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Country programme recommendation**

Nicaragua

Addendum

Summary

The present addendum to the country note submitted to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2001 contains the final country programme recommendation for Board approval.

It contains a recommendation for funding the country programme of Nicaragua, which has an annual planning level of \$1,000,000 or less. The Executive Director *recommends* that the Executive Board approve the amount of \$4,509,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$18,000,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2002 to 2006.

* E/ICEF/2001/12.

** The original country note provided only indicative figures for estimated programme cooperation. The figures provided in the present addendum are final and take into account unspent balances of programme cooperation at the end of 2000. They will be contained in the summary of recommendations for regular resources and other resources programmes for 2001 (E/ICEF/2001/P/L.73).



*Basic data^a**(1999 unless otherwise stated)*

Child population (millions, under 18 years)	2.5
U5MR (per 1,000 live births) (2000)	45
IMR (per 1,000 live births) (2000)	37
Underweight (% moderate and severe) (1998)	12
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births) (1998)	150
Literacy (% male/female) (2000)	64/64
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female) (2000)	80/80
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%) (1996)	51
Use of improved drinking water sources (%) (2000)	77
Routine EPI vaccines financed by Government (%)	80
GNP per capita (US\$)	410
One-year-olds fully immunized against:	
Tuberculosis	99 per cent
Diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus	83 per cent
Measles	99 per cent
Poliomyelitis	93 per cent
Pregnant women immunized against tetanus	.. per cent

^a Excerpted from the publication "Progress since the World Summit for Children: A statistical review", prepared as a supplement to the Secretary-General's report "We the children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children" (A/S-27/3), and therefore may differ from data contained in the text of this document.

The situation of children and women

1. Since the country note for Nicaragua (E/ICEF/2001/P/L.31) was presented to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2001, some additional information on the situation of children and women has emerged. The fluctuating economic situation continues to affect the Government's capacity to expand social services. The drop in growth of gross domestic product from 9 per cent in 1999 to an estimated 5 per cent in 2000 has affected social sector spending. The Government continues to adhere to the goals for macroeconomic and structural reform of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility of the International Monetary Fund and should finalize the Strengthened Poverty Reduction Strategy (SPRS) in the coming months. It is expected that the Government elected in November 2001 will be obligated to implement the SPRS while it continues structural reforms for at least a year before Nicaragua completes all the requirements of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

Programme cooperation, 1997-2001

2. The 1997-2001 programme of cooperation (E/ICEF/1996/P/L.25/Add.1) was designed to support and facilitate national efforts to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the National Plan of Action (NPA) for Children. In

addition to programmes on promoting the rights of children, adolescents and women, education, health and nutrition and integrated basic services, an emergency and rehabilitation programme was launched in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch in October 1998.

3. UNICEF advocacy contributed to the enactment of the 1998 Code for Children and Adolescents. In commenting on Nicaragua's 1999 report, the Committee on the Rights of the Child recognized the Code's influence on compliance with the Convention. However, weak institutional capacity and coordination within and between sectors, in addition to budgetary constraints, limit the effective application of the Code. The Government's creation of Special Prosecutors for Child and Adolescent Rights and for Women's Rights was an important development. UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance to reduce the number of non-registered children. To date, 19 registration posts have been established in addition to existing registration services, and rural mobile registration teams have been organized, resulting in the registration of more than 50,000 children.

4. The health and nutrition programme supported National Health Days and routine immunization activities. Immunization coverage for children under one year of age exceeded 90 per cent for all vaccines by the end of 2000. Advocacy by UNICEF and other partners, including the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama and the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), with the Government and private sector resulted in vitamin A fortification of all sugar and the use of iodized salt by more than 90 per cent of homes. The micronutrient survey undertaken in 2000 showed resulting improvements in vitamin A and iodine consumption by children. Under the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI), supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 13 hospitals, 54 health centres and four local health systems (*Sistemas Locales de Atención Integral en Salud* (SILAIS)) were certified as "baby-friendly". The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with UNICEF and PAHO/WHO, continued the third phase of the "PROSILAIS" health project, with support from the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA). The referral systems of six SILAIS was strengthened through the training of health personnel and the provision of essential equipment. Local coordination improved between mayors' offices, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and SILAIS, as demonstrated by the development of local health plans in 56 municipalities.

