

Eastern Caribbean multi-country programme

Country programme document 2012-2016

The draft country programme document for the Eastern Caribbean multi-country programme (E/ICEF/2011/P/L.16) was presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comments at its 2011 annual session (20-23 June 2011).

The document was subsequently revised, and this final version was approved at the 2011 second regular session of the Executive Board on 15 September 2011.

Summary of the situation of children and women

1. The eight autonomous Caribbean countries making up the Eastern Caribbean area (Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago) and the four British Overseas Territories (Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and Turks and Caicos Islands) range in population from 5,000 (Montserrat) to 1.32 million (Trinidad and Tobago). The poverty rate in the area ranges from 14 per cent in Barbados to 39 per cent in Dominica. The situation of those living under the poverty line is exacerbated by high income inequality: the richest 20 per cent of the population receives 57 per cent of total income, while the poorest 20 per cent receives less than 3 per cent.¹ Children account for a disproportionate share of the poor in these Small Island Developing States (SIDS). An estimated one half of children in Grenada are income-poor, for example. Children account for about 40 per cent of all income-poor people in Saint Kitts and Nevis.²

2. The most disadvantaged girls and boys in the Eastern Caribbean include an estimated 250,000³ children from income-poor families, as well as poor children (non-income-poor) from rural areas and outlying islands and those at risk of violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination. These include, for example, boys and girls who have dropped out of school; children living on the street, in conflict with the law or in institutions; children affected by migration or HIV/AIDS; children with disabilities; and indigenous children in Dominica.

3. Women and girls in the Eastern Caribbean suffer from a number of inequalities, such as unequal distribution of power and resources among household members, gender-based violence, physical insecurity and in some cases discriminatory legislation. Women are disproportionately represented in insecure and poorly paid employment and face inequalities in pay. Approximately 50 per cent of the 1 million households in the subregion are headed by women. In Grenada 40 per cent of children in non-nuclear-family households live with their mothers only, compared to 3 per cent who live with their fathers only.⁴

4. Progress towards attainment of the Millennium Development Goals has been steady by all countries. However, concerns remain about HIV and AIDS rates (prevalence averages 0.77 per cent to 0.95 per cent⁵), obesity, teenage pregnancy (from 3 per cent of pregnancies in Trinidad and Tobago to 6 per cent in Saint Lucia⁶), childhood diabetes, undetected disabilities (and limited services to treat them), low birthweight, low rates of exclusive breastfeeding and seasonal environmental diseases such as dengue. Of particular concern are increasing infant

¹ G. Galofré-i-Vilà, ‘An Overview of Socio-Economic Indicators in the Eastern Caribbean and Implications for Children and Households’, UNICEF, 2010.

² National Social Safety Net Assessments, 2009, supported by UNICEF, UNIFEM and the World Bank.

³ Estimations from UNICEF and the World Bank, ‘Compendium Report of Social Safety Net Assessments (covering Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Barbados)’, 2010.

⁴ Government of Grenada, Core Welfare Indicators Survey, CDB/UNDP, St. Georges, 2005.

⁵ Calculated on the basis of UNGASS country progress reports and data obtained from respective countries. Variation exists because Saint Lucia’s prevalence is determined to be between 0.22 per cent and 1.8 per cent.

⁶ Source: <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.ADO.TFRT>>.

mortality rates in Trinidad and Tobago (from 3 per cent in 1990 to 3.1 per cent in 2008⁷) and British Virgin Islands (from 2.1 per cent in 1998 to 2.5 per cent in 2007⁸).

5. All countries provide free and universal primary health care and primary education. Access to antenatal care and to a skilled medical practitioner at birth is either near or completely universal. However, early childhood development (ECD) services on the islands are far from achieving ‘education for all’.⁹ Service coverage is not comprehensive, and disadvantaged groups often lack access. The percentage of children under 3 years old who enrol in formal early childhood centres and preschools varies from 5 per cent in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to 53 per cent in Saint Kitts and Nevis. For children 3 to 5 years old, enrolment ranges from 55 per cent in Dominica to 100 per cent in Montserrat.¹⁰ In the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) subregion, only 18 per cent (144) of the 788 early childhood education institutions are owned by governments; the remainder are owned or sponsored by private operators, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith-based organizations. The quality of many ECD programmes is inadequate.

