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### United Nations Children's Fund

Executive Board

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

### Country programme recommendation\*\*

**Venezuela**

**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 Venezuela which has an annual planning level of \$1,000,000 or less. The Executive Director *recommends* that the Executive Board approve the amount of \$2,935,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$5,280,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period 2002 to 2007.

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\* 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<sup>a</sup>**(1999 unless otherwise stated)*

Child population (millions, under 18 years)	9.7
U5MR (per 1,000 live births) (2000)	23
IMR (per 1,000 live births) (2000)	20
Underweight (% moderate and severe)	5
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births) (1997)	60
Literacy (% male/female) (2000)	93/93
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female) (1996)	83/85
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%) (1995)	89
Use of improved drinking water sources (%) (2000)	83
Routine EPI vaccines financed by Government (%)	100
GNP per capita (US\$)	3 680
One-year-olds fully immunized against:	
Tuberculosis	97 per cent
Diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus	79 per cent
Measles	82 per cent
Poliomyelitis	87 per cent
Pregnant women immunized against tetanus	.. per cent

<sup>a</sup> 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 major features of the situation of children and women in Venezuela remain essentially as described in the country note presented to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2001 (E/ICEF/2001/P/L.34). However, the most recent government data show improvements in some social indicators. There was a gradual reduction of the infant mortality rate from 24 per 1,000 live births in 1996 to 19 in 1999. The rate of attendance in primary school increased from 81 per cent in 1998 to 90 per cent in 2000, and the percentage of children reaching grade five rose from 84 per cent in 1997 to 97 per cent in 2000. These data reflect improvements in national averages, although inequalities still affect large sectors of the most vulnerable child population, particularly from families living in poverty and extreme poverty (44 and 21 per cent, respectively, of the national population, according to government data), in rural regions and in the slums of the major urban centres. The 31 indigenous groups (1.5 per cent of the population) have social indicators consistently worse than the national average and are steadily losing their language and ethnic identity.

## Programme cooperation, 1998-2001

2. The 1998-2001 country programme (E/ICEF/1997/P/L.5/Add.1) focused on promoting child rights in public policies and on the participation of children and

adolescents in public forums and organized groups in order to advocate for increased awareness of child rights in civil society and by policy makers. It also supported strengthening of local-level statistical systems to monitor rights compliance, and local-level activities in the states of Zulia, Amazonas and Vargas aimed at improving access to health, sanitation, basic education and recovery from the 1999 floods.

3. UNICEF played a key role in the adaptation of national legislation to conform to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as highlighted in a Latin American and Caribbean regional study of UNICEF programming with a rights-based approach. Together with civil society organizations, UNICEF supported the creation of a children's and adolescents' movement for the defence of their rights, culminating in the Child and Youth Constitutional Assembly that opened a formal space for children and adolescents in the consultations for changing national legislation and drafting a new Constitution. UNICEF also trained and oriented members of the National Constitutional Assembly in the principles of the Convention; assisted the Constitutional Assembly in drafting the chapter on social rights; and established strong bonds with many organizations, including universities, the judiciary and members of the Government, who embraced the movement to ensure that national legislation fully reflects the Convention. Child rights gained more space in the media and on the political agenda, with children and adolescents increasingly demanding and practising their right to express opinions and participate.

4. Taken together, these efforts contributed to the explicit inclusion of the principles of the Convention in the new Constitution of Venezuela (1999), and to the formulation (1998) and subsequent approval and entry into effect (2000) of the Law for Children and Adolescents. These instruments created some very important, although not yet sufficient, conditions for the fulfilment of child rights. The adaptation of relevant institutions to reflect the new legislation, including the judiciary system and the administration of child protection measures, is still in a preliminary phase, while the organized movement of children and adolescents needs to be consolidated.

5. In close collaboration with the National Statistical Institute (*Instituto Nacional De Estadística* (INE)), UNICEF supported the pilot development of an Information System for Local Management. This system has been adopted by the Government for the entire country, but needs to be fully installed in all states and municipalities.

6. Local development activities supported by UNICEF were concentrated in poor indigenous communities in the states of Zulia and Amazonas, and focused particularly on the provision of technical support to local governments to reduce infant mortality. Child and infant mortality due to diarrhoea decreased by more than 78 per cent in the poorest indigenous municipalities of Mara and Paez, in Zulia state, in direct correlation with the creation of community-managed oral rehydration units. However, as highlighted by an evaluation conducted in 2000, the reduced involvement of local decision-making authorities limited the scope of programme interventions, which were not taken to scale nor had any recognizable impact on the definition of sectoral policies.

