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Country programme recommendation****Belize****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 Belize, which has an annual planning level of \$1,000,000 or less. The Executive Director *recommends* that the Executive Board approve the amount of \$3,010,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$1,250,000 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>	
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Child population (millions, under 18 years)	0.1
U5MR (per 1,000 live births) (2000)	41
IMR (per 1,000 live births) (2000)	34
Underweight (% moderate and severe) (1992)	6
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births) (1995)	140
Literacy (% male/female) (2000)	80/80
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female) (1999)	92/90
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%) (1997)	72
Use of improved drinking water sources (%) (2000)	92
Routine EPI vaccines financed by Government (%) (1998)	100
GNP per capita (US\$)	2 730
One-year-olds fully immunized against: (1999)	
Tuberculosis	96 per cent
Diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus	87 per cent
Measles	82 per cent
Poliomyelitis	84 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. The analysis of the situation of children and women remains essentially as described in the country note submitted to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2001. However, some recent events have affected the immediate situation and vulnerability of some portions of the population.

2. In October 2000, Hurricane Keith hit Belize, causing a great amount of damage, particularly on the islands Ambergis Caye and Caye Caulker, where the massive destruction of buildings and houses left 35 per cent of the islands' population homeless and without access to basic services. The situation on the mainland was less severe, although damage caused by flooding in the aftermath of the hurricane affected large areas of Belize, Orange Walk and Corozal Districts. According to an assessment by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the damage, especially to the tourist and sugar industries, amounted to \$280 million. The impact of the hurricane is expected to reduce the estimated rate of growth of the gross domestic product by 1 per cent (from a forecasted 6.9 per cent) and set back the Government's poverty alleviation strategy.

3. As indicated in the country note, in spite of progress towards some of the goals of the World Summit for Children, disparities remain between national averages and rates in rural and marginalized communities. One third of the population live in poverty, with more than one half of the Mayan population living below the poverty

line. Another growing area of concern is HIV/AIDS; the infection rate is 2.1 per cent, with an estimated 7,000-9,000 positive cases and 75 per cent of new cases occurring among people aged 15 to 35 years. A 1997 Ministry of Health survey of people attending a clinic for sexually transmitted diseases in Port Loyola revealed that among young people aged 14 to 19 years, 19 per cent of males and 16.7 per cent of females were HIV-positive. In 1992, 80 per cent of all HIV-positive women were of child-bearing age; by 1998, that number had increased to 92 per cent.

Programme cooperation, 1997-2001

4. The country programme of cooperation focused on monitoring progress towards the goals of the World Summit for Children and supporting efforts of the Government and civil society to comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

5. Advocacy and technical assistance offered by UNICEF through the legal and institutional reform project, which aimed to bring national legislation into compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, resulted in the passage of the Sexual Harassment Act in 1996, the Families and Children's Act in 1998, implementation of the Domestic Violence Act and an amendment to the Criminal Code in 1999. These laws make provision for the rights of children and women in Belize, allow special protection for children with regard to fostering and adoption, require mandatory reporting of child abuse, increase the age for criminal responsibility and provide protection from sexual harassment and against rape in marriage. The National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC) coordinated training in the new laws for local and district staff of the Family Court, the Family Services Division, the police department and magistrates. The Government signed several other international agreements, including the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on children in armed conflict and International Labour Organization Convention 182 on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

6. In 2000, UNICEF prepared a comprehensive assessment of the juvenile justice system in Belize and provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Human Development in establishing the Community Rehabilitation Department. The Department for International Development (DfID) (United Kingdom) has provided start-up and training funds, and UNICEF will continue to advocate for legal reforms and alternatives to custody programmes, while providing technical and some programme support.

7. Through the project on social policy development and sustainability, UNICEF supported government efforts to develop and approve a special education policy (1997), a day-care policy (1998) and a draft policy on pre-school education which will be finalized this year. These policies established for the first time written guidelines for the licensing and operation of these facilities. In 1999, the Ministry of Education developed a strategy for "Transforming Education in Belize for the 21st Century", a comprehensive plan to address issues of access and quality in all sectors of the educational system. UNICEF supported a pilot project on summer pre-schools in Mayan villages, which was evaluated as a successful model, to facilitate the transition of children into primary school. The Government committed itself to expand pre-school coverage and investigated the possibility of bilingual education for primary schools in selected Mayan villages. UNICEF support to the Ministry's

teacher-training programme resulted in increased coverage for disabled and pre-school children. UNICEF efforts to include health and family life education modules in the curriculum of primary schools and the Belize Teacher's College progressed well.