6. Average net enrolment in primary education in 2007 was 90 per cent, ranging from 73.4 per cent in Antigua and Barbuda to 99 per cent in Saint Lucia. Declines from previous years were reported in the British Virgin Islands, Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Enrolment rates in secondary education are much lower than in primary school, and rates are higher for girls (84 per cent) than for boys (77 per cent).¹¹ Boys also generally underperform compared to girls in secondary school, as reflected in the number of boys (33,377) compared to the number of girls (60,247) who wrote the Caribbean Secondary School Certificate (CSEC) Examinations in the eight OECS countries and Turks and Caicos.¹² In 2009, only 25 per cent of students passed at least five subjects,¹³ while 28 per cent did not pass any. Education receives a relatively large share of national budgets (average of 6.8 per cent of gross domestic product, or GDP, in 2007)¹⁴ in the OECS and 4.3 per cent of GDP in Trinidad and Tobago.¹⁵ The low exam-passing rate, gender disparity and inequity highlight a faltering education system.

7. Violence and abuse against girls and boys is reported to be widespread and has gradually increased. It is connected with the prevalence of gangs, drug and alcohol use, risky sexual behaviour, teenage pregnancy, corporal punishment, bullying, poor educational attainment and youth unemployment. A recent study on child sexual

⁷ Source: <www.unicef.org/infobycountry/trinidad_tobago_statistics.html>.

⁸ UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Children and their Families in the Eastern Caribbean (draft), 2010.

⁹ UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean, ‘Early Childhood Care and Education in the Caribbean Community’, 2010. Report prepared for the World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, Moscow, 27-29 September 2010.

¹⁰ S. William and L.C. Charles, ‘Early Childhood Care & Education in the Caribbean (CARICOM states)’, UNESCO, 2006, p. 13.

¹¹ Average percentage over the 11 countries with enrolment figures from 2005-2008.

¹² UNICEF, Draft Situational Analysis of Children and their Families in the Eastern Caribbean, secondary school net enrolment rate (2003-2008).

¹³ Passing five subjects in the CXC is considered acceptable performance for matriculation and entry level employment.

¹⁴ OECS Secretariat, ‘Towards a New OECS Education Development Agenda’, Nov. 2009, p. 10.

¹⁵ Nation Master Trinidadian Tobagonian Education Statistics, <www.nationmaster.com/red/country/td-trinidad-and-tobago/edu-e>.

abuse estimated a prevalence rate of 20 per cent to 45 per cent for the Eastern Caribbean Area.¹⁶ Adolescents, especially boys and those out of school, face many challenges growing up in the subregion. These include early initiation of sexual activity and its consequences, male marginalization, mental health issues, obesity, alcohol and drug abuse, migration of parents and disability.

8. Rates of migration in the subregion remain among the highest in the world, with the Eastern Caribbean exporting the largest proportion of its population in percentage terms globally.¹⁷ For example, the British Virgin Islands has an emigrated population of 38.3 per cent and Antigua and Barbuda of 22.4 per cent.¹⁸ The recent increase in migration from Haiti highlights the impact of natural disasters on migration patterns.

9. Eastern Caribbean SIDS are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters, such as volcanoes, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes and tsunamis. The Composite Commonwealth Vulnerability Index¹⁹ lists these SIDS among the most vulnerable in the world due to the prevalence of natural disasters, global warming and the susceptibility of the economies to external factors such as unfavourable trade agreements, fluctuating oil prices and unpredictable incomes from tourism. In particular, hurricanes cause catastrophic devastation to property and the lives of children and their families. Hurricane Tomas in 2010 cost Barbados \$8.5 million in damages²⁰ and Saint Lucia at least \$3.3 million.²¹ It also left an estimated 20,000 children and their families without safe water for up to two months.

10. The global economic crisis has exacerbated the inherent structural weakness of small, open and dependent economies and has slowed progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The GDP of the OECS group of countries contracted by 7.4 per cent in 2009.²² In response, most countries have reduced their public spending by almost one third. Unemployment has also increased considerably,²³ and unemployment rates among young people (aged 15-24) and women are two to three times higher than the national rates.²⁴ Unemployed people tend to rely on remittances from relatives abroad, engage in seasonal work or migrate to find work within or outside the Caribbean. Throughout the Eastern

¹⁶ UNICEF, University of Huddersfield and Action for Children, 'Child Sexual Abuse in the Eastern Caribbean', 2009, p. 10.

