capacity, the limited mandate of the social workforce, and limited cross-sectoral collaboration. Regional data indicate that bullying (which is higher among boys), anxiety and depression could be risks.

(vii) Most existing services for children with disabilities, including special education, are limited to major cities. Efforts are being made to implement inclusive education in mainstream schools, while special schools for children with disabilities continue to operate. High costs impede the expansion of both. Many disabilities can be prevented. For example, Oman has a high rate of consanguineous marriages. The Ministry of Health provides genetic testing and health-screening services for couples, yet these services are poorly utilized.

4. Oil prices crashed in 2015, reducing economic growth and requiring the Government to reduce spending. In 2020, Oman experienced yet another economic shock from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, in addition to the fallen oil prices. Economic reform efforts are under way to address this aggregate shock. The economy is highly dependent on oil and gas, which generates 74 per cent of public revenue, but contributes only 30 per cent of the gross domestic product. Thus, the non-oil sector already has the potential to make additional contributions to public revenue to lessen the impact that oil price volatility may have on public investments and service provision.

5. Within the context of Oman Vision 2040,<sup>18</sup> the country has already made significant progress towards diversification and economic reform. Under the Tawazun Initiative, the Government has formulated the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan 2020–2024 to address the budget deficit, high level of debt and other fiscal challenges. The Plan

<sup>11</sup> ONNS, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) and UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Education administrative data.

<sup>14</sup> NCSI, 2018.

<sup>15</sup> [Progress in International Reading Literacy Study \(PIRLS\) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study \(TIMSS\) International Study Center, 2019](#). The average scale score for Oman was 431, well below the TIMSS scale centerpoint of 500. Average scores for girls and boys in Oman were respectively 438 and 424.

<sup>16</sup> Some 568,000 individuals are expected to enter the labour market by 2040. NCSI, *Population Growth Scenarios and Sustainable Development Requirements until 2040*, Muscat, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> NCSI, Annual Report 2020, Muscat. Oman Vision 2040 aims to increase this to 35 per cent by 2030 and 40 per cent by 2040.

<sup>18</sup> See: Government of Oman, *Oman 2040. Vision Document – Moving forward with confidence*, Muscat, 2020.

will also redesign subsidies and improve the social safety net. The economic shocks from 2020 will require some tough economic choices for the Plan: spending cuts to all departments of 10 per cent against their 2020 budgets have been announced, with plans to introduce a value added tax in 2021. It will be crucial that the Government protects critical social spending, such as the universalization of integrated early childhood development (IECD) services, social workforce strengthening and the expansion of inclusive education.

6. As part of accelerated reform efforts, the Government is developing an integrated social protection system that is comprehensive and shock-responsive. This will build on existing strengths to support the most vulnerable groups, as subsidies and other forms of support are withdrawn and taxes are introduced. Oman will need to build capacity for developing fiscal space analyses for social services and implementing public finance for children,<sup>19</sup> a concept introduced in 2018 with UNICEF support.

7. In 2020, the new Head of State, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, laid out the national priorities. Placing youth at centre stage, the Sultan underscored the importance of education and training, the creation of opportunities for young people, and the continuation of the policies set out in Oman Vision 2040. The Vision aims to realize an empowered, knowledge-based society that is economically competitive and ensures sustained well-being of its members. This will require a skilled workforce that is able to adapt to changing technology. Oman Vision 2040 also emphasizes youth employment and the empowerment of “women, children, youth, persons with disabilities and the most vulnerable groups”.

8. Oman lacks robust and disaggregated data on several child-related indicators, even on national priorities such as education.<sup>20</sup> Behavioural data underlying social norms issues, and data on child protection, disabilities, IECD and youth, are limited. Due to the economic slowdown, the use of administrative data systems had been prioritized over costlier surveys. The 2020 E-Census has led to the integration and improvement of administrative data. However, many child-related indicators – including Sustainable Development Goal indicators – require household survey data.

9. The country is vulnerable to natural disasters and to the effects of climate change. To respond to such threats, Oman has a National Multi Hazard Early Warning System and a well-developed emergency management system.<sup>21</sup> There are no specific issues related to migrants from neighbouring countries that are not covered by national agencies.