7. After the disastrous floods of December 1999, emergency activities added to the local development programme in the states of Vargas and Zulia reached an estimated 70 per cent of the 15,000 affected children. UNICEF supported the children's return to school, emotional trauma recovery, birth registration and the

rehabilitation of the water and sanitation infrastructure. Methodologies developed in other countries, for example psychosocial rehabilitation, were adapted to the Venezuelan environment. Emergency activities fostered stronger alliances between UNICEF and such counterparts as the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, the army and the regional government. The alliances have endured after the emergency within regional reconstruction plans, with UNICEF accompanying the transition from emergency response to development activities.

## Lessons learned from past cooperation

8. The important lessons learned presented in the country note are that: (a) a carefully managed strategy mix of alliance-building, social mobilization and advocacy multiplied UNICEF resources and increased legislative impact; (b) limited access to decision-making levels inhibited pilot activities from going to scale; (c) there is an essential link between the production and dissemination of information on the situation of children and women and the elevation of child rights on the public agenda; and (d) emergency preparedness strategies must link immediate responses to rehabilitation.

## Recommended programme cooperation, 2002-2007

	Estimated annual expenditure (In thousands of United States dollars)						
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Total
<b>Regular resources</b>							
Implementation of child rights	259.6	245.5	205.9	163.0	163.0	163.0	1 200.0
Knowledge generation and information dissemination	224.4	219.6	125.7	100.0	100.0	100.0	869.7
Cross-sectoral costs	151.0	134.9	168.4	137.0	137.0	137.0	865.3
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>635.0</b>	<b>600.0</b>	<b>500.0</b>	<b>400.0</b>	<b>400.0</b>	<b>400.0</b>	<b>2 935.0</b>
<b>Other resources</b>							
Implementation of child rights	346.6	433.2	535.4	650.9	794.6	899.3	3 660.0
Knowledge generation and information dissemination	91.4	114.2	141.1	171.9	209.4	237.0	965.0
Cross-sectoral costs	62.1	77.6	96.0	116.3	142.0	161.0	655.0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>500.1</b>	<b>625.0</b>	<b>772.5</b>	<b>939.1</b>	<b>1 146.0</b>	<b>1 297.3</b>	<b>5 280.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 135.1</b>	<b>1 225.0</b>	<b>1 272.5</b>	<b>1 339.1</b>	<b>1 546.0</b>	<b>1 697.3</b>	<b>8 215.0</b>

## Country programme preparation process

9. The current country programme was approved for the period 1998-2002. However, within the context of United Nations reform, it was decided in 2000 to shorten the UNICEF programme by one year in order to synchronize it with that of

the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Consequently, a formal mid-term review was replaced by an accelerated process of evaluation of all major programme components.

10. The situation analysis was carried out with numerous governmental and non-governmental partners, including the Ministries of Health, of Social Development and of Education; the National Council for Child Rights; INE; such non-governmental organizations as the Venezuelan Association for Alternative Sexual Education, the Community Learning Centre, the Federation of Private Institutions of Child, Youth and Family Care, Fundación Luz y Vida (Light and Life Foundation); and the Catholic University Andres Bello. The analysis was complemented by the end-decade assessment conducted by the Government in preparation for the United Nations Special Session on Children and by the development of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) by the United Nations Country Team. This led to the identification of the UNICEF strategy as presented in the country note, which had been agreed upon with the United Nations team prior to its submission to the Executive Board. As this exercise took place before the definition of the timing of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the 2002-2007 country programme will be an important input into the development of UNDAF.

11. Consultations with counterparts following the submission of the country note led to the definition of the specific areas of interventions of the new programme, which builds on: (a) the experience and credibility gained by UNICEF in the area of child rights; (b) the lessons learned from evaluations and reflections on the previous period of cooperation, taking into the account changes in the political and institutional environment; and (c) the comparative advantage of UNICEF relative to other institutions and in accordance with the mandate of the organization. The entire process was conducted under the coordination of the Ministry of External Relations.

### **Country programme goals and objectives**

12. The overall goal of the 2002-2007 country programme is to help create the conditions for the fulfilment of the rights of all Venezuelan children, with special emphasis on reaching the most excluded population. The programme will operate within the global framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as the Government's plans for social development, focusing on the major areas of concern highlighted in the situation analysis.