5. The education programme included national and local initiatives. Support for early childhood development (ECD) focused on the quality and coverage of pre-school education and the design of a pilot training programme for pregnant and breastfeeding women, which is being evaluated by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for possible future expansion. Results included increased pre-school enrolment in priority municipalities (34 per cent compared with the national average of 26 per cent). The programme also supported the design of multigrade teaching methodologies for use in rural areas and for over-aged adolescent, out-of-school and working children in priority municipalities. Government efforts, supported by UNICEF and other agencies, led to an increase in the net primary school enrolment rate from 75 per cent in 1998 to 80 per cent in 2000. UNICEF contributed to the dissemination of reliable educational statistics, a vital tool for policy makers. UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) provided technical and financial assistance for the Education for All (EFA) review process and the design of a 15-year national education plan. The

National Child Labour Eradication Action Plan was the result of cooperation between the Government, UNICEF and the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO). In addition, 30 municipal actions plans were formulated and implemented with UNICEF support.

6. Through the integrated basic services programme, UNICEF supported decentralization and decision-making processes in 30 priority municipalities, including the formulation of 30 local development plans through a participatory methodology. Rehabilitation of infrastructures and the provision of equipment improved access to safe water and sanitation systems in three regions. However, progress was limited by different approaches to decentralization and the threat of politicization of programme activities, which was revealed by the mid-term review (MTR).

7. As part of the emergency and rehabilitation programme established after Hurricane Mitch, the “return to happiness” initiative for psychosocial care and rehabilitation reached 34,701 children. The “educational bridges” programme encouraged 37,090 children to return to school. Nearly 15,000 children were provided with backpacks, uniforms, shoes and school supplies. In addition, 400 “school brigades” were formed, 8,000 children and adolescents were trained for disaster prevention, 15 schools were rehabilitated and two were rebuilt. There were no epidemics in at-risk areas, largely as a result of an educational campaign about diarrhoea, cholera, malaria and dengue prevention supported by UNICEF and PAHO/WHO. The programme also supported the rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of 583 rural water supply systems, reaching a total population of 111,321; and the construction of 2,250 latrines for about 14,000 people, thus restoring basic sanitation services to pre-hurricane levels.

Lessons learned from past cooperation

8. The lessons learned remain essentially the same as described in the country note. In addition, it should be noted that despite efforts to focus interventions in an integrated manner, it was not possible to limit actions to the 30 priority municipalities, largely because of the relief and rehabilitation activities required after Hurricane Mitch. As a result, actions were undertaken in nearly 100 municipalities, and the expected synergistic results were not achieved, especially in the areas of water, sanitation and hygiene. In the next country programme, efforts should be limited to a smaller number of municipalities.

9. Strong cooperation with donors and inter-agency collaboration, undertaken with government counterparts, has been vital to improving the impact of sector-wide approaches and reducing duplication. Examples include the results achieved under BFHI; fortification of sugar, salt and flour with micronutrients; and the work of the Health Sector Modernization Commission led by the Ministry of Health. This collaborative model should be considered for the education sector, as well as for the water, hygiene and sanitation sector.

Recommended programme cooperation, 2002-2006

	Estimated annual expenditure (In thousands of United States dollars)					Total
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
Regular resources						
Public policies, legislation and special protection	250	200	230	200	200	1 080
Health and healthy environment	200	202	222	252	253	1 129
Education and citizenship	251	300	250	250	249	1 300
Cross-sectoral costs	200	200	200	200	200	1 000
Subtotal	901	902	902	902	902	4 509
Other resources						
Public policies, legislation and special protection	880	840	810	740	730	4 000
Health and healthy environment	2 040	1 400	1 540	1 610	1 410	8 000
Education and citizenship	520	830	980	950	720	4 000
Cross-sectoral costs	400	400	400	400	400	2 000
Subtotal	3 840	3 470	3 730	3 700	3 260	18 000
Total	4 741	4 372	4 632	4 602	4 162	22 509