10. Information and communications technology and the role it plays in society is an important pillar of national strategies to achieve Oman Vision 2040 and to promote a smart digital society. National statistics show that 45 per cent of the population above 18 years of age use a computer, while 95 per cent have access to the Internet, 97 per cent have a mobile phone and 95 per cent have a smartphone. Ninety-two per cent of the population use WhatsApp, while Facebook is used by 56 per cent of the population.<sup>22</sup> The platforms where children’s issues are most commonly featured are Facebook (64 per cent), Instagram (47 per cent) and Twitter (41 per cent).<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Lievens, T., and C. Williams, *Fiscal Space for Social Sectors in Oman: Initial implications for UNICEF planning*, Oxford Policy Management, Muscat, 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Net enrolment rates by governorate are not regularly available and the completion rate, according to the new Sustainable Development Goal definition, cannot be reported.

<sup>21</sup> Al-Shaqsi, S.Z., *Emergency management in the Arabian Peninsula: A case study from the Sultanate of Oman*, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> NCSI, *Questionnaire: Penetration and use of information technology and communication*, Muscat, May 2020.

<sup>23</sup> UNICEF, *Public Perceptions Survey on UNICEF in the Middle East and North Africa*, 2019.

11. The new CPD, 2022–2025, is informed by the findings of the 2018 midterm review of the country programme, 2017–2021; several analyses and studies, notably, a public finance for children study undertaken to identify and develop fiscal space analyses for social services; an in-depth analysis of the child protection system; studies on administrative data mapping, government restructuring, the country's monthly cash transfer and COVID-19 social protection responses, COVID-19 impact and recovery; a situation analysis of children and women; and a situation analysis of youth. Participants included partners from Government, other United Nations entities, academia, the private sector and civil society, including young people.

12. The challenges for the country's children and youth require two kinds of support: institutional strengthening for unfinished business or development challenges, and upstream support to national priorities. The country programme components are the following: (i) strengthened evidence-based policies for children, (ii) enhanced systems and services for children and adolescents, and (iii) programme effectiveness.

## **Programme priorities and partnerships**

13. The overarching goal of country programme is to support the Government to empower all children in Oman to realize their rights and participate equitably in building a knowledge-based society and competitive economy. This is aligned with Oman Vision 2040, the Tenth Five-Year Development Plan (2021–2025), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and with the UNICEF Strategic Plan and the Gender Action Plan 1.

14. Based on priorities identified with partners and lessons learned, the country programme's theory of change is as follows:

(i) If analyses and disaggregated data are used effectively in policy and programmes to contribute to socioeconomic reforms and strengthen sensitivity to childhood issues;

(ii) If children and mothers receive timely, quality health interventions as needed;

(iii) If young children under 6 years of age receive early socio-emotional stimulation, appropriate nutrition, care and early education;

(iv) If all girls and boys, including those with disabilities, achieve improved learning outcomes at school and through multiple pathways;

(v) If all children and adolescents, including those with disabilities, are equipped with skills for the transition to life, work and engaged citizenship;

(vi) If the child protection system conducts enhanced detection, referral and management of cases of at-risk children, including those with disabilities;

(vii) If an equitable, integrated and shock-responsive social protection system protects vulnerable groups from deprivation and shocks;

(viii) Then all girls and boys in Oman will realize their rights and be equitably empowered to participate in building a knowledge-based society and competitive economy.

15. The assumptions are that the national commitment to child rights remains high and that Oman will have a resilient recovery. Recognized risks, for which mitigation measures have been designed, include a prolonged impact of the pandemic, continued

overreliance on oil and gas, and the persistence of certain social norms and behaviours, for example, those affecting pregnancy outcomes and young child nutrition.

16. The United Nations resident coordinator system has not been formalized. Other United Nations agencies present in Oman are the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Health Organization. United Nations entities coordinate on relevant programme areas, such as public finance for children, adolescent programming, social protection and the impact of COVID-19 on child well-being.

17. The theory of change process identified the following cross-cutting strategies, which will be complemented by external communication and public advocacy:

(i) Leveraging partnerships: This includes triangular cooperation with other national Governments and institutions to support innovative solutions and best practices; partnerships with civil society, academia, youth, the private sector and the media to achieve programmatic goals; and partnerships with other United Nations entities to support the Government on common issues.

(ii) Institutional strengthening: Arrangements with national and international institutions will facilitate training and accreditation, while technical assistance will be provided to enhance national capabilities, norms and standards.

(iii) Evidence-based policy analysis and advocacy: Technical support will be provided for economic and fiscal space analyses, evidence generation, evaluation and situation monitoring. The results will inform decision-making forums.