¹⁷ UNICEF Barbados and Eastern Caribbean Office (BECO), 'The Impact of Migration on Children in the Caribbean', Aug. 2009, p. 1.

¹⁸ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 'International Migration Report 2006: A global assessment', at: <www.un.org/esa/population/publications/2006_MigrationRep/Profiles_country.pdf>.

¹⁹ Commonwealth Secretariat/World Bank Task Force on Small States, 'Small States: A composite vulnerability index', 1999.

²⁰ N. Brancker, 'Business to get moving in Barbados', *The Barbados Advocate*, 8 November 2010, p. 2, <www.barbadosadvocate.com/businessmonday/default_bottom.asp?RetrievePage=20101108BMWWW/20101108_P2.jpg&TopNav=True&PageNumber=2>, retrieved 12 November 2010. Quoted material: "... as well as the fallout from the passage of Tropical Storm Tomas, 20 miles to the South of Barbados, causing damages estimated at BDS\$17 million."

²¹ Source: <www.caribbean360.com/index.php/news/st_vincent_news/47156.html>.

²² Source: <<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/IDA/Resources/IDA-OECS.pdf>>.

²³ UNDP, 'Social Implications of the Global Economic Crisis in Caribbean SIDS: Synthesis of the findings of 7 country studies', Dec. 2009, p. 18.

²⁴ G. Galofré-i-Vilà, op. cit.

Caribbean, a number of social safety net programmes endeavour to mitigate particular vulnerabilities. Nevertheless, due to governments' financial constraints and political preferences, coverage of social safety net programmes is far from universal. They do not reach even a majority of the income-poor and disadvantaged women and children.²⁵

11. Reporting on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is substantially delayed in the Eastern Caribbean Area, where 6 of the 12 countries have outstanding and overdue reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Regarding all the countries, the Committee on the Rights of the Child is concerned about the absence of comprehensive and current data in the State party reports and the inadequacy of national data collection systems in all areas covered by the Convention. The Committee notes that such data are crucial to formulate policies, monitor and evaluate progress achieved, and ensure that policy and programme changes target the most disadvantaged children. This remains a significant challenge for the subregion. Key child rights issues remain regarding social exclusion, inequality and violence, along with lack of social data and access to quality learning,²⁶ especially for the poor and disadvantaged.

Key results and lessons learned from previous cooperation, 2008-2011

Key results achieved

12. A number of research projects were carried out, providing a clearer understanding of the current situation for children. These also assist in advocating for policy changes to address the social policy gaps related to:

- (a) Social assistance to income-poor and disadvantaged children, women and their families;
- (b) Identification of significant national and regional data needed on children (which led to an OECS regional consensus on the introduction of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, or MICS);
- (c) Evidence on child protection issues such as sexual abuse, corporal punishment, risky sexual and social behaviour, and the spread of HIV among children and women (which sparked discussions in various Cabinets and the development of national plans of action and communication campaigns);
- (d) Trends in national budget analysis with respect to fulfilment of children's rights;
- (e) Evaluating the impact of Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) and NGO community-based adolescent mentoring programmes;
- (f) The quality of learning in early childhood centres (which guided the revision or establishment of national ECD policies);

²⁵ UNICEF and World Bank, 'Compendium Report of Social Safety Net Assessment (covering Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Barbados)', 2010.

²⁶ Covering ECD and primary, secondary and vocational education.

(g) Describing good practices regarding environment, migration, the impact of the economic crisis on children and the status of social investment in children in SIDS as part of the SIDS Paper Series with the UNICEF Fiji Office;

(h) The evaluation of NGO-led models for reaching at-risk children and adolescents outside classrooms, assisting UNICEF and its partners to strategically formulate a more holistic focus on the well-being and positive development of children within child-centred and non-discriminatory education and protection systems, as proposed in this new multi-country programme for 2012-2016.

13. In partnership with the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), UNICEF has supported the development of online DevInfo databases for sharing national data on children in the CARICOM Secretariat (CARICOMInfo) and Saint Lucia (HelenInfo). The OECS Commission and four other States have developed desktop versions of their databases. Following advocacy efforts by UNICEF, the Regional Caribbean Census Coordinating Committee has adopted CensusInfo as the platform for disseminating the 2010/2011 round of population censuses throughout the Caribbean.