13. The country programme has two programme components: (a) implementation of child rights; and (b) knowledge generation and information dissemination. The objectives of the first programme are: (a) the strengthening of capacities of national, regional and local institutions to uphold and guarantee the two Conventions and the Law for Children and Adolescents; and (b) ensuring that their principles are fully adopted by social actors and decision makers and reach the most excluded children. The objective of the second programme is to contribute to improved decision-making at all levels by national, regional and local governments, civil society and community organizations, the private sector, universities and families, using up-to-date information on the situation of children and women in the country and fostering demand among the population for the fulfilment of child rights. The two programmes are interdependent and complementary. Activities undertaken in the

child rights implementation programme will contribute to the areas of study being contemplated as part of the knowledge and information programme, while the latter will expand further the information available and deepen the understanding of the country programme priority areas. The Venezuelan components of the subregional PROANDES (Programme for the Andean region) and Amazon programmes will complement the interventions of the country programme.

### **Relation to national and international priorities**

14. All proposed activities support the national focus on addressing social inequity, particularly the creation of mechanisms through legislative reform and institutional changes to allow the participatory inclusion of the community in all relevant decision-making processes. National priorities include ensuring full access to education, providing comprehensive health care and protecting children in need of special protection. At the same time, the activities of the country programme take into consideration the specific areas where UNICEF will be directing its attention over the next 10 years as outlined by the Global Movement for Children, the outcome of the United Nations Special Session on Children and the commitments resulting from the tenth Ibero-American Summit and the Kingston Consensus on Children and Social Policy in the Americas. These areas include ensuring that all children, specifically those who are excluded, get a good start in life with the promotion of early childhood care, receive basic education of good quality and live in an enabling environment during adolescence, with an emphasis on participation.

15. The United Nations team completed the first phase of the CCA early in 2001, confirming the central role of the system agencies in helping to reduce inequalities, support implementation of existing legislation and generate social information for the enforcement of human rights. These are fully reflected in the proposed country programme and will feed into the formulation of UNDAF. UNICEF will pursue partnerships with United Nations agencies in the specific areas of the country programme, as noted in paragraph 30 below.

### **Programme strategy**

16. The programme strategies remain as described in the country note. They are to mobilize society around a widely recognized vision of child rights; build institutional capacities and ensure integration among key actors involved in programmes for children; support going to scale of successful pilot experiences using national resources; and assist the State to prepare for programme continuity in the event of emergencies.

17. **Implementation of child rights.** This programme builds upon the achievement of the adoption of the Law for Children and Adolescents by supporting its implementation and fostering complementary policies and programmes to achieve full protection of children and women. Comprised of three projects, the programme addresses important issues raised in the situation analysis and strategy process, specifically the need to: continue the overhaul of national institutions in the context of national priorities and commitments; increase avenues for participation, especially of adolescents; and ensure the protection of vulnerable groups, including those without proper birth registration. Gender-responsive programming cuts across

the entire programme and will be important in interventions on family violence, sexual exploitation, reproductive health and adolescent participation, among others.

18. Under the mechanisms for protection project, technical assistance from UNICEF will support the Government in the design of public policies, programmes and plans that safeguard children's and women's rights. Through consultations and training, UNICEF will also support technical and institutional capacity-building of government agencies and of civil society and community organizations that work with families to promote child rights, and ensure the inclusion of all partners in the national protection system for children and adolescents. Expected results include: (a) full consistency of all legislative instruments with the two Conventions; (b) establishment of the administrative and judiciary institutions of the national protection system and their working in line with the legislation, paying particular attention to children in conflict with the law, family violence, sexual exploitation, child trafficking and children in emergencies; (c) community networks of child defence offices to be working in coordination with the other institutions of the national protection system; and (d) improved mechanisms for the registration of children.

19. The survival and development project focuses on early childhood development (ECD) and adolescent health as entry points for more integral development processes in vulnerable, socially excluded populations. This project will support the development of successful models that are to be taken to scale by national and regional counterparts. Directly addressing families and communities with social mobilization interventions, the project will raise awareness of the need for early childhood stimulation, responsible parenting and pre-school education. The project will work closely with the university system to incorporate such issues as adolescents' health, including HIV/AIDS prevention, in the curriculum for professional health care and social workers, and with education authorities and indigenous organizations to increase the coverage and quality of intercultural bilingual education. Strategies employed will especially emphasize the cultural appropriateness of interventions and the role of the family. Expected results include integral programmes for ECD reaching 50 per cent of children in selected peri-urban, rural and indigenous areas; an intercultural, bilingual education system that covers the majority of indigenous communities; and increased demand for and supply of programmes for the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents.