(iv) Social and behavioural change communication (SBCC): Evidence-based communication interventions through media, interpersonal, community and other channels will advocate for positive changes in attitudes and behaviours among caregivers, communities and the public. Building on previous work, platforms for community engagement and feedback will be promoted.

(v) Innovation will bring value, provide solutions backed by science, strengthen behaviour change messages and provide platforms for two-way communication, which are crucial for enhanced programme quality.

### **Strengthened evidence-based policies for children**

18. The planned outcome for this component is that improved public finance analysis, data and evidence are used to inform social policies and programmes for children, adolescents and young people, and to progress towards the realization of child-related Sustainable Development Goals. The country programme will strengthen the capacities of the Government and other national stakeholders to monitor the situation of children, adolescents and young people. It will support the use and generation of timely and robust data through approaches and tools that meet international standards, including the implementation of a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and the establishment of a nutrition surveillance system. Following the 2020 E-Census, the programme will support further enhancement of administrative data systems. Special attention will be given to strengthening tracking systems at subnational level in health, nutrition and education, to contribute to monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals. Efforts will be made to promote and support information-gathering on behavioural issues and their drivers.

19. The programme will also enhance stakeholders' capacities and evidence on public financing for children to improve policies, identify financing solutions and enhance the quality of service delivery. The programme will provide regular updates on fiscal space analyses and support line ministries in developing budget briefs and

child budgeting guidelines to enhance their budget submissions. The budget briefs will include sufficiently detailed chapters on health, education and social protection to monitor changes in social sector financing arrangements. Through analyses of the efficiency, equity and adequacy of social services, the programme will support line ministries to develop financing solutions that enhance social services delivery for children. Support will be provided to grow and maintain the network of public finance for children advocates. Government staff will be trained in public finance for children to strengthen the operational capacities of the social sectors. This component will also provide added value to all partners dealing with the challenges of meeting Oman Vision 2040 goals in the context of the current fiscal constraints.

20. Strategies to overcome the barriers identified include ensuring technical excellence in evidence and knowledge products, engaging in policy advocacy at judiciously selected forums, and leveraging strategic partnerships to translate analyses into concrete policies, programmes and results. Triangular cooperation will be undertaken with international entities to identify and apply innovative solutions and best practices. Media partnerships will be used strategically to support programme outcomes.

21. Programme partners include the Ministry of Finance and the Tawazun Initiatiiv,<sup>24</sup> the Ministry of Economy, the National Centre for Statistics and Information and relevant line ministries, including Education; Culture, Sports and Youth; Health; and Social Development, as well as relevant United Nations entities and private sector partners.

#### **Enhanced systems and services for children, adolescents and young people**

22. The planned outcome for this programme component is that children, adolescents and young people in Oman, including those with disabilities, benefit from improved social service systems and services. The programme component will focus on strengthening government systems and service quality, as well as on addressing behavioural issues.

23. The programme will enhance national institutional capacities to develop and establish an improved mechanism that will deliver equitable and quality IECD services at community level. The National Committee for Family Affairs will be supported to develop a national IECD policy and plan that includes at a minimum: (a) at least one year of universal pre-primary education services for enhanced and equitable early childhood education, (b) national standards, including in health and nutrition, on the care of young children up to 6 years of age; and (c) early identification of and intervention for developmental delays and disabilities in young children. The IECD model, covering children up to 6 years of age, will be rolled out in at least two governorates by 2025, together with an action plan and budget to expand IECD nationwide. Efforts will be geared towards identifying service provision solutions via the public and private sectors, both in schools and community-based facilities. Support will be provided to SBCC for the critical behavioural shifts needed to improve nurturing care practices for young children, child feeding, maternal nutrition and the health and nutrition of adolescent girls.

24. In the education sector, the programme will enhance capacities to achieve quality learning outcomes and equitable access, especially for children with disabilities, and improve the skills of adolescents and young people, as set out in

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<sup>24</sup> According to a Cabinet statement, the government reform plan includes initiatives aimed at laying the foundations for the financial sustainability of the Sultanate, reducing public debt, raising the efficiency of government spending by directing it towards national priorities, increasing government income from non-oil sectors, strengthening the financial reserves of the state and improving the return on investment of government assets.

Oman Vision 2040. To improve the quality of primary and secondary education, technical support will be provided to Ministry of Education reforms related to the Oman National Framework for Future Skills, which was adopted by the Government in July 2020. Support will also be provided for the expansion of inclusive education services, building on earlier gains towards an inclusive school policy and inclusive education teacher training. The programme will also support a diagnostic study of the education system and the operationalization of the Oman National Framework for Future Skills for adolescents and young people, especially those with disabilities, and will include life skills education and align with Oman Vision 2040. Together with private sector partners and relevant institutions, a multi-stakeholder platform for youth will explore solutions and develop pathways for youth skills acquisition, civic engagement, employment and entrepreneurship.

