

Office of the Secretary of the UNICEF Executive Board

Template for delegations commenting on the country programme documents

2021 second regular session

Country programme document posting period: 16 June to 6 July 2021

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: **Eritrea**

In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/1, 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 will be made public on the Executive Board website, and considered by the requesting country, in close consultation with UNICEF.

General comments	Delegations' comments	Response
The United States encourages UNICEF country office to engage stakeholders to address the following in the CPD:		We thank the government of USA for its review and valuable feedback on the Eritrea draft country programme. Below are brief responses to the comments.
1. Sex and age disaggregated data -- to consider designing surveys with specific questions that examine the unique needs of vulnerable populations including girls and people with disabilities.		Equity focused approach has been central to UNICEF Eritrea's programming approach. Inclusive programming focusing on girls and children/people with disabilities is undertaken both as cross-cutting as well as specific interventions. For example, inclusive programming benefiting children/girls with disabilities include inclusive education, social protection via cash transfers and donkey for schools targeting households with children with disabilities, and community-based rehabilitation providing family support and referral services. The new CP as reflected under M&E section would further deepen the space for disaggregated sex/age data-based surveys as part of social protection portfolio as was evident in recent years (for e.g., social service mapping surveys, out of school surveys and proposed survey on impact of covid-19 on school drop-outs).

<p>2. Program and risk management – to consider conducting a risk analysis to identify and manage risks specific to the Eritrean context including the risks of fraud, waste, and abuse. Noting that strengthening risk management practices was a high priority action in the internal UNICEF Country Office audit from 2018, we ask UNICEF to include these in the “Programme and risk management” section of the CPD.</p>		<p>This CPD is informed by situation analysis of children in Eritrea including the impact of COVID-19 on situation of children and women in Eritrea, thus accentuating the focus on Risk Informed Programming (RIP) in this Country programme. UNICEF Eritrea continues to periodically update the programme criticality analysis with a focus on risks pertaining to Strategic/Programmatic, Institutional, Operational and Contextual aspects that resulted in the development of the Country Office Enterprise Risk Management Plan (ERM), which is updated on a yearly basis. The last update has been completed in April-May 2021.</p>
<p>3. A feedback mechanism to capture suggestions and complaints. We ask UNICEF to ensure a feedback mechanism for programming in the Monitoring and Evaluation section.</p>		<p>Our accelerated focus on Community Based Platforms for delivery of integrated quality essential services at local level is central to foster systematic community engagement and people-centric programming. The frontline community workers have been key to feedback mechanism for any course correction. Harmonised strategy to community engagement, communication and information-sharing, feedback and complaints mechanisms will be systematically adopted. Initiatives include consultation and validation with vulnerable groups and communities of lessons learned and validation of the approaches used for programmes. The above has been adjusted in the CPD under para 59.</p>
<p>4. Risks of COVID-19 on program implementation and how UNICEF would adapt. We ask UNICEF to include these in the CPD.</p>		<p>In 2020 and to date, UNICEF Eritrea has supported the government’s efforts at continuity of critical services for children and women, despite the movement restrictions. With the pandemic persisting unabated, full socio-economic impact and its implications on children will need to be continuously assessed. The country is grappling with a health system overwhelmed by COVID-19 caseload, as well as strains on WASH infrastructures and facilities at community and at facility level. UNICEF Eritrea intends to sustain its advocacy on ‘safe school reopening,’ and the Risk Communication & Community Engagement on Infection Prevention Control measures, which till now have provided necessary confidence to the Government. In the new country programme, UNICEF will draw on a few lessons, especially on the need for contingency preparedness and procurement of critical medical equipment’s and PPE. The UN assessment on socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 has</p>

		<p>enabled UNICEF to reprioritise funding allocations for cash transfer to Vulnerable Populations as part of our ongoing Social Protection programme.</p> <p>Thus, the new Country programme factors-in the risk-informed programming approach including lessons drawn from COVID-19. Given the word limit, we were constrained to elaborate further on the program adaptations undertaken in the new CPD narrative.</p>
<p>The United States and other Executive Board members - in formal and informal meetings of the Executive Board and with UN leadership, including the Development Coordination Office (DCO) – as well as OP74 of A/Res/75/233 have set clear expectations that the UN development system do a better job to sequence entity-specific country program documents and their underlying Frameworks and/or outcome matrices. We note that only a draft outcome matrix was provided, without indication that it had been agreed by the Government and UNCT. In the future, we encourage UNICEF to ensure that finalized UNSDCF's and/or clearly marked 'final' or 'approved' outcome matrices are provided along with the draft Country Program Documents during the designated commenting period.</p>		<p>We take note of the point to ensure sequencing of the UN agency CPDs to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the need to ensure approved outcome matrices are provided along with the CPD.</p> <p>The UNSDCF Results Matrix has been reviewed by Government, who led and engaged in the visioning exercise and the prioritisation and strategic results formulation consultations. Subsequently UNICEF and other Ex-Com agencies have received the No-Objection letter from the Government, while UN RC provided a written concurrence on the alignment of agency CPDs with the UNSDCF Results Matrix and the draft document. Subsequent to the draft CPD's submission for commenting, the Results Framework was finalized and submitted to the Regional Office of DCO.</p>