20. The participation project will provide technical assistance and support to institutions and organizations, including some managed by children and adolescents, that promote the rights to recreation, sport and opinion. UNICEF and its partners will encourage the active participation of children and adolescents in a variety of settings ranging from the family to student councils to child parliaments. Expected results include an increasing number of active student councils, inclusion of adolescents in education councils and adolescents' representation in the child defence offices covered in the mechanisms for protection project. The project will pay special attention to the right to participation of one particularly excluded group, adolescents in conflict with the law, by promoting their role in the design of individual socio-educational reinsertion plans. The project will also stress exchanges of experience among partners.

21. **Knowledge generation and information dissemination.** This programme aims to maximize Venezuela's potential to produce information on the situation of

children and women, and to intensify understanding of the scenarios the data is describing. This information will be communicated to the general public for the social auditing of national and international commitments, and through targeted alliances and technologies to ensure that all relevant sectors — policy makers, communities and families — have access to this information. This programme responds to a recommendation by the Committee on the Rights of the Child that Venezuela improve the collection of data on children, builds on the comparative advantage of UNICEF, and responds to the need for focused knowledge generation and dissemination to realize the goals of the programme on implementation of child rights. Gender-responsive programming will include special attention to disaggregating data by gender, monitoring relevant indicators and using dissemination channels that ensure wide coverage to the appropriate groups.

22. The generation of knowledge project will promote the understanding of the situation of children and women in the country in order to affect decision-making processes. UNICEF will work with institutions at national and local levels to promote information systems that are harmonized in terms of coverage, indicators and technologies, emphasizing disaggregation of data by age, gender, location and socio-economic groups. Training will be provided on the generation and use of the information at different levels of public management. The project will stress monitoring such national policy efforts as the Law for Children and Adolescents and the follow-up to the World Summit for Children, the United Nations Special Session on Children and the Beijing +5 platform, with an emphasis on excluded groups and women and children in need of special protection. Expected results include the functioning of a reliable statistical information system for decision-making in favour of children and women at the national level and in selected priority areas; the development of specific modules or information systems to organize and analyse data on groups in need of special protection; a system for monitoring and evaluating the institutions of the national protection system; and the documentation of successful experiences for the formulation of public policies.

23. The dissemination of information project will make available relevant, age-appropriate and gender-sensitive information in order to strengthen the demand for the fulfilment of children's and women's rights. A broad set of alliances will be established with partners from the Government, civil society, the media and universities to increase the amount and types of dissemination channels and improve the quality of information on children and women available, for example, through web sites, television, radio and printed media, public libraries and documentation centres. Communication skills will be a major aspect of technical support by UNICEF. A major priority is facilitating adolescents' access to relevant, age-appropriate and gender-sensitive information. Expected results include increased reporting to the authorities of violations of children's and women's rights as people commit themselves to speaking out, improved quality and increased space of programmes devoted to the rights of children and women in the media, and strengthened documentation centres and channels for disseminating information on children and women.

24. **Cross-sectoral costs** will cover some operational costs not included in the support budget (e.g., a portion of telecommunications costs and rent) and for support staff in the areas of budget monitoring and programme assistance.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

25. The integrated monitoring and evaluation plan (IMEP), which is updated annually, integrates indicators of impact and process to measure the achievement of each objective of the country programme. The IMEP will also monitor progress towards the goals of the World Summit for Children and the social indicators included in the national plans, disaggregated by age, gender, location (urban and rural) and socio-economic group, particularly assessing the fulfilment of children's rights among excluded groups.

26. Indicators for the child rights implementation programme will include the public budget allocated to children and basic social services, the percentage of the target population actually reached by the national protection system and the number of child rights violations reported to the authorities. Indicators for the knowledge generation and information dissemination programme will include coverage of child rights issues in the media; and the percentage of families which are knowledgeable about child rights, and the existence and use of mechanisms for enforcing them when they are at risk or violated.

27. Venezuela has achieved a rather advanced institutional platform for the production of statistical information, managed by INE and by the information department of all sectoral ministries. UNICEF will also work with INE to include special, additional modules in the national household survey. Routine systems and the national surveys will be the main sources of information for most impact indicators. The registry system of the institutions of the national protection system, although still weak, will be a major source of information concerning reported rights violations and responses.