25. The programme will strengthen social services for the prevention, early identification, response, management and monitoring of violence against girls and boys. Using systems-building integrated case management approaches, this programme component will support the development of a national strategy and action plan for a comprehensive child protection system addressing policy, legislation, data, capacities, mandates, partnerships and financing. Social workforce strengthening, including repurposing of the workforce, will be supported through training and accreditation institutes. As part of a wider SBCC strategy on positive parenting approaches, the programme will support positive child discipline practices, gender equality in childcare practices and a safe environment for children.

26. The programme will support the government with redesign of the social protection system to ensure children and their families have enhanced access to equitable and comprehensive social protection services. Technical support will be provided to cover (i) an in-depth mapping of the current system; (ii) the development of an integrated social protection strategy, encompassing rights, thresholds, targeting and transfers, linkages with social services and delivery infrastructure; (iii) strengthening of operational mechanisms for a shock-responsive social protection system that can adapt and expand in a timely manner during crises; (iv) enhanced identification of vulnerable groups, and (v) a sustainable and predictable costing and financing strategy for provision of social protection services.

27. The National Committee for Family Affairs and other partners will be supported through triangular cooperation with other countries, exposure to international best practices, and professional development programmes by partner institutions, which will lead to accreditation of the workforce. Technical expertise will be provided for costing and financing strategies for IECD and inclusive education. Social and behavioural change communication strategies, employed through appropriate channels, will promote the changes required, particularly in IECD and in preventing violence against children. Multi-stakeholder platforms, including with private sector partners, will be used in advocacy and mobilization, primarily to leverage gains for children and youth.

28. Programme partners will include the Ministries of Culture, Sports and Youth; Education; Health; and Social Development, the National Committee for Family Affairs, the Tawazun Initiative, the National Centre for Statistics and Information, as well as United Nations entities, research, academic and professional institutes, and private sector and civil society partners.

## **Programme effectiveness**

29. The planned outcome for this component is that country programme effectiveness is enhanced by meeting quality assurance standards in programming for children. Support will be provided to programme sectors and partners to enhance the



effectiveness of SBCC and risk communication and community engagement as cross-cutting strategies. Interventions will align with a cross-sectoral SBCC strategy in the areas of health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, child protection, early learning and inclusion of children with disabilities. Meanwhile, risk communication and community engagement work will build on the strategies employed to respond to COVID-19, such as the ongoing collaboration with the World Health Organization on vaccine hesitancy and child well-being.

30. Other cross-cutting priorities will be implemented in support of national priorities through enhanced and expanded partnerships with United Nations entities and various international institutions.

31. Acquisition of capacities, human and financial resources and tools to effectively manage the country programme will be prioritized. Technical guidance and quality assurance will be provided to the Government on programme planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

32. A key strategy employed for this component will be support to the Government's Programme Management Group,<sup>25</sup> and support through the country management team. The group monitors UNICEF programme implementation and performance through key performance indicators and regular budget reports.

33. Given that the programme is funded by the Government, UNICEF engagement with the private sector will focus on leveraging resources to directly contribute to efforts by line ministries to achieve the child-related Sustainable Development Goals. UNICEF will guide investments by the private sector (via public-private partnerships and corporate social responsibility) towards key national priorities for children, such as the expansion of services for children with disabilities. Advocacy will focus on raising awareness about the child rights agenda to contribute to the application of child rights principles and policies in business.

34. Programme partners will include the Ministries of Culture, Sports and Youth; Education; Health; Information; and Social Development, the National Centre for Statistics and Information, as well as the media, private sector and civil society partners.

### 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>
Strengthened evidence-based policies for children	0	1 933	1 933
Enhanced systems and services for children, adolescents and young people	0	1 283	1 283
Programme effectiveness	0	1 153	1 153
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4 369</b>	<b>4 369</b>

<sup>25</sup> Made up of representatives from UNICEF and the Ministries of Education; Health; and Social Development, and the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

## **Programme and risk management**

35. This country programme document outlines 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.

36. UNICEF Oman does not currently make cash transfers to civil society organizations or government partners, so the harmonized approach to cash transfers has not been applied. UNICEF Oman provides liaison support for the procurement requests from the Government to the UNICEF Supply Division, which are funded by direct transfers from the Ministry of Health to the Supply Division. Should cash transfers become a requirement of the country programme, UNICEF will operationalize them in agreement with the Government and in accordance with the policy related to harmonized approaches to cash transfers and other relevant risk management measures.

