



## Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited  
3 April 2008

Original: English

**For action**

---

### United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Board

**Annual session 2008**

3-5 June 2008

Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda\*

### Short-duration country programme document

#### Guatemala

#### *Summary*

The draft country programme document for Guatemala is presented to the Executive Board for discussion and comments. The Board is requested to approve the aggregate indicative budget of \$891,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$4,619,500 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions for the year 2009.

#### **The situation of children and women**

1. Guatemala has a large child population: one half of its people are under age 18 and one fifth under age 6 (2007). The country also is unique for its low level of urbanization. More than half (54 per cent) of the population, the majority of them Mayan Indians, live in rural areas. The Guatemalan economy is also unusual for its strength: it is the largest economy in Central America, comprising 40 per cent of the region's gross domestic product (GDP). Significantly, over the last three years, GDP grew from 3.2 per cent to an estimated 5 per cent in 2007. The country also enjoys a low budget deficit, low inflation, and a stable currency.

2. Nevertheless, social indicators continue to be poor, despite progress in some areas. One reason for this is that tax collection remains weak, and tax revenues are insufficient to make the needed contribution to finance State responsibilities. Securing a high proportion of taxes in relation to GDP was one of the main objectives of the 1996 Peace Accords, but the percentage is only around 10.4 per

---

\* E/ICEF/2008/9.



cent (2007). The obvious result is a low margin for social investment (6.1 per cent of GDP in 2004). Improvement in social investment is needed in this country where some 51 per cent of the population is poor, and some 15 per cent is extremely poor, according to a 2006 national living standards survey (*Encuesta Nacional Sobre Condiciones de Vida, ENCOVI*). Moreover, poverty rates have not improved over the past three years, according to several indicators. As a result of low social investment and high poverty, marked by inequality, many groups are excluded from accessing services in health, nutrition and education. Girls and women remain particularly marginalized, showing low participation in economic, social and political life, though gains are being made in increasing their access to education. Linked to this widespread poverty are high numbers of teen pregnancies and maternal deaths. Progress on reducing the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) has been insufficient to attain the Millennium Development Goal.

3. Another challenge is chronic malnutrition. Among its schoolchildren, Guatemala has one of the worst rates in the world: some 49 per cent, according to a recent census in schools. The figures are more alarming among indigenous children, reaching up to 80 per cent in some areas, such as the Totonicapán department. Related indicators also indicate challenges: the infant mortality rate is 44 per 1,000 live births; under-five mortality is 59 per 1,000 live births; and MMR is 153 per 100,000 live births, according to 2002 official figures. Since the Peace Accords, education has improved significantly, to the extent that 90 per cent of children aged 7-12 are registered in primary school. Unfortunately, however, only 60 per cent of children finish the primary cycle. This means that reaching the goal of universal primary school education by 2015 will be very difficult.

4. Violence has reached alarming proportions: 275 child homicides were reported in 2005, 44 of which involved children under 12 years old. Violence against women has led to use of the term “femicide” to underline the fact that 536 women were assassinated during 2007, according to the National Congress. Other common types of violence are family violence and sexual abuse: seven out of ten girls and boys suffer some type of abuse as a result of domestic violence. Some 54 per cent of the cases of family violence involve boys, and 46 per cent involve girls. The home is the scene of child abuse in 85 per cent of all cases. Regarding the type of abuse, 43 per cent of victims suffer physical abuse, 41 per cent abuse due to negligence, 10 per cent sexual abuse, and 6 per cent emotional abuse. In 2005, the Ministry of Justice received 11,900 complaints of domestic violence, sexual abuse against girls and boys, and trafficking in persons.

5. A recent study of the impact of small arms on children and adolescents in Central America and the Caribbean revealed that Guatemala is the most armed country in Central America. In 2002, there were 181,051 arms legally registered and in circulation in the country, according to the authorities. However, according to United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, there were at least another 1.5 million illegal firearms in circulation. The Guatemalan Constitution guarantees its citizens their right to carry firearms, which are sold freely in the market, and this presents a unique situation in the region.

6. In Guatemala, migration has a major impact on children and results in large amounts of remittances. The negative effects of migration on children from families in which a parent has migrated have yet to be analysed in depth. Indigenous peoples make up most of the migrants, with significant consequences on identity.

7. In 2006, the number of international adoptions reached a record figure of 4,496. Fortunately, because of the enormous pressure from the international community, Congress ratified the Hague Convention first, and later on 11 December 2007, approved Adoption Law 77-2007, passage of which had been delayed because of opposition by special interests.

## The country programme, 2009

### 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>
Public policies and institutional capacity-building	287.0	1 502.5	1 789.5
Rule of law, participation and culture of peace	282.5	2 917.0	3 199.5
Cross-sectoral costs	321.5	200.0	521.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>891.0</b>	<b>4 619.5</b>	<b>5 510.5</b>

### Reasons for the short-duration submission

8. In June 2007, the United Nations country team agreed to request an extension of the duration of the 2005-2008 country programmes of the respective agencies to the end of 2009. This request was made so that the new Government taking office in January 2008 could contribute to the formulation of the next United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The next full UNICEF-Guatemala country programme, therefore, will cover the period 2010-2014. This time frame will also allow the programme to coincide with the UNICEF next medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) for 2010-2013.

### Goals, key results and strategies

9. The new Government, which took office in 2008, has stated that its programme will be based on four strategies: (a) solidarity — human loyalty; (b) governance — civic loyalty; (c) productivity — economic loyalty; and (d) regionalization — neighbour loyalty.