8. The community and parent empowerment project had a slow start because of the many partners involved, but ultimately achieved considerable success in providing comprehensive parenting knowledge and skills development on a range of issues affecting children's rights and participation. An external evaluation in 2000 indicated that the project achieved its main objective, although it did not provide adequate support to the community leaders who were trained so they could replicate the training in other communities. This is being addressed through the establishment of local support groups by a committee of governmental and non-governmental organizations. Other programmes addressed the role of men in the family, as well as specific target groups through, for example, the training of Mayan and Kekchi women in the Toledo District as traditional birth attendants, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Plenty International. Throughout the programme period, NCFC, the National Organization for the Prevention of Child Abuse, UNICEF and other partners continued parent and teacher education and public awareness campaigns on children's rights. NCFC has implemented two nationwide radio programmes, one managed and executed by children — a concept now being replicated by other stations.

9. The Children's Advisory Committee (CAC) to UNICEF was formed in 1997, following the Caribbean Conference on the Rights of the Child, to advise UNICEF on programmes which seek to address issues that face children in Belize. CAC organized children's elections in 1998, the "Stamp Out Child Abuse" Conference in 1999 and the "Keeping the Promise Forum" in 2001. The latter was held in the parliament building and attended by political, religious, civic and business leaders and children from across the country.

10. UNICEF Belize was able to respond quickly to Hurricane Keith by providing health supplies and food for displaced populations. With funds provided by DfID for disaster relief activities, UNICEF worked with partners and counterparts to develop emergency response programming focused on women and children, including reconstruction of schools and post-traumatic stress therapy. Preliminary reports indicate that those interventions have been effective in supporting the physical and psychological recovery of the affected children.

Lessons learned from past cooperation

11. The lessons learned remain essentially the same as those described in the country note, including the need to invest further in institutional strengthening of key ministries and departments, as well as in efforts to increase public education and awareness of children's rights and strengthen partnerships in key sectors. However, additional analysis has highlighted other lessons, which have affected planning for the new programme cycle.

12. UNICEF support to the improvement of social sector data collection and analysis resulted in the first annual publication of key social indicators by the Central Statistical Office. In spite of some successes, however, a lack of information in many critical areas hinders programme development and monitoring. Despite the small size of the country, it is not always easy to obtain verifiable, current information on the situation of women and children. Monitoring, research and

analysis must be key areas of capacity-building in order to facilitate social mobilization, policy formulation and resource mobilization.

13. In the wake of Hurricanes Mitch and Keith and the country's continued vulnerability to natural disasters, UNICEF recognized the need to build a cross-cutting focus on emergency preparedness into the country programme.

Recommended programme cooperation, 2002-2006

	Estimated annual expenditure (In thousands of United States dollars)					Total
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
Regular resources						
Enhancing holistic child development	198.0	226.75	226.75	226.75	226.75	1 105.0
Enabling environments for adolescent development	267.5	267.50	267.50	267.40	267.40	1 337.4
Cross-sectoral costs	136.5	107.80	107.80	107.80	107.70	567.6
Subtotal	602.0	602.00	602.00	602.00	602.00	3 010.0
Other resources						
Enhancing holistic child development	100.0	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	500.0
Enabling environments for adolescent development	125.0	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	625.0
Cross-sectoral costs	25.0	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	125.0
Subtotal	250.0	250.00	250.00	250.00	250.00	1 250.0
Total	852.0	852.00	852.00	852.00	852.00	4 260.0

Country programme preparation process

14. The Ministry of Human Development chairs the interministerial committee which coordinates the country programme preparation process. The proposed country programme was developed on the basis of the situation analysis, the draft of the Common Country Assessment (CCA), the review of progress towards the goals of the World Summit for Children, national priorities as set out in the Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan 1999-2003, and the global and regional priorities of UNICEF. Additional analysis of the juvenile justice system and sexual exploitation of children, as well as the National Family Health Survey, assisted in establishing the priorities of country programme.

15. Consultative meetings with partners evaluated progress and recommended strategic lines of action. Stakeholders, members of civil society and partners from government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participated in the situation analysis and helped to define the strategies and priorities of the proposed country programme as reflected in the country note. Subsequently, further consultations involving all programme partners resulted in the elaboration of the country programme and a detailed plan of action. Taking part in the exercise were

representatives from DfID, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), CAC and UNICEF staff.