14. Six of the twelve countries met their reporting obligations to the Committee on the Rights of the Child during the programme cycle. The review process leading to development of reports in the other six countries has been initiated or restarted. The Concluding Observations of the Committee were used as a framework for policy improvements. They were also used to leverage support from the United Kingdom Department for International Development to address some of the recommendations for the British Overseas Territories.

15. In policy and programme development, UNICEF helped Grenada to formulate and enact new child protection and family legislation that complies with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, while research on the impact of sexual abuse led to the development of three national plans of action. As a member of the Trinidad and Tobago Monitoring Committee of the Implementation of the National Plan of Action for Children (NPA) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF supported compilation of data on progress of NPA implementation. ECD policy, standards and regulatory frameworks have been developed in four States.²⁷ The HFLE curriculum framework was expanded to cover the full primary and secondary levels through an enhanced teacher training mechanism at the University of the West Indies. The aim is to develop specialized HFLE teachers. UNICEF also helped forge a partnership between the Commonwealth of Learning and the University of the Southern Caribbean to develop the capacity of teachers in Trinidad and Tobago on child-friendly school models and principles through in-service and pre-service training.

16. UNICEF supported five innovative programmes:

(a) Community-based rehabilitation programmes for children in conflict with the law in Dominica, Grenada and Saint Lucia;

(b) Development of a child-friendly school approach with an emphasis on alternative disciplinary practices in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica and

²⁷ ECD policy, standards and regulatory frameworks have been developed in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Saint Lucia, reaching 9,933 children from 33 primary/junior secondary schools (13.4 per cent of primary/junior secondary schools);

(c) NGO-led models for reaching at-risk children and adolescents outside classrooms (635 girls and 674 boys), to influence wider policy on programming for positive adolescent development, especially for children who are poor, out of school or having problems at school;

(d) Implementation of alternative and government-led early childhood models to provide early stimulation interventions to poor, rural and under-served children in children under age 3 in three countries;

(e) In Trinidad and Tobago, expansion of the national children's hotline (ChildLine), which provides 24-hour access to a counselling and referral service, with sustainable support from key line ministries.

17. In addition to advocacy, UNICEF has effectively used Communication for Development to deliver targeted messages through videos, public service announcements, poster and brochures to reinforce its policy and 'modelling' support to countries. In one example of the influence of this advocacy, a 2009 opinion poll in Barbados reported a major decline in approval of corporal punishment in schools. Acceptance of physical punishment declined 15 per cent among adults (from 69 per cent in 2004 to 54 per cent) and 18 per cent (from 74 per cent to 56 per cent) among children.

18. After the category-4 Hurricane Ike in September 2008, UNICEF interventions in the Turks and Caicos Islands allowed schools to reopen within two weeks of the disaster. Psychosocial care was provided for 15 per cent of school-going girls and boys through the Return to Happiness programme and provision of tents. The year 2010 was the wettest rainy season on record for Trinidad and Tobago. UNICEF provided girls and boys with school kits to facilitate their return to school in one of the poorest and most affected flood areas. In the aftermath of Hurricane Tomas in Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in October 2010, UNICEF assisted girls, boys and their families in the hardest hit areas by providing safe drinking water, hygiene kits, tents for schools and psychosocial support.

Lessons learned

19. To remain an effective and relevant partner in a middle-income region and to influence policy development for children and monitoring of their rights, UNICEF needs to assist countries to collect and use relevant, disaggregated and consistent data and develop baselines on the situation of children. This will require establishment of monitoring and evaluation systems for all supported models and sector system changes. The evidence must be used to provide more support to facilitate compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and State party reporting to its Committee.

20. UNICEF support to community groups for a project to help adolescents to protect themselves from HIV and resolve conflicts has shown the need for a more holistic focus on children's well-being and positive development within a child-centred and non-discriminatory education and protection systems. The new programme will look at learning throughout the life cycle, from early childhood (up to 8 years) to early adolescence (9-14 years) and adolescence (15-18 years). The priority will be on keeping children in and connected to school, as it is one of the

major pillars of the protective environment. Other efforts to strengthen the protective environment will focus on laws and policies compliant with the Convention and other international standards.