Country programme preparation process

10. The Economic Relations and Technical Cooperation Secretariat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led the participatory process of developing the country programme, which involved inputs and feedback from the Government, NGOs and other counterparts. National partners were involved at all stages of the process and helped to identify programme strategies and priorities. Consultations were also held with key donors, including the Danish International Development Agency, SIDA and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), as well as with IDB and other United Nations agencies. The comments of the Executive Board were also incorporated into the country programme. The recently developed Common Country Assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) helped to identify priority interventions and geographic locations, specifically citing the need to improve vital statistics as a priority for joint efforts.

Country programme goals and objectives

11. The overall goal of the country programme is to advocate for and contribute to the progressive consolidation of a popular culture of respect for human rights through the recognition and fulfilment of the rights of all children and women. This is in accordance with Nicaragua's obligations and responsibilities as a State party to

the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

12. The main objectives of the programme are to: (a) increase public demand and strengthen national capacities for compliance with the National Policy for Integral Protection for Children and Adolescents, in accordance with the Code for Children and Adolescents, and with the two Conventions; (b) support comprehensive care and development efforts that aim to guarantee the rights of all children, adolescents and women to adequate health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene; (c) contribute to efforts by the Government and civil society to guarantee all children a good start in life through timely interventions for ECD that are supported by parents and are community-based; (d) ensure opportunities for learning through the provision of quality primary education, non-formal complementary education, and education for citizenship and peace; and (e) support the development of national capacities, within and between sectors, for emergency preparedness and the psychosocial rehabilitation of children during and after emergencies.

Relation to national and international priorities

13. The country programme will support the achievement of certain objectives of the SPRS, specifically: the reduction of infant and under-five mortality rates; the reduction of the maternal mortality ratio and malnutrition; ensuring access to reproductive health services and water supply and sanitation; the provision of primary education; and the reduction of illiteracy. The programme will contribute to implementation of the recently approved National Education Plan and National Health Policy, which addresses the modernization and decentralization of the health sector. An agenda for children and adolescents in the next decade is being drafted based on the declaration of the tenth Ibero-American Summit and the Kingston Consensus on Children and Social Policy in the Americas, which will lead to the formulation of an NPA for Children 2002-2010. UNICEF will advocate that this agenda follow a rights-based and life cycle approach.

14. The country programme reflects the organizational priorities of UNICEF identified in the medium-term strategic plan and the Global Agenda for Children. The outcome of the United Nations Special Session on Children will be taken into consideration during the annual review of the country programme.

Programme strategy

15. The country programme strategy remains essentially the same as described in the country note. It will build on the comparative advantage and accumulated experience of UNICEF in utilizing the results of local initiatives to design policies and methodologies; mobilizing alliances at all levels; strengthening networks; and developing integrated strategies that promote child rights throughout the life cycle. Priority will be given to strengthening national capacities to improve intersectoral coordination, institutional accountability, and planning and monitoring. The scope of the programme combines national interventions and local actions that will focus on 30 deprived municipalities in the central and northern departments of Nueva Segovia, Madriz and Estelí, and in the Atlantic region. The municipalities will be selected according to their levels of poverty, as described in the SPRS; the

vulnerability analysis undertaken by the World Food Programme; the potential to complement other donors' efforts; the need to consolidate past initiatives to guarantee sustainability; and the interaction with other United Nations agencies under UNDAF.

16. In pursuing a right-based approach, the programme will address: (a) universality, by focusing on disadvantaged groups in poor rural and urban areas, social disparities, gender inequities, and violations of the rights of women and children; and (b) indivisibility, by strengthening national and municipal coordination mechanisms and, through the life cycle approach, by promoting the convergence of services to achieve better care for children and improved development and participation of adolescents. Strengthening community-level capacities for decision-making through the municipal child rights commissions and school governments will contribute to participation by children and communities. The programme will support the empowerment of families with the knowledge necessary to provide caring and supportive environments to their children throughout the life cycle.