Country programme goals and objectives

16. The overall goal of the country programme is to contribute to the promotion and defence of the rights of all children in Belize. Through the country programme, UNICEF and partners will advocate that all children from every background enjoy the highest attainable standards and reach their full physical, emotional, social and intellectual development in a safe and caring environment. The main strategy will be to strengthen the capacities of the Government and civil society to establish systems and structures that guarantee the effective fulfilment of the rights of all children.

17. To this end, two programmes will focus on two stages of the life cycle of the child — early childhood and adolescence. These are priority areas identified in the situation analysis and other core documents and in which UNICEF has a comparative advantage and can have a considerable impact on the well-being of children in Belize. The first programme, on enhancing holistic child development, aims to establish safe and supportive environments for young children up to six years old, and to ensure their access to basic services that will enable optimum growth and development, including timely birth registration. It will help to develop an enabling environment that will facilitate the holistic (social, physical, psychological and intellectual) development of young children. The second programme, on enabling environments for adolescent development, aims to promote opportunities for adolescents' development and participation in matters affecting their well-being. It will work to affect legislation and policies concerning adolescents; to ensure that they have access to information on key health issues, particularly HIV/AIDS; and to support opportunities for them to participate in their communities and learning environments.

Relation to national and international priorities

18. The country programme will contribute to the achievement of the Government's Poverty Elimination Strategy and Action Plan 1999-2003, which seeks to counteract the poverty that affects more than one third of the population. The Plan includes a strategy to address situations of inequity and inequality, increase access to services and empower local governments and civil society. It also includes plans for capacity development for short-term emergency response, mid-term infrastructure improvements, and long-term economic and social planning initiatives. The programme also complements the Government actions to improve access to and the quality of primary education and health services. The country programme is closely related to and supports reforms in the health and education sectors and decentralization process now under way.

19. The country programme also reflects the global and regional priorities of UNICEF, and will emphasize the need for early education and development, protection from violence, prevention of HIV/AIDS and the importance of adolescent development, including girls' education.

20. UNICEF maintains a strong relationship with the other two United Nations agencies working in the country — UNDP and PAHO/WHO. By consensus of the

three agency heads, preparation of the CCA has begun under the leadership of UNICEF. The next step will be an analytical workshop with partners, counterparts and social scientists to prepare the final document, which will lead to the preparation of a United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The United Nations agencies have also collaborated in the areas of HIV/AIDS prevention, with the funding of joint projects by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and emergency response. Collaboration will be sought on such issues as sexual and reproductive rights with the United Nations Population Fund, gender issues with the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and education with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the World Bank.

Programme strategy

21. The overall programme strategy remains the same as described in the country note, centred in a rights-based approach and focused on advocacy for legal reform and public policies, social mobilization of civil society groups and organizations, technical assistance for the development of programmes in adolescent participation, and institutional strengthening in support of decentralization and cooperation with civil society. Service delivery will be directed only towards pilot projects to reach excluded and marginalized populations, which will be replicated by counterparts if successful. The programme follows a cross-sectoral programming approach, allowing UNICEF to complement efforts by other partners and strengthen government capacities in early childhood education and adolescent development.

22. The country programme will emphasize several cross-cutting themes, including community participation, disparity reduction, emergency preparedness, HIV/AIDS and gender. These are areas where interministerial and intersectoral cooperation exist and where cross-sectoral integration and interventions are crucial. The first two themes, community participation and disparity reduction, are seen as prerequisites for sustainability. The involvement of stakeholders in development processes will be strengthened through advocacy and increased participation of local-level authorities and community groups. Following Hurricane Keith in October 2000, the need for ongoing attention to emergency preparedness and rapid response was evident. UNICEF will work to maintain alliances already forged to address emergency needs following the hurricane, and to build partner and counterpart capacity in emergency preparedness and response, linked with ongoing programme interventions. HIV/AIDS prevention and care will be mainstreamed throughout the country programme in collaboration with the National AIDS Commission and UNAIDS, and with support from the regional multi-country HIV/AIDS initiative for 2002-2006 (E/ICEF/2001/P/L.62) and the National Strategic Plan (1999-2003) of the National AIDS Task Force, which is currently being implemented. Mainstreaming of gender issues will be pursued through advocacy for legal reform, policy development, capacity-building, girls' education and training, targeting in particular male involvement in child rearing and addressing the man's role in the family. Monitoring and evaluation will also be included in each component of the country programme.

23. As indicated above, the programme has been designed to emphasize early childhood and adolescent development, maximizing programme interventions particularly in the area of primary education. However, cooperation will extend to include 6- to 12-year-olds in continuing such existing programmes as the integrated school health initiative, as and when appropriate.