21. The economic crisis has shown that the social assistance systems in the SIDS in the Eastern Caribbean Area do not adequately protect children, especially the income-poor and most disadvantaged, during external shocks. To address pockets of child poverty and disparity, UNICEF will need to increase its support to policy and programming for child-sensitive social protection.

The multi-country programme, 2012-2016

Summary budget table

<i>Programme</i>	<i>(In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
	<i>Regular resources</i>	<i>Other resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
Evidence-based advocacy and capacity-building for equity-sensitive policy and programme development	8 500	6 000	14 500
Lifelong learning and protection	5 500	6 500	12 000
Cross-sectoral costs	2 000	2 500	4 500
Total	16 000	15 000	31 000

Preparation process

22. The preparation of the multi-country programme for the Eastern Caribbean Area began with the midterm review conducted between December 2009 and June 2010 for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, and in September 2010 for Trinidad and Tobago. The review was a consultative and participatory exercise and included the following key milestones: (a) preparation of an updated situation analysis; (b) preparation of evaluations and analyses; (c) two multi-country cluster consultations with government officials, NGOs and civil society; (d) two consultations with adolescents; (e) a consultation with the Government of Barbados, CARICOM, the OECS Commission and regional NGOs, including a church alliance; (f) a consultation with United Nations agencies, bilateral agencies and international funding institutions; (g) bilateral consultations with relevant ministries; and (h) two final midterm review meetings, one in Trinidad and Tobago and the other with ministers of the various countries, jointly organized by the OECS Commission and hosted by the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis. Following the midterm review, colleagues from the Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados offices came together to develop the programme for the Eastern Caribbean 2012-2016. It was reviewed by colleagues in the regional office as well as senior officials from the 12 countries, CARICOM and the OECS in a consultation meeting in February 2011.

Programme and component results and strategies

23. The overall goal of the multi-country programme is to contribute to realization of the rights of all girls and boys in the Eastern Caribbean area by ensuring accurate and current data on their situation, fostering an enabling, child-friendly and

protective environment, reducing the vulnerabilities of children and their families to social, environmental and economic risks and enhancing their participation. The programme details two main results to be achieved by 2016:

(a) Equity-sensitive national policies, programmes and budget allocations are made based on reliable, disaggregated data reflecting the actual situation of girls and boys and their families in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Millennium Development Goals. By 2014, all countries will have fulfilled their Convention reporting obligations and by 2016 will have taken actions to comply with all Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child;

(b) Governments have enhanced capacities to develop comprehensive systems of national policies, laws and institutions to ensure positive development and protection of all boys and girls, especially those who are poor and vulnerable to neglect, violence, exploitation and discrimination.

24. The programme will be guided by the human rights approach and the strategic monitoring and normative programming role of UNICEF (in MICS). It will have a gender-sensitive and equity focus to increase its impact on all children in the area. Building on the previous programme of cooperation, it will emphasize the use of evidence to (a) support implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and (b) advocate for public policy changes consistent with international standards, as well as budget allocation and programmes focused on children, especially the income-poor and disadvantaged.

25. Special efforts will be made to strengthen national capacity to monitor and evaluate the situation of all children. This will also contribute to implementation of relevant policies and programmes. Key strategies include (a) collection of data at national and subregional levels; (b) enhancing the capacity of potential Eastern Caribbean Centres of Excellence in advocacy, research and analysis; (c) sharing of experience to support scaling up of systematic approaches in ECD and education; and (d) promoting a protective environment and disaster risk reduction, emphasizing poor and disadvantaged girls and boys. Innovative state models and initiatives for possible scale-up will be supported in countries with the lowest level of gross national income²⁸ for South-South sharing with other Eastern Caribbean countries through the strategic partnership of UNICEF with CARICOM and the OECS. This new role for UNICEF will aim to position children high on the post-Millennium Development Goals agenda in the Eastern Caribbean.

26. Cross-cutting strategies include capacity development for rights-based programming and results-based planning. The convening role of UNICEF will help in building new alliances with a wide range of partners. UNICEF will advocate for behavioural, policy and programme changes that support inclusion of the income-poor and most disadvantaged children. The programme will contribute to and benefit from multi-country initiatives in education, protection and data collection and management.