17. Since the submission of the country note, the country programme has been modified to incorporate emergency preparedness in each programme, which is critical in a country vulnerable to natural and man-made disasters.

18. The country programme will use five operational strategies: (a) high-level advocacy with the Government and civil society to facilitate decision-making processes, gain political support for the implementation of the Code for Children and Adolescents and the two Conventions, generate consensus on actions for the fulfilment of children's and women's rights, and ensure the allocation of necessary resources; (b) strengthening of institutional capacities to support the effective development and expansion of services at national and municipal levels; (c) social communication and mobilization to raise awareness of children's and women's rights in schools, communities and among the general public, and to ensure the participation of parents, children, adolescents and women in the realization of their rights while encouraging the demand for services and respect of rights; (d) creating and strengthening existing alliances to promote and support social accountability, monitor compliance of rights and ensure sustainability of processes; and (e) selective service delivery. The proposed country programme consists of three programmes, as detailed below.

19. **Public policies, legislation and special protection.** The programme has three project areas: (a) the application of the Code for Children and Adolescents and monitoring public policies; (b) special protection for children and adolescents; and (c) the right to a name and nationality.

20. The first project aims to strengthen the capacities of national institutions and civil society organizations for coordination and the formulation, implementation and monitoring of public policies, laws and national programmes. UNICEF will provide technical support for the formulation of the NPA for Children 2002-2010, and to strengthen operational elements of the National Child Information System, in partnership with IDB. The project will also support the Special Prosecutors for Child and Adolescent Rights and for Women's Rights in the establishment an investigative and rapid response system to address violations of children's and women's rights.

21. At the local level, 30 municipal commissions will be trained and action plans implemented for promoting and monitoring the rights of children, adolescents and women, with partial funding from the Government of Italy. As part of the National Movement for Children, civil society networks will be empowered to mobilize public opinion and demand for rights by children, adolescents and women.

22. The project on special protection for children and adolescents will support capacity-building of the Ministry for the Family, entities that provide special protection for at-risk children, and institutions which administer justice for adolescents. The aim is to reorient these institutions and NGOs by determining accountabilities and norms, and defining strategic plans. Preventive interventions will be supported in the areas of child disability, violence against women and girls, drug abuse, sexual exploitation and accidents related to landmines and unexploded ordnance. The Nicaraguan Red Cross and the Organization of American States are partners in efforts to prevent landmine accidents. As part of the UNDAF priority to provide universal and quality access to justice, a juvenile justice system will be established to provide appropriate and timely responses to children in conflict with the law and reduce the number of adolescents in detention centres. Assistance provided by the German Technical Cooperation and IDB will support implementation of the National Action Plan Against Violence towards Women and Adolescents.

23. The right to a name and nationality project will focus on creating a universal birth registration system, which supports the UNDAF strategy to improve national statistics. While the system is being established, the project will continue to support ongoing registration at hospitals, in municipalities and through mobile registration teams in rural areas, especially in the 30 target municipalities. The project will support efforts to analyse existing laws and mechanisms for birth registration and to draft a new law to regulate the process; organize additional mobile units in border areas and the Atlantic coast region; and implement wide-reaching information campaigns, directed especially towards indigenous populations in border and coastal areas.

24. **Health and healthy environment.** The programme will contribute to the implementation of the National Health Policy and Health Sector Reform Plan, including strengthening of the SILAIS model for decentralized primary health care (PHC). The main thrust is to complete the unfinished agenda of the past decade, including reducing maternal mortality and malnutrition, and increasing water and sanitation coverage. Technical assistance will be provided for implementing the National Programme on Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)/HIV/AIDS, together with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and with funding being sought through the regional HIV/AIDS multi-country initiative (E/ICEF/2001/P/L.62). The programme will have two projects: (a) strengthening national and local health systems; and (b) water and a healthy environment.

