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Country programme recommendation**

The Gambia

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 the Gambia, which has an annual planning level of \$1,000,000 or less. The Executive Director *recommends* that the Executive Board approve the amount of \$3,635,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$7,700,000 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).



<i>Basic data ^a</i> <i>(1999 unless otherwise stated)</i>	
Child population (millions, under 18 years)	0.6
U5MR (per 1,000 live births) (2000)	128
IMR (per 1,000 live births) (2000)	92
Underweight (% moderate and severe) (2000)	17
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	..
Literacy (% male/female) (2000)	44/30
Primary school attendance (% net, male/female) (2000)	54/49
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%) (1997)	74
Use of improved drinking water sources (%) (2000)	62
Routine EPI vaccines financed by Government (%)	60
GNP per capita (US\$)	330
One-year-olds fully immunized against:	
Tuberculosis	96 per cent
Diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus	90 per cent
Measles	88 per cent
Poliomyelitis	90 per cent
Pregnant women immunized against tetanus	89 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. The Gambia is a low-income country, with a per capita gross national product of \$340 for 1999. Its economy grew at a rate of 4.1 per cent the same year. It has an estimated population of 1.3 million, which is growing at a rate of 4.2 per cent per year. A life cycle and rights-based approach were used in updating the situation analysis of children and women, and the problems remain the same as described in the country note (E/ICEF/2001/P/L.13).

2. There has been a dramatic decline in the infant and under-five mortality rates (IMR and U5MR) since 1973. IMR has decreased from 217 per 1,000 live births in 1973 to 61 in 1999, and U5MR has decreased from 290 to 75 per 1,000 live births in the same period. An average annual increase of 2.2 per cent in the gross enrolment rate for girls over the period 1992-1998 indicates a faster rate than in previous years owing to the specific interventions introduced in favour of girls. These achievements are the result of the Government's commitment to invest in the social sectors, particularly education and health. The Government is also committed to the creation of a National Commission on Children's and Women's Rights to facilitate reporting on and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

3. The gross enrolment rate for early childhood in 1998 was 18 per cent, with no significant gender differentials. A repetition rate of 6.5 per cent and a retention rate of 67 per cent to grade 6 for girls show that a significant proportion of them still do not complete the primary cycle. In 1999, 24 per cent of the national budget was allocated to education, with two thirds of that allocated to basic education.

4. While skilled birth attendants assist 51 per cent of deliveries (multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS) 2000), the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is estimated at 1,050 per 100,000 live births. Teenage pregnancies in schools continue to affect the retention rate of girls. More than 60 per cent of the population practise female genital mutilation, and early marriages continue to pose health and psychological problems for children and women. MICS 2000 indicates that exclusive breastfeeding in the first three months has doubled since 1998 from 17 to 35 per cent. Malnutrition peaks at age 24 months, and approximately 20, 25 and 10 per cent of children under five years of age are underweight and/or affected by stunting and wasting, respectively.

5. The national prevalence of HIV infection was relatively low in 1991-1992 (2.2 per cent among people 15 years of age and older). However, the Medical Research Council (MRC) survey in 1998 revealed that the risk of HIV-1 transmission from mother to child is 25 per cent. The cumulative number of reported cases of HIV/AIDS from one sentinel site was 3,000 at the end of November 2000, and a prevalence rate of 3.5 per cent was reported from hospital-based data derived from a rural clinic.

6. The year 2000 will be remembered as a watershed in the Gambia's enviable record of stability in a subregion beset by armed conflicts and political unrest. The student demonstration of April 2000 resulted in the deaths of 14 young people and children, with several others maimed and wounded. This situation calls for intensive awareness creation of children's rights and child protection issues. The initial report on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child was submitted in July 1999 and will be discussed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in October 2001. The National Assembly has ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Protection and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

7. In summary, the main problems to be addressed in the new programme of cooperation include IMR, U5MR and MMR resulting from malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea and malnutrition. In addition, HIV/AIDS (particularly mother-to-child transmission (MTCT)), early childhood care and development (ECCD), safe motherhood, school retention of girls, water and sanitation and disabilities in schools, adolescents' and children's participation, child abuse and exploitation, juvenile justice and harmonization of the national laws with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women will be pursued.

Programme cooperation, 1999-2001

8. The Government of the Gambia and UNICEF signed a five-year programme of cooperation for the period 1999-2003 in the first quarter of 1999. There are three sectoral programmes and one cross-cutting programme — health and nutrition; education; water and environmental sanitation; and advocacy, social policy and

programme development, respectively. They are being implemented through eight projects.