24. **Enhancing holistic child development.** The programme will focus on the maintenance and expansion of basic services in health to reach excluded populations, with an emphasis on immunization. It will work through two project areas: (a) child-supportive environment; and (b) support to families. Both projects will promote the development of policies and long-term plans to achieve sustainable, quality health services and, when approved, advocate for implementation of the policy on sexual and reproductive health.

25. Through the child-supportive environment project, UNICEF will advocate for the maintenance of essential basic health services for children aged 0-6 years and promote a focus on early childhood development (ECD). The project will support the development of public policies and legislation and advocate for increased resource allocation in the overall area of child health and development in order to help Belize meet its commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the same time, the project will support the implementation of programmes by government counterparts and other partners to expand pre-school coverage and quality, and revise the system of day-care provision through a set of initiatives, including a certification programme, training and curriculum development. UNICEF will support these initiatives by providing technical assistance aimed at capacity-building.

26. Through the support to families project, the family will be recognized as having primary responsibility for providing protection and stimulation for young children. The project will promote involvement by parents and communities through strengthening of NCFC; enhancing partnerships with existing networks and groups that promote women's rights; promoting legal protection of families and children and ensuring implementation of legal reforms; strengthening communities' organizational capacity; and increasing parental education programmes. The project will also support disaster preparedness at the local level in light of the country's vulnerability to hurricanes.

27. The key role of UNICEF will be to support actions by counterparts in relation to the well-being of mothers, infants and young children. The Ministry of Human Development will be responsible for overall coordination of the enhancing holistic child development programme, and will monitor the provision and quality of day-care centres. As part of its National Health Insurance Plan, the Ministry of Health will support activities for safe motherhood, early detection of disabilities, nutrition of pregnant women and children, and monitoring the health status of children and women. The Ministry of Education, through the Pre-school Unit, is responsible for managing and monitoring pre-school interventions, including the development of policies and long-term plans designed to achieve sustainability of these services, training and curriculum development, and efforts to raise public awareness of the importance of ECD. The ministries of Rural Development and Human Development will oversee implementation of relevant laws and actions to increase community and family empowerment. The National Human Development Advisory Committee, of which UNICEF is a member, will assist in monitoring outcomes and results, and will be responsible for coordinating government policies and services concerning families and support programmes for parents. The Ministry of the Attorney General will be responsible for legal revision, with NCFC responsible for implementation and monitoring of the changes.

28. **Enabling environments for adolescent development.** The programme will focus on facilitating adolescents' development and participation within a safe and supportive environment. It has three project areas: (a) juvenile justice and legal

reform; (b) adolescent health and HIV/AIDS prevention; and (c) adolescent health and development.

29. The project for juvenile justice and legal reform will support reforms to ensure full compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It will promote juvenile justice reform, development of alternatives to the incarceration of youths with adults, and training and services to prevent violence, abuse and exploitation. The Ministry of Human Development and NCFC will spearhead the juvenile justice reform process, promoting reform of all acts regarding children in conflict with the law. They will be supported by a set of coordinated efforts between different agencies and government departments, including the Community Rehabilitation Department and the Department of Corrections. Other actions will include the revision and update of laws, public awareness and training of probation officers.

30. Adolescents represent a fairly large segment of the population, and there is great need for sensitization on health issues that concern them, such as sexual and reproductive health; the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS; and the prevention of substance abuse. The adolescent health and HIV/AIDS prevention project will promote positive attitudes among adolescents, parents and teachers on such issues as healthy living, interpersonal relationships, sexuality, self-worth and reliance. The project will advocate for and support policy development and specific legislation in the areas of teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, and the establishment of supportive environments for adolescent participation and development. The issue of adolescents as caregivers will also be addressed, and the project will benefit from the parental education component of the support to families project.

31. In coordination with the National AIDS Commission Plan 2000-2003, a programme supported by United Nations agencies, various NGOs and ministries, UNICEF and counterparts will specifically target adolescents as the main recipients of HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness actions. This programme will also be supported through the regional HIV/AIDS multi-country initiative. The Ministry of Health will introduce "youth-friendly" health services, a concept that has already been successfully introduced by the Belize Family Health Association. The Women's Department will establish a women's health watch, with an emphasis on young men, women and couples. The programme will support initiatives aimed at providing specialized health education programmes. One of these initiatives is the Caribbean project to incorporate health and family life education as a central element in the new curriculum for primary and secondary schools. UNICEF and PAHO will continue to support this initiative through the provision of training and technical assistance. The Ministry of Education will manage this component of the programme.