10. The international instruments that will serve as a common base for these actions are the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UNICEF Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies, the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS goals, Education for All, the Millennium Development Goals, and the UNICEF MTSP for 2006-2009. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will also be taken into account.

11. The main government interventions are: security, rural development, social investment, with special attention given to women and children, and housing. Due to the midterm review exercise in 2007, UNICEF has decided to give priority attention to indigenous children, including the Afro-descendant Garifuna group, the migrant

population and disabled children. Priority issues will be discussed between the Government and UNICEF.

12. The goals, key results and strategies of the country programme for 2009 will be the following: (a) budget analysis on social investment devoted to children and adolescents, the sponsoring of an Observatory on Social Policy and its use as an advocacy tool to increase funding for children and adolescents; (b) promotion of a civic culture for citizen's fiscal responsibilities within the educational system; (c) strengthened actions for promoting the rights of indigenous children, especially of indigenous girls, in preserving their cultural heritage through increased access to bilingual and intercultural education, health and participation; (d) actions to favour early childhood development, giving priority to the reduction of chronic malnutrition; (e) support to implementation of the new Adoption Law; (f) contribution to reduced violence against children and adolescents through work with school systems and municipalities to promote a culture of peace; (g) improvement in the legal protection of migrant children; (h) advocacy for the rights of children with disabilities, mainly through communication campaigns; (i) extension of results already obtained at the municipal level, increasing the number of municipalities reached; and (j) an increased role of social mobilization in favour of children rights.

#### **Programme components**

13. **Public policies and the strengthening of institutional capacities.** This programme seeks to increase citizen participation in public policy and promote sustainable development benefiting children and adolescents, especially at the community level. It supports national and municipal government institutions in formulating and implementing public policies. It also supports both national and local governments and non-governmental bodies in ensuring adequate conditions for the survival and development of the most at-risk children, adolescents and women, with a special focus on indigenous children, especially girls and migrant children. Key programme results include implementation of child-friendly municipal policies in 100 municipalities and increased social budgeting of 5 per cent for children and adolescents in critical issues such as integrated early childhood development and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and treatment and comprehensive care for children living with HIV/AIDS. In 2009, the number of child-friendly municipal policies will be increased by 10 per cent compared to the previous year, and municipal spending for children and adolescents will increase by 5 per cent.

14. **Rule of law and culture of peace.** This programme aims to create a protective and supportive environment for children and women by promoting and strengthening children's and adolescent's knowledge of their rights, with a particular focus on indigenous children. The programme will promote behaviour that is based on democratic principles through the enhancement of skills for securing resolution of conflicts and a culture of peace. Another aim is to strengthen the national programme and local systems for protection of children and adolescents, with an emphasis on municipalities with indigenous child populations, providing incentives to prevent violence against children. A third major area of the programme is the strengthening of early pre-school and intercultural bilingual education and guaranteeing the right to quality education for all, especially for indigenous girls. The education component seeks to articulate the efforts made by the Ministry of

Education with the municipalities to promote education management both at national and departmental levels, so that all children, including adolescent indigenous children, may have equal opportunities of education and personal development. Special efforts will be made to enforce the Adoption Law.

15. **Education.** By the end of 2009, the active school model known as the bilingual new school (*Nuevas Escuelas Unitarias Bilingues, NEUBI*) will have spread to 200 new multi-grade rural schools, with the coordination and support of 10 per cent of the municipalities in poor areas. Risk Management Committees for risk prevention have been established in 50 schools of selected municipalities. In these schools the education community will be organized and trained in risk management.

16. **Child protection.** This programme will have several expected results: By the end of 2009, local protection systems with emphasis in violence prevention will have been developed and will be operating in 12 pilot municipalities out of a total of 34, selected for local interventions in human rights promotion and training. These 12 municipalities will develop community models and strategies to prevent violence against children. A total of 10,000 girls, boys and adolescents will have been trained in democratic values and in culture of peace. Special efforts have been devoted to the promotion of probation programmes for adolescents in conflict with the law, and the decentralization of these programmes.

17. **Communication and participation for a culture of rights.** This programme aims to develop a culture of respect for human rights and the appropriate participation needed to fulfil them. Interventions will be directed to developing a culture of respect for the rights of children and adolescents through knowledge management. The interventions during 2009 will be the following: (a) systematize, process and disseminate five participation and communication experiences of children and adolescents; and (b) develop a training module for communicators on the rights of the child.

18. **Main actors in programme implementation.** Actors will continue to be national and local government institutions, the private sector, civic associations, rural and indigenous movements, non-governmental organizations, networks and organizations of adolescents, and United Nations agencies. New partners will include the National Institute of Public Administration; the *Hogares Comunitarios* ("community homes") day care programme under the auspices of the Office of the First Lady of Guatemala (*Secretaría de Obras Sociales de la Esposa del Presidente, SOSEP*); the *Pastoral de la Infancia* (pastoral organization for children) of the Catholic Church; the Central American Institute for Fiscal Studies; and the National Adoptions Council.

19. **Monitoring and evaluation.** In conjunction with implementing partners UNICEF will supervise all the financial support provided to associates. Periodic reviews in situ and through random visits will take place to monitor financial records, as well as programmatic issues. The implementing partners and UNICEF will agree on surveillance and financial control instruments for the programme.