9. UNICEF agreed to shorten the current country programme by two years to harmonize its programme cycle with those of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) by the year 2002. Although implementation of the programme of cooperation began only two years ago, significant achievements have been made in bringing child rights issues to the forefront of the development process through awareness creation and advocacy.

10. The end-decade assessment report has shown that, since ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and adoption of the National Plan of Action, the Gambia has made significant progress in meeting the World Summit for Children goals. However, several factors have constrained government efforts. These include the continuing decline in resource flows to the social sectors, particularly health and water and sanitation, coupled with weak institutional capacity for child-specific programme development and management, the absence of a corporate body of laws on the rights of women and children, and deeply rooted socio-cultural beliefs and traditional practices.

11. The major achievements were the revitalization of primary health care through the Bamako Initiative; maintenance of vaccination coverage; and progress in the areas of safe water supply and sanitation and the promotion of basic education, particularly for girls. In addition, support was provided for training; the provision of books and technical advice across the primary school curriculum; and sensitization of parents and religious leaders, in collaboration with Catholic Relief Services and the Forum for African Women Educationalists, on the right to education and the retention of girls in schools. With the support of youth groups, and in collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), significant progress has also been made in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention.

Lessons learned from past cooperation

12. The past programme of cooperation focused primarily on service delivery, with less emphasis on national capacity-building. Greater emphasis on service delivery has not necessarily ensured sustainability, as illustrated by a declining rate of immunization coverage. In the context of the new programme, capacity-building and community empowerment strategies will enhance service delivery capacities to maintain and expand access to basic services, particularly in the poorest divisions of the country.

13. The effective mobilization of youth to break the cultural silence surrounding HIV/AIDS has proven to be a useful strategy for the future programme. The programme will build on lessons learned from this experience to address such critical but sensitive issues as arranged/early marriages, teenage pregnancies and violence against girls and women to further increase the enrolment of girls and reverse the downward trend in their retention in schools.

14. The innovative Baby-Friendly Community Initiative (BFCI) strategy demonstrated that breastfeeding promotion not only mobilizes communities and families to protect, support and promote exclusive breastfeeding for six months, but

also can be used successfully as an entry point to community-based ECCD issues. The existing structures at the decentralized level should be given adequate means, in terms of both staffing and funding, to enable true coordination and synergy.

15. The integration of basic services for the provision of water and sanitation in primary schools in the context of the girls' education programme was successful. This has contributed to making school environments more girl-friendly and promoting school access and retention. The promotion of impregnated bednets has contributed to malaria reduction, particularly in rural areas. The new country programme will address the above-mentioned issues in three of the poorest divisions of the country, namely, Lower River, Central River and Upper River.

Recommended programme cooperation, 2002-2006

	Estimated annual expenditure (In thousands of United States dollars)					Total
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
Regular resources						
Basic services	258	252	252	248	250	1 260
Rights promotion and protection	151	154	154	154	154	767
Social policy planning	233	233	233	233	233	1 165
Cross-sectoral costs	85	88	88	92	90	443
Subtotal	727	727	727	727	727	3 635
Other resources						
Basic services	890	890	890	890	890	4 450
Rights promotion and protection	500	500	500	500	500	2 500
Social policy planning	150	150	150	150	150	750
Subtotal	1 540	1 540	1 540	1 540	1 540	7 700
Total	2 267	2 267	2 267	2 267	2 267	11 335

Country programme preparation process

16. The preparation of the new country programme for the period 2002-2006 was launched in June 2000, under the auspices of the Policy Analysis Unit, Office of the President. It involved government departments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), youth groups and United Nations agencies. A two-day brainstorming session on the situation of children and women in the Gambia paved the way for the strategy meeting in September 2000. Consultations were also held with development partners, including NGOs and religious leaders.

17. The preview meeting, held in March 2001, was conducted under the leadership of the Vice-President of the country. The mid-term plan, the draft outcome document for the United Nations Special Session on Children in September 2001 entitled "A world fit for children" and the Global Movement for Children have been the source of inspiration for the formulation of the country programme. "Say Yes for Children"

has been the entry point for the launching of a massive campaign to put children first on the national development agenda.