37. The Security Risk Assessment, Security Plan, Minimum Operating Security Standards and Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards were all updated in October 2020. These documents are reviewed and updated annually, or whenever deemed necessary.

38. In recognition of the country's high-income status, UNICEF will continue to rely on funding from the Government to support the programme. Funding will be sustained through demonstration of the added value of the programme towards achieving national priorities with specific focus on: (i) supporting the Government to respond to its commitments to achieve the child-related Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; (ii) technical excellence in all matters related to children using robust evidence and UNICEF extensive global expertise; (iii) cooperation and knowledge exchange with other countries to allow Oman to benefit from the UNICEF global network, while other countries benefit from the experience of Oman and its success stories in regard to human development; (iv) advocacy – including through pilot projects – to elevate the children's agenda and to sustain and leverage the required resources; and (v) high-impact interventions with catalytic effect, in line with government priorities.

39. Notable management initiatives will include a drive to ensure cost effectiveness and cost savings in the programme, especially in terms of operational costs. Such initiatives will include the use of United Nations Volunteers and other human resource deployments for some functions. UNICEF will also continue to increase efficiencies through collaboration on operational modalities with other United Nations entities present in Oman.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

40. UNICEF, in partnership with the Programme Management Group, will monitor results through annual management plans and rolling workplans. Reviews will be held as necessary with the group, government technical working groups and private sector partners. Progress towards planned results will be monitored using the results and resources framework indicators, which are based on the UNICEF Strategic Plan and the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Region programme areas for acceleration.

41. Several components of the country programme will contribute to strengthening national monitoring and evaluation capacity. In coordination with the Government, UNICEF will evaluate specific interventions and approaches, and support additional research as necessary. Midterm and endterm country programme reviews will determine programme relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

## Annex

## Results and resources framework

## Oman – UNICEF country programme of cooperation, 2022–2025

<p><b>Convention on the Rights of the Child:</b> Articles 2–4, 6–8, 12–13, 17, 19, 23–29 and 33–34.</p> <p><b>National priorities:</b> Oman Tenth Five-Year Development Plan (2021–2025), Oman 2040 Vision, Sustainable Development Goals 1–6, 8, 10–13 and 17</p>
<p><b>United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) outcomes involving UNICEF:</b> Not applicable (there is no United Nations resident coordinator system in Oman)</p>
<p><b>Related UNICEF Strategic Plan Goal Areas:</b> Goal Areas 1 to 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
<p><b>Outcome 1. Strengthened evidence-based policies for children</b> By 2025, improved public finance analysis, data and evidence are used to inform social policies and programmes for children, adolescents and young people, and to progress towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.</p>	<p><b>Outcome 1 indicators</b> 1.1 Percentage of key child-related SDG indicators monitored through national surveys or administrative data Nationally: B: 56% (2020) T: at least 80%, disaggregated by Governorate and sex (2025)</p> <p>1.2. Single registry developed for an integrated social protection system B: Fragmented information systems (2020) T: Single Social Registry (2025)</p>	<p>National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) data UNICEF SDG Data Portal</p> <p>Ministry of Social Development records</p>	<p><b>Output 1.1. Enhanced availability and quality of data on children</b> By 2025, evidence is available to monitor progress on child-related SDGs and national development targets, through national household surveys, enhanced administrative systems across health, education, and social and child protection.</p>	<p>Ministry of Finance and the Tawazun Initiative; Ministry of Economy; NCSI; relevant line ministries, which include Ministries of Culture, Sports and Youth; Education; Health; and Social Development</p>	0	1 933	1 933