32. The adolescent development and participation project will promote adolescent participation through the development of projects with and for adolescents around matters that concern them. Structural measures will be accompanied by short- and medium-term actions such as "second-chance" education programmes, skills training and schooling for adolescent girls. UNICEF will support pilot programmes for adolescents in the areas of leadership skills, empowerment, alternative education programmes and community development, and promote a wider emphasis on gender issues, especially in the areas of educational access and the role of men in families.

33. In line with the Government's Education Reform Strategy, a project supported by the World Bank and DfID, UNICEF will support initiatives to increase the number of child- and adolescent-friendly schools and to establish a more democratic

and supportive environment for adolescents at home, in the community and at school. Public awareness campaigns will address the importance of adolescents' participation in the family, the school and the community. NCFC, the Ministry of Human Development and the Ministry of Youth will collaborate in the implementation of this component of the programme.

34. **Cross-sectoral costs** will be used for technical support in the areas of social mobilization, transport and communication; information technology; and a limited amount for monitoring, evaluation and general programme planning and coordination.

35. Regular resources will be used to fund essential staff and programme support for both programmes, as well as the planning and monitoring functions, and other resources for widening the impact of capacity-building and support to the replication of community-level pilot projects.

Monitoring and evaluation

36. Monitoring and evaluation activities are structured within the integrated monitoring and evaluation plan. The main indicators to assess progress and results of the overall country programme will include the number of laws reformed to comply with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the number of young children and families with access to basic health services and services for early childhood stimulation and development; teenage pregnancy rates; and the number of alternative programmes for juvenile offenders. UNICEF will carry out project monitoring on an ongoing basis through field visits to report on constraints faced and progress made in each project component. In November of each year, annual reviews of projects will take place, and any adjustments in relation to project objectives and programme goals will be reflected in the following year's plan of action. Major evaluations expected in the course of the programme period will include assessments of the availability and quality of care in maternal and child health; the development and implementation of health insurance plans; the reduction of preventable diseases in infants and children; and early disability detection. Evaluation activities will be planned, conducted and analysed by personnel of the counterpart ministries, NGOs and UNICEF. Whenever necessary, external technical assistance will be contracted for evaluation activities. The mid-term review (MTR) of the programme, to be conducted in 2004, will evaluate the main strategic indicators related to the country's institutional capacity for self-reliance in the promotion and protection of child rights.

37. The programme will emphasize capacity-building in monitoring and evaluation for counterparts, and aims to stimulate and institutionalize participation by civil society and adolescents in monitoring, assessment, analysis and planning. The Central Statistical Office continues to be the main partner for updating social sector statistics, which will be published annually. NCFC is the main partner for monitoring implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Women's Department for implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Collaboration with partners

38. The proposed country programme will enhance relationships with such key partners as the ministries of Human Development, Health and Education, and seek and expand new partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs). The Belizean model of joint Government-NGO service delivery and project implementation has proven to be successful and sustainable. UNICEF will continue to support this model, which stimulates efficiency, and will play a central role in the decentralization process. The country programme will continue to support intersectoral coordination and co-sponsor coordination initiatives. Existing partnerships with bilateral and multilateral agencies will be strengthened through periodic consultations and joint field visits. UNICEF Belize hopes to establish new bilateral partnerships with DfID for juvenile justice, the Government of Japan for HIV/AIDS prevention, specific donors through the subregional programme to benefit Central America's indigenous population groups (PROMAYA), and Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (Spanish Agency for International Cooperation) and the Inter-American Development Bank in the area of education.

39. UNICEF Belize will gradually increase the number of partnerships with CSOs active in the areas of child rights and community empowerment. Established relations with NGOs in the areas of health, adolescent development and child rights advocacy will be continued and strengthened. UNICEF will increase its collaboration with national, Caribbean and international institutions such as the University of Belize, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Caribbean Development Bank and the University of the West Indies on specific issues of common interest. As indicated above, partnerships will also be continued with UNDP and PAHO/WHO, the two other United Nations agencies operating in the country.

Programme management

40. The interministerial committee, chaired by the Minister of Human Development, and including the social sector ministries, NGOs and United Nations agencies, will coordinate the implementation and review of the overall country programme, including joint annual reviews with partners. Consultations with other United Nations agencies, bilateral donors and major partners will take place during the MTR and annual planning sessions to ensure compliance with government priorities and complementarity within the context of UNDAF. The committee will monitor progress and suggest adjustments as required. UNICEF programme and operations staff will coordinate planning and monitoring of the components of the country programme and work closely with the relevant sectoral ministries and other institutions on the management of the programme.