²⁸ The countries with the lowest gross national income include Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, Grenada and Saint Lucia.

Relationship to national priorities and the UNDAF

27. The multi-country programme is fully aligned with national and regional policy frameworks, such as those of CARICOM and the OECS, Vision 20/20 and the National Plan of Action for Children in Trinidad and Tobago. It will contribute to achievement of several strategic priorities formulated in the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) of (a) Barbados and the OECS, and (b) Trinidad and Tobago.

28. UNICEF programming in Barbados and the OECS will be harmonized with 16 resident and non-resident United Nations agencies, focusing on three priority areas of the 2012-2016 UNDAF for Barbados and the OECS: (a) an enabling environment for effective economic and social governance and enhanced security; (b) social protection and poverty reduction with a focus on vulnerable groups; and (c) capacity-building and institutional strengthening. The UNICEF programme is also synchronized with the UNDAF 2012-2016 for Trinidad and Tobago in terms of United Nations coherence, and it will contribute to the two joint programmes and results areas of social statistics and poverty reduction.

Relationship to international priorities

29. The Eastern Caribbean countries are progressing to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The multi-country programme will focus on areas that need support to achieve the Goals, in particular Goal 3 (gender equity), Goal 6 (HIV/AIDS and other diseases), Goal 7 (environmental sustainability) and Goal 8 (global partnership for development). Since these are compatible with the Goals, the programme will also support realization of the principles addressed in the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and *A World Fit for Children*. The new programme will contribute to all focus areas of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan, 2006-2013, with an emphasis on policy advocacy and partnerships for children (focus area 5).

Programme components

30. **Evidence-based advocacy and capacity-building for equity-sensitive policy and programme development.** This component will build capacity in the subregion to gather, disseminate and use social data for national policy decision-making. The objective is to ensure quality social services for all, especially the poor and disadvantaged, in line with international standards. UNICEF support will focus on: (a) national disaggregated data on girls and boys, with special focus on disparities in education, health and protection and evaluation of national programmes and policies; (b) State compliance with reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child; (c) State actions in response to the Committee's Concluding Observations and Recommendations; and (d) national budget allocations to ensure coverage for excluded and disadvantaged girls and boys and their families.

31. Reliable, disaggregated and high-quality data are needed to develop effective policies and programmes that address the needs of poor and disadvantaged children and their families. Therefore, support will be given to development of (a) national monitoring systems for children that consistently generate data from national surveys, and (b) an administrative sector monitoring system covering the education, health, protection sectors. MICS will be supported for the first time in Barbados and

the OECS countries, and DevInfo will be further supported in all countries as a tool for disseminating information online. Evaluations of national programmes and policies will be employed to improve upon them. The programme will also forge partnerships with subregional Centres of Excellence to assist countries to generate, manage and share data on children and to assist in creating a regional Caribbean observatory to monitor children's rights.

32. The programme will seek to reinvigorate and support the commitment of countries to implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and compliance with State party reporting.

33. The programme will closely monitor child-related budgets and expenditures, to ensure adequate and cost-effective financing of key supportive systems (especially in education, health and protection) for children living in poverty. The programme aims to generate evidence to support governments in extending public services to the most disadvantaged children and families and to strengthen the coverage, transparency and monitoring of child-sensitive social protection programmes.

34. In order to ensure national disaggregated data on children in 12 countries, key partnerships will be strengthened with the Ministries of Social Development, Education and Health; National Statistical Offices; CARICOM; OECS; other United Nations agencies; and the World Bank. Partnerships will be sought with the University of West Indies and other Caribbean learning centres and institutions for establishment of additional (Eastern) Caribbean Centres of Excellence. The Ministries of Social Services/National Transformation, parliamentarians and cabinets will be pursued as partners to comply with reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and take action on its Concluding Observations. Together with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), World Bank, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), European Union and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF will continue its partnership with the OECS and Ministries of Finance, Economic Affairs and Social Services/National Transformation to work towards child-friendly budget allocations and child-sensitive social protection.

35. **The lifelong learning and protection component** aims to address gaps in access to quality and child-centred systems of ECD, education and child protection that cater to all girls and boys in the 12 countries. UNICEF support will focus on three priority areas: (a) access to quality ECD for children from the poorest communities; (b) non-discriminatory and child-centred education for all primary and secondary school children; and (c) enhanced child protection laws, policies, services and systems. This programme will be supported by the data and evidence gathered as part of the first component.