Country programme goals and objectives

18. The new country programme encompasses the key cross-cutting areas of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) from a rights-based perspective to ensure follow-up to major conferences such as the World Summit for Children, the Fourth World Conference on Women, the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development. Areas for follow-up include human rights, population, governance, gender mainstreaming, poverty, the environment and HIV/AIDS. Sectoral interventions, such as in the areas of health, nutrition and food security, education, and water supply and sanitation, have been identified by the United Nations system to be addressed to ensure convergence and coordination. In the context of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UNDAF, all United Nations agencies, donors, NGOs and youth groups were invited to provide inputs in the formulation of the programme documents.

19. The programme will aim to reach the most vulnerable groups in three divisions (Central River, Lower River and Upper River), selected based on the following criteria: (a) high prevalence of poverty; (b) high fertility rate; (c) high IMR, U5MR and MMR; and (d) low primary school enrolment and high drop-out rates, particularly for girls. The multisectoral set-up of the programme of cooperation will contribute to improving coordination and the integration of traditional sectoral interventions as part of the decentralization process defined in the long-term Vision 2020, the National Governance Policy and Strategy, and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

20. The overall goal of the proposed programme of cooperation will be to contribute to the survival, development, protection and participation of children and women in the context of the national development of the Gambia. By the year 2000, the country programme will contribute to: (a) the reduction of MMR by 10 per cent and U5MR by at least 20 per cent; (b) an increase in equitable access to quality basic education from 63 to 80 per cent in the selected geographic areas; (c) the provision of ECCD to ensure that 50,000 children reaching the age of eight years in the three selected divisions are physically and mentally fit and able to learn; and (d) the provision of protection to 1,000 children in special need, particularly adolescents and children in conflict with the law and children affected by sexual exploitation and abuse, in two urban municipalities and three selected divisions.

Relation to national and international priorities

21. The proposed programme supports the development processes, priorities and programmes of the country. Under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries II scheme, the Gambia has received approximately \$69 million in debt relief from the World Bank. This will supplement the resources of development partners, particularly those within the United Nations system.

22. The programme of cooperation will operate within the framework of the country's long-term Vision 2020, PRSP, UNDAF and the Comprehensive Development Framework. These frameworks have the overarching goals of poverty

reduction and the promotion of girls' education as a means of ensuring a better quality of life for the population of the Gambia. Through advocacy, and the development of sound project proposals and effective programme communication strategies, UNICEF will play a catalytic role in mobilizing resources for children from the private sector, donors and international partners.

23. The country programme of cooperation will respond to the medium-term strategic plan for 2002–2005 and to the following priority outcomes of the global agenda for children: (a) that infants start life healthy and young children are nurtured in a caring environment that enables them to be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and intellectually able to learn; (b) that the poorest and most disadvantaged children have access to and complete basic education of good quality; and (c) that adolescents have opportunities to fully develop their individual capacities in safe and enabling environments and to participate and contribute to the development of their communities.

24. Given that HIV/AIDS poses a serious threat to both the youth and the development of the Gambia, strategies to address this issue will be developed further in the context of UNDAF. In collaboration with the Medical Research Council, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and the World Health Organization are providing assistance for the management, prevention, advocacy and treatment of HIV/AIDS. The World Bank has earmarked \$15.0 million for the next four years for the HIV/AIDS rapid response project, in collaboration with the Government and UNAIDS. The UNICEF strategy for HIV/AIDS includes activities under the basic services and rights promotion and protection programmes. UNICEF will support activities that focus on sensitization and information through peer education in schools, adolescents and communities, particularly on the prevention of MTCT. With support from the United Nations system, UNICEF will continue to mainstream gender throughout the programme of cooperation. The National Women's Bureau and Council are playing an active role to ensure implementation of the National Women's Policy. In addition, the 1996 Constitution contains provisions to ensure equal access to education and political rights for women.

Programme strategies

25. The main strategies of the country programme are advocacy, capacity-building, service delivery and community empowerment. Advocacy will help to forge partnerships and alliances to mobilize resources for children and enhance rights promotion and protection. Capacity-building will address policy development and training in social sectors. Service delivery will focus mainly on integrated basic services in three of the most disadvantaged divisions in the country and children in need of special protection. Communities and youth will be empowered to be active in identifying their problems and taking initiatives to address them.

26. HIV/AIDS prevention and management will be mainstreamed throughout the programme, particularly in the areas of policy development, youth peer education and partnership-building. Special attention will be drawn to the promotion of attitudinal and behavioural change through advocacy, communication and information exchange. Integrated participatory planning at the community level will contribute to the decentralization process in an effort to enhance coordination

through partnership- and alliance-building for maximum impact, synergy and cost-effectiveness. Mainstreaming gender across the programmes will contribute to the effective participation and empowerment of women and girls to reduce discrimination and disparities. Given the country's geo-political situation, the influx of refugees from Liberia, Sierra Leone and southern Senegal, and its vulnerability to epidemics and natural disasters, special attention will be given to emergency preparedness. UNICEF will support the Government's emergency preparedness plan and activities by assisting in settling refugees and the destitute during such periods.