25. The first project aims to support national and municipal capacity-building. At the national level, the expected results include better application of policies, norms, procedures and strategies for enhancing the health and well-being of children, adolescents and women. The "Ten Steps towards Safe Birth" will be promoted and implemented to complement actions in certified "baby-friendly" units. The project will also support the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness strategy and the expanded programme on immunization to consolidate achievements in coverage and

disease control. With the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and PAHO/WHO, UNICEF will support initiatives for adolescents' sexual and reproductive health and the prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS. Training will be given to the Health Commission on Emergency Preparedness to reinforce, within the Ministry of Health, the "return to happiness" initiative for the psychosocial rehabilitation of children during and/or after emergencies.

26. At the local level, the project will support four new SILAIS, in addition to two of the six SILAIS supported during the previous programme period, and provide technical assistance to strengthen institutional and community capacities for PHC. Supplies will be delivered selectively to improve the coverage and quality of care with, for example, clean delivery kits to be provided to traditional birth attendants to address high maternal mortality ratios. The project will strengthen the capacities of community health networks and facilitate the exchange of local, national and international experiences. These actions will build on the experience of the PROSILAIS project.

27. The project on water and a healthy environment will focus on strengthening the technical capacity of the National Water Enterprise to develop a comprehensive approach to water, sanitation, hygiene education and protection of water sources in the selected municipalities. Water supply and sanitary facilities will be built and educational materials provided to promote attitudinal changes and appropriate hygiene practices. Support will be provided to increase water and sanitation coverage; improve maintenance and monitoring of existing systems; create effective quality control for water that also addresses the emerging issue of arsenic contamination; and improve sanitary practices in priority municipalities. This project will be implemented in coordination with the National Water and Sanitation Network, PAHO/WHO, SDC, SIDA, the USAID Environmental Health Project, other bilateral agencies and local NGOs.

28. **Education and citizenship.** The programme will contribute to ensuring the right to a quality education for all within the policy framework provided by the National Education Plan 2001-2015. UNICEF will work in partnership with other agencies to address such stumbling blocks as poor access; insufficient quality and relevance, including gender issues; low enrolment and insufficient parental capacity to support learning and the demand for better services. National-level initiatives will be combined with local actions in the selected municipalities. This programme consists of two projects: (a) basic education and citizenship for all; and (b) eradication of child labour and protection for adolescents in the work force.

29. The first project will support increased access to and improved quality of family- and community-based ECD and pre-school programmes in the 30 selected municipalities. Local initiatives will support increased coverage of ECD activities and net primary enrolment for the most excluded children. The basic education component will strengthen the outreach and quality of multigrade rural schools and teaching and learning processes through the development of evaluation tools for progressive student assessment, as well as additional learning materials. The *Escuela Amiga y Saludable* (Child Healthy and Friendly Schools Initiative) will be promoted and implemented in selected schools as an intersectoral activity. Municipal-level initiatives will feed into the development of national policies and strategies, especially to reach the most vulnerable children, and be used to leverage donor funding.

30. The citizenship component of the project will foster the participation of children and adolescents and promote additional learning opportunities and life skills practices both in and out of schools in order to build values of democracy and peace. Materials for social communication and learning will be prepared with and directed to authorities, parents, children and adolescents. Proposed results include the participation of primary and secondary students, parents and communities in the formation of life skills related to citizenship and peace.

31. The project on eradication of child labour and protection for adolescents in the work force will seek to increase access to and enhance the quality of educational models for over-aged children and protect their rights in the work force in 30 selected municipalities. The project will provide technical support for extracurricular activities that help to retain children and adolescents in school. It will also support actions to strengthen the capacity of the Child and Adolescent Labour Division of the Ministry of Labour to protect the rights of working adolescents. At the local level, a monitoring mechanism will be instituted to assess the impact of efforts undertaken as part of the existing municipal action plans to eradicate child labour. The Ministries of Education, Labour and the Family are the main counterparts, in addition to IPEC/ILO. Joint actions in selected municipalities will be carried out with the Emergency Social Investment Fund, mayors' offices, municipal child rights commissions, NGOs and the private sector.