28. The research component of the country programme will include baseline studies and evaluations with such themes as child labour, domestic violence, reproductive health and adolescent participation. A special feature will be children's opinion polls as a way to provide inputs for national policies and programmes. Universities and research centres will be important partners.

29. The UNICEF Programme Manager System will be the main means of monitoring internal management indicators. Special attention will be devoted to monitoring annual fund-raising targets, the impact of fund-raising campaigns and the public perception of UNICEF in the country. Periodic visits to local project sites with key counterparts and allies, as well as the annual planning exercise, annual reviews and the MTR, scheduled for 2004, will provide opportunities to monitor progress and lessons learned, and to agree on needed course corrections.

## **Collaboration with partners**

30. The proposed country programme takes into account the programmatic areas covered by other United Nations agencies, whose presence in general is limited in Venezuela. The Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) has staff specializing in areas of child health not receiving direct assistance from UNICEF. PAHO/WHO and other partners will monitor the situation of children. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS will an important partner for all HIV/AIDS-related activities. The United Nations Population Fund is a potential partner for adolescent programming, specifically for reproductive health.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees would be a strong ally in case of cross-border emergencies. UNDP is an important partner for human rights advocacy and strengthening social information systems. The inter-agency thematic groups on gender and human rights will continue as forums for coordination, mutual support and information exchange. Deliberations are still under way to determine the timing of UNDAF. UNICEF will also collaborate with the Inter-American Development Bank, which has approved credits for implementation of the national protection system and other special protection programmes.

31. Under the overall coordination of the Ministries of External Relations and Planning, UNICEF will establish formal agreements with all programme partners. The partners will be the implementing agencies, with UNICEF providing technical assistance, facilitating experience exchanges, co-funding activities, and jointly monitoring and evaluating of interventions. Public partners will include governmental ministries (especially the Ministries of Education, of Health and Social Development and of Interior and Justice), INE, the National Institute for Women, the Child Foundation, regional and municipal governments, the National Ombudsperson's Office, the child defence offices, the administrative bodies in charge of the national protection system and the police force.

32. Universities such as the Catholic University Andres Bello and the Central University of Venezuela, research centres and the national public library system will be fundamental partners for the generation and dissemination of information, together with INE and the communication media. Non-governmental partners will include the Federation of Private Institutions of Child, Youth and Family Care; the Community Learning Centre; the Venezuelan Association for Alternative Sexual Education; grass-root organizations, particularly in indigenous areas; and youth groups.

33. Venezuela is a very low priority country for international development assistance, so the prospects for bilateral funding are small. However, bilateral donors which got to know the work of UNICEF during the 1999 emergency may continue their support. Even with bilateral support, national resources should become the main source of other resources funding for the programme. Strategies for raising other resources will focus on: (a) private sector fund-raising, especially corporate alliances, direct mail, events and the sale of UNICEF cards and products, for which the market is still partly unexploited; and (b) co-funding of activities, especially with the national and regional governments. Co-funding is an important strategy both for project financing and promoting ownership by partners. Their participation in successful pilot experiences is practical advocacy for going to scale and, thereby, increasing social spending for programmes in favour of children.

### **Programme management**

34. The Ministry of External Relations, in coordination with the Ministry of Planning, will oversee a Technical Coordination Committee that includes all relevant partners. During semi-annual meetings, the Committee will monitor programme implementation, resolve problems, and plan for such milestone events as the annual and mid-term reviews. Annual plans will be agreed upon and signed by each implementing counterpart and UNICEF, taking into account the results of the previous year and the recommendations of the Committee. Additional coordinating

mechanisms may be organized on a project, thematic or geographic basis, under the overall supervision of the Committee.

35. The regular resources allocated to the programme will be reduced gradually, and the programme will have to rely extensively on local fund-raising to fund the large other resources component. UNICEF will need to increase technical and staff capacities for local fund-raising. Support from other country offices, especially UNICEF Colombia which has a sophisticated and successful private sector fund-raising team, will be arranged.

36. Long-term staff and core programme activities will be financed with regular resources, with the scope of the country programme and the portion of staff costs covered with other resources gradually expanding as local fund-raising increases. The staff profile will reflect the priority themes of the country programme. Core personnel with broad technical knowledge and managerial skills will be accompanied by short-term specialized staff as other resources become available and the scope of programme implementation increases.