27. The country programme will consist of three programmes and seven projects. The programmes are basic services, rights promotion and protection, and social policy planning. The first two programmes have been structured to respond to a mix of sectoral and cross-cutting issues to facilitate implementation at national and decentralized levels. Cross-sectoral interventions will address rights promotion issues and integrated basic services in the three poorest divisions. The cross-cutting social policy planning programme will focus on policy development, planning, coordination, management, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes.

28. **Basic services.** In collaboration with UNFPA, UNDP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Bank and community-based organizations, this programme will contribute to: (a) the achievement of maternal well-being and the reduction of MMR by 10 per cent and U5MR by at least 20 per cent; (b) increasing equitable access for children, particularly girls, to quality basic education in the selected divisions from 63 to 80 per cent; and (c) early childhood care for survival, growth and development in the selected divisions to ensure that 50,000 children reaching the age of eight years are physically and mentally fit and able to learn. The programme will consist of three projects. The health promotion project will be implemented at the national level within the framework of the Bamako Initiative and the basic education project. The main activities will include training, social mobilization, institutional development and research. Policy dialogue will also be used in collaboration with partners such as the World Bank, UNFPA, UNAIDS and UNDP to ensure that a national HIV/AIDS strategy and action plan is developed, with attention to clearly defined policies and strategies on MTCT. The integrated basic services project will be implemented in three selected divisions and its main activities will include the expansion of BFCI as an entry point to ECCD, safe motherhood, child health and nutrition, water and sanitation in schools, malaria prevention and control through impregnated bednet promotion and hygiene, girls' education and community planning through training and technical assistance.

29. **Rights promotion and protection.** In collaboration with United Nations agencies, NGOs, youth and development partners, this programme will contribute to: (a) the creation of awareness on children's and women's rights nationwide to ensure their promotion and respect through communication for behaviour and social change, community participation and social mobilization; and (b) the protection of 1,000 children in special need, particularly adolescents, children in conflict with the law and children affected by sexual abuse and exploitation, in two urban municipalities and three rural divisions. The programme will consist of two projects to be implemented at national and local levels. The rights promotion project will contribute to awareness creation and the promotion of children's and women's rights to enhance children's and adolescents' participation in decision-making, planning, monitoring and evaluation of programmes. The child protection project will focus

on children in conflict with the law, children affected by sexual exploitation, child abuse and children living in the streets. The main activities will be training, awareness creation, research, networking, support to the National Youth Council and youth groups, and the establishment of a national commission on children's and women's rights and institution-strengthening to ensure harmonization and enforcement of national laws with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

30. Social policy planning. This programme will contribute to: (a) the enhancement of national capacities, including reliable data collection and analysis for policy development, planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of social policies and programmes; and (b) ensuring effective and efficient planning, management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the country programme. The programme will consist of two projects. The social planning project will address policy dialogue, planning, supervision, technical advice, management, training, research and support to the Policy Analysis Unit. The monitoring and evaluation project will strengthen monitoring and evaluation of the social sectors and provide support to sectoral and decentralized information systems. The main activities will be training, data collection, processing and analysis, updating the integrated monitoring and evaluation plan, policy dialogue, institution-strengthening and improving information management systems. The cross-cutting programme will enhance overall coordination and supervision of the country programme of cooperation. The main activities will be training, strengthening management and supervision throughout the programme of cooperation, and supporting national counterparts through technical advice on integrated planning and management for the maximum use of resources.

31. Cross-sectoral costs will ensure the availability of administrative, financial, supply and logistics support for programme implementation.

Monitoring and evaluation

32. The social policy planning programme will ensure the overall monitoring of the country programme and the quality assurance of programme implementation. UNICEF will continue to support and contribute to the design of routine data collection mechanisms or national surveys for monitoring progress towards achieving national goals in the context of the CCA, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the UNICEF-assisted programme. Monitoring and evaluation activities will take different forms: joint field visits by government and UNICEF staff; progress reports for use at annual and mid-term reviews; and evaluations of programme interventions. The United Nations system and other multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs and youth will be involved in monitoring implementation of the country programme.