32. Emergency preparedness is a cross-cutting component of the country programme. Efforts will include the psychosocial rehabilitation of children during and/or after emergencies, continuation of education and strengthening of national capacities for emergency awareness through the establishment of "education brigades". Training will be provided to teachers and students to increase their capacities to respond rapidly to emergency needs and, in high-risk areas, prevent accidents caused by landmines.

33. Regular resources will be used to guarantee core programme interventions, and other resources will be sought to maximize the results of key interventions and to expand municipal-level coverage.

34. **Cross-sectoral costs** will cover elements that support the country programme, including salaries of support staff, travel costs, operational expenses, and activities to strengthen capacities within the office and of counterparts to manage the programme.

Monitoring and evaluation

35. A five-year integrated monitoring and evaluation plan will assess the progress and impact of the country programme. Data for project indicators will be collected through routine systems and regular surveys. Baseline studies will be conducted, especially in the 30 municipalities, for indicators not presently utilized, i.e., the number of cases handled by the Special Prosecutors for Child and Adolescent Rights and for Women's Rights, the number of functioning school governments and the number of schools taking part in the *Escuela Amiga y Saludable* Initiative. Actions within each programme component will support the use of basic, user-friendly information for monitoring and evaluation at the municipal level. Some key indicators for the public policy, legislation and special protection programme will be the number of children registered; the number of cases of rights violations reported

and handled by the Special Prosecutors; and the preventive actions and special measures undertaken for children at risk. For the health and healthy environment programme, more traditional indicators of water and sanitation coverage and reduction of infant, under-five and maternal mortality will be used, together with indicators for measuring knowledge about HIV/AIDS prevention. Indicators for the education and citizenship programme will follow the Dakar Framework for Action on EFA, as well as specific indicators more directly linked to the programme, for example, on ECD, eradication of child labour, gender discrimination and inclusion. In addition to regular field visits, UNICEF staff, together with counterparts and donors, will monitor project implementation through periodic site visits. These activities will feed into annual reviews of the programme and the MTR, which will take place in 2004.

Collaboration with partners

36. The country programme has been formulated simultaneously with the CCA and UNDAF, resulting in clear linkages in specific priority areas, specifically legislation and social policies, birth registration, violence against women, health, education, water, environmental sanitation and STDs, including HIV/AIDS.

37. In the area of health, partners will be PAHO/WHO, which is supporting its national capacity-building and epidemiological surveillance, and the World Bank, for institutional reform. UNICEF will focus on community participation in the SILAIS. A donor coordination mechanism has been established for a sector-wide analysis, with the participation of IDB, PAHO/WHO, UNFPA, the World Bank and the Governments of Canada, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. Interventions for maternal and reproductive health will be coordinated with PAHO/WHO and UNFPA as part of UNDAF. In addition, UNICEF chairs the United Nations working group on HIV/AIDS.

38. In the basic education and citizenship for all project, activities to support implementation of the National Education Plan will be coordinated with USAID and the European Union, IDB, UNESCO and the World Bank. The Save the Children Alliance, Plan International and the National NGO Network for Children will be major partners for the public policies, legislation and special protection programme.

Programme management

39. The Economic Relations and Technical Cooperation Secretariat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will coordinate overall implementation and review of the country programme. Relevant sectoral ministries and concerned institutions at national and local levels will be responsible for direct implementation of the programme activities. Annual and mid-term reviews will be organized with government authorities, including local government officials and NGOs, donors and other partners.

40. To guarantee efficient programme management, the UNICEF office will address programming and implementation issues through improved collection and use of data and periodic reviews. The country management team will hold quarterly reviews of the status of the internal work plan, including the status of cash assistance, donor reports and other established management indicators.

41. Depending on the availability of resources and the result of a feasibility analysis, UNICEF will support the UNDAF proposal to establish two United Nations zonal offices in the Atlantic region.