36. The programme will build on alternative models assisted during the 2008-2011 programme to reach children from birth through age 5 in poor communities with early stimulation as well as detection of developmental or cognitive delays. The emphasis will be on ensuring national policy development, standard-setting through the evaluation of national policies and programmes, the development and use of an interactive curriculum for this age group, and data, monitoring and budgeting for sustainability and national coverage.

37. The programme will also support governments to establish positive, child-centred learning environments offering quality education. As such, the emphasis

will be on integrating the child-friendly approach (including a ban on corporal punishment) into national education policies and then into all primary and secondary schools. Support will also be given to education reform initiatives, including curriculum development. The emphasis is on the psychosocial development of children and completion of secondary school.

38. Another important priority is ensuring that children have access to effective child protection services framed within updated laws, policies and systems. Legal reform will focus on the status of children, children in conflict with the law, domestic violence, care and protection. Countries will be supported to develop action plans with financial resources, monitoring indicators and strategies to ensure that effective social services are available to those who are vulnerable to neglect, violence, exploitation and discrimination. This includes children living on the street, in conflict with the law and affected by migration, as well as victims of sexual abuse. With evidence, governments will be supported to nationalize and institutionalize court diversion models for juveniles in conflict with the law.

39. Emergency preparedness and disaster risk reduction strategies will be mainstreamed within the various intermediate results. This effort will concentrate on child protection and education, for which UNICEF assumes cluster leadership in case of a humanitarian crisis.

40. Quality early childhood education will require the partnership of the Caribbean Child Support Initiative. The heightened work in education will require the partnership not only of ministries of education, but also the CXC, OECS, CARICOM, Commonwealth of Learning and the World Bank. Partnerships with parliamentarians, universities, cabinets and political parties will further child protection initiatives. Stronger partnerships will be sought with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies and Center for Partnerships to Improve Education. To engage public opinion and ensure funding, partnerships will be sought with the media, private sector, foundations and civil society in the spirit of corporate social responsibility.

41. The cross-sectoral component will cover cross-cutting programme costs in Communication for Development, resource mobilization and leveraging resources for programmatic interventions and communication.

Major partnerships

42. In support of national priorities, the multi-country programme seeks to consolidate its partnership with key ministries and institutions in 12 countries: Ministries of Justice, Finance, Education, Planning, Family, Youth, Social Development, National Mobilisation, and Culture; attorneys general, statistical departments, National Committees on the Rights of the Child, parliaments, cabinet officials, political parties and trade unions.

43. The multi-country programme will also strategically partner with subregional organizations and unions such as the OECS, CARICOM, CDB, Caribbean Broadcasting Union, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, CXC, University of the West Indies and other universities, Commonwealth of Learning, trade unions, NGOs, civil society organizations and faith-based groups.

44. Collaboration will be further sought and continued with United Nations agencies through the UNDAF (UN-Women, UNDP, Joint United Nations

Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Population Fund, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization), and international and bilateral organizations such as USAID and President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) programme, the International Organization for Migration, Inter-American Human Rights Commission, United Kingdom Department for International Development, Canadian International Development Agency, United Kingdom National Committee for UNICEF, World Bank, CDB and AID International.

Monitoring, evaluation and programme management

45. Key to this five-year multi-country programme will be the investment in solid monitoring mechanisms to ensure evidence-based results for children. This will involve strengthening national, subregional and office capacity in monitoring and evaluation in order to measure qualitative, quantitative and behavioural indicators. National child monitoring systems will be established in the 12 countries by strengthening administrative data collection in the education and protection sectors. MICS will be introduced into the OECS subregion for the first time. DevInfo will be further supported for data management, presentation and sharing.

46. The multi-country programme will pursue a more strategic approach to evaluation by supporting government-led evaluations of innovative programmes for children in order to meet the demand for replication and investment of successful models. The UNICEF office will develop a strategic Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to accompany programme implementation. Programme results will be planned with partners through multi-country workplans. The time frame allows for thorough midterm and end-year reviews. Programme activities will be coordinated by the appointed ministries of governments, and collaboration with the OECS Commission and CARICOM will continue.