33. A baseline survey will be conducted in the three selected divisions (Lower River, Central River and Upper River), to assess available community structures, capacities and facilities for the effective implementation of various activities, including ECCD. Other monitoring and evaluation activities will include specific studies, mainly operational in nature, in collaboration with research institutions such as the Medical Research Council, Gambia College and the University of the Gambia. In collaboration with the integrated basic services project, community

consultations will be initiated to develop process indicators. This will ensure greater community participation to foster the development of a sense of ownership.

34. Regular field monitoring will be undertaken and reports prepared on a quarterly basis. The Policy Analysis Unit of the Office of the President will be responsible for the overall planning, monitoring and evaluation of the country programme in the context of UNDAF. Collaboration will be sought with institutions and development partners to ensure the effective monitoring and evaluation of the programmes and to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation capacity of the Central Statistics Department in general, and the social sectors in particular.

Collaboration with partners

35. Maximum benefit will be drawn from the experience gained during previous programmes. Cooperation with bilateral and multilateral donors, United Nations agencies and NGOs, within their respective interests and mandates, is envisaged. These include the World Bank-funded Participatory Population Health and Nutrition Project, HIV/AIDS Rapid Response Project and Basic Education; the African Development Bank projects on education, health and community skills improvement; the WHO Roll-Back Malaria project and HIV/AIDS; the World Food Programme on access and retention of girls in schools; and UNFPA and UNDP on reproductive health and poverty alleviation, respectively. The health promotion, basic education and integrated basic services projects will benefit from collaboration with the above-mentioned organizations for better coordination and maximum impact. In addition, closer partnership will be sought with the United Kingdom Department for International Development in gender, sanitation and education; and the European Union and the European Development Fund in water and sanitation, basic education and community development. Closer collaboration with the UNICEF office in Dakar, Senegal, will be sought in addressing subregional problems such as sexual exploitation and child abuse in a comprehensive manner.

36. Similar collaboration with NGOs such as the Gambia Food and Nutrition Agency on school access and the retention of girls in schools will be pursued. Collaboration with Catholic Relief Services and the Christian Children's Fund in ECCD and ActionAid in environmental health and rights promotion will also be pursued. The rights promotion and protection programme will, among other things, collaborate with ActionAid, the National Association for Youth and Children's Organisation, the National Youth Council and the Bar Association. The social policy planning programme will work closely with the United Nations thematic groups to promote effective planning and coordination and for the periodic updating of the CCA, development of social policy in general and integrated monitoring of UNDAF. For effective community-based interventions to promote behavioural and attitudinal change, collaboration with organizations such as the Forum for African Women Educational, the Gambia Committee on Traditional Practices, the National Youth Council, the National Association for Youth and Children's Organisations, the media and the Association of Non-Governmental Organisations will also be vigorously pursued.

Programme management

37. UNICEF assistance to the Government will be coordinated by the Secretary-General of the Government. The Policy Analysis Unit of the Office of the President will be responsible for the overall coordination, supervision, monitoring and evaluation emanating from the master plan of operations. UNICEF will provide technical assistance and undertake financial management of resources allocated to programmes, in collaboration with the executing agencies. Regular resources have been reallocated to strengthen management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation across the country programme through the creation of an international programme coordinator position responsible for the social policy planning programme to ensure coordination and the integration of UNICEF-assisted programmes.

38. A multisectoral consultative group led by the Office of the President will enhance cross-sectoral relationships at central, divisional and district levels. The Departments of Health and Social Welfare, Education, Natural Resources and Environment, Local Governments, Justice, Youth and Sports will designate a focal point to oversee the implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects. This multisectoral body will also facilitate the promotion of partnerships and alliance-building to involve stakeholders interested in children's and women's rights.

39. The Department of Community Development will be the lead agency responsible for the overall implementation, management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the basic services programme, in collaboration with the sectoral Departments of Education, Health and Water Resources. At the community level, a multidisciplinary facilitation team composed of personnel from the Departments of Education, Health, Water Resources and Community Development, in collaboration with the Divisional Coordinating Committees and the Village Development Committees, will coordinate and monitor programme implementation. The Attorney-General's Chamber and Department of State for Justice, in collaboration with the Department of State for Interior and Social Welfare, the National Association for Youth and Children's Organizations, and the National Youth Council, will be responsible for the implementation, coordination, management, monitoring and evaluation of the rights promotion and protection programme. The Policy Analysis Unit, in collaboration with the Central Statistics Department, will be responsible for the implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the social policy planning programme, in consultation with the multisectoral group and the education and health planning units. Youth and NGOs will also be involved.