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
	1.3. Percentage of health, education and social welfare spending as a proportion of government expenditure  B: Health-5.4%, Education-12.9%, Social welfare-TBD% <sup>26</sup> of government expenditure (2020) T: Health-15%, Education-15%, Social welfare-TBD of government expenditure (TBD) (2025)	Ministry of Finance data	<b>Output 1.2. Improved policies and financing for children</b> By 2025, policies, procedures and systems on public financing for children are strengthened, contributing to improved quality of service delivery in the education, health and social and child protection sectors.				
<b>Outcome 2. Enhanced systems and services for children, adolescents and young people</b> By 2025, all children, adolescents and young people in Oman, including those with disabilities, benefit from improved social service systems and services.	<b>Outcome 2. Indicators</b> 2.1. Participation rate of five-year-olds in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), disaggregated by sex and governorate  B: Boys-79.0%, Girls-85.7%, Total-82.3% (2018) T: Total-95% (2025)	Ministry of Education administrative data	<b>Output 2.1. Integrated early childhood development</b> By 2025, integrated ECD mechanisms across relevant sectors are developed, contributing to equitable and quality services at community level.	Ministries of Culture, Sports and Youth; Education; Health; and Social Development, the National Committee for Family Affairs, the Tawazun Initiative, NCSI, research, academic and professional institutes, private sector, civil society	0	1 283	1 283
	2.2. Percentage of children aged 36–59 months with whom an adult has engaged in four or more activities to promote learning and school readiness in the last 3 days  B: Boys-77.8%, Girls-83.8%, Total-80.7% (2014) T: Total-90%	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey					
	2.3. The Oman National Framework for Future Skills (including life skills) is	Ministry of Education and Ministry of	<b>Output 2.2. Learning outcomes and skills</b>				

<sup>26</sup> Data on social protection expenditure are currently not available.

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>endorsed by the Ministry of Education for accredited programmes and licensed training providers, and to the relevant parts of the preparatory (primary), secondary and tertiary education curricula</p> <p>B: Oman National Framework for Future Skills not started yet (2020). T: Oman National Framework for Future Skills endorsed by the Ministry of Education for use in concerned programmes and curricula (2025)</p>	Culture, Sports and Youth endorsed documents	By 2025, policies, procedures and systems on quality learning and equitable access to education, especially for children with disabilities, are strengthened including improved skills of adolescents and young people, in line with Oman Vision 2040.				
	<p>2.4. Multisectoral Youth Strategy aligned with Oman Vision 2040 is adopted by the Government</p> <p>B: Youth Strategy not started yet (2020). T: Strategy adopted by the Government (2025)</p>						
	<p>2.5. Percentage of children and adolescents with disabilities (5–17 years of age) who are enrolled in education.</p> <p>B: 57% (2020). T: At least 70% (2025)</p>	E-Census					
	<p>2.6. National Strategy and Action Plan for Child Protection system adopted by the Government</p>	Ministries of Social Development, Health and Education	<b>Output 2.3. Child Protection</b> By 2025, the child protection national system and the social workforce are strengthened for the prevention, early				

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: No national strategy and action plan for child protection system (2020). T: Strategy and action plan meeting national criteria adopted (2025)	endorsed document	identification, response/management and monitoring of violence against girls and boys.				
	2.7. Percentage of girls and boys who have experienced violence reached by health, social work or justice/law enforcement services B: Girls (TBD), Boys (TBD) (2019) T: Girls (TBD), Boys (TBD) (2025)	Ministry of Social Development data					
	2.8. Social workforce roles are repurposed, defined, and adopted for integrated service delivery B: Review of roles not yet started (2020) T: Roles repurposed, defined and adopted by the Government (2025)	Ministries of Social Development, Health and Education revised and endorsed terms of reference					
	2.9. Proportion of children covered by social protection floors/systems B: Children (TBD) (2020) T: Children (TBD) (2025)	Ministry of Social Development administrative data	<b>Output 2.4. Social protection for vulnerable groups</b> By 2025, national systems are strengthened to provide enhanced access to child-centred, equitable, integrated and shock-responsive social protection services.				

<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>
<b>Outcome 3. Programme effectiveness</b> By 2025, country programme effectiveness is enhanced by meeting quality assurance standards in programming for children.	3.1. Percentage of core measures of performance scorecard that meet high performance grading criteria B: 80% (2020) T: > 90% (2025)	UNICEF performance management system (InSight)	<b>Output 3.1. Effective management</b> By 2025, UNICEF staff and partners are provided with the capacities, human and financial resources, and tools to effectively manage the country programme.	Ministries of Culture, Sports and Youth; Education; Health; Information; and Social Development, NCSI, media, private sector, civil society	0	1 153	1 153
	3.2 Communication and community engagement platforms/ mechanisms supported by UNICEF meet quality standards across development priorities. B: Level 1 - 25% (2020) T: Level 4 - 100% (2025)	Programme management group reports; annual and bi-annual reviews. Midterm review of the country programme.					
<b>Total resources</b>					<b>0</b>	<b>4 369</b>	<b>4 369</b>