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### Summary of midterm reviews of country programmes

#### Latin America and Caribbean region

#### *Summary*

This regional summary of midterm reviews of the country programmes in Argentina, Ecuador and Guatemala (2012) was prepared in response to Executive Board decision 1995/8 (E/ICEF/1995/9/Rev.1). The Executive Board is invited to comment on the report and provide guidance to the secretariat.

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## **Introduction**

1. The Latin America and Caribbean region continues to demonstrate advances in addressing child rights and is making progress towards achieving many of the Millennium Development Goals. Poverty rates have decreased, children's access to education has improved, gender gaps are declining and child mortality rates are falling. However, within countries deep social and economic inequities persist, with large numbers of children suffering exclusion, including significant numbers of children from indigenous groups. In response, UNICEF country programmes in the region have focused on public policies to address inequities by linking national policies and programmes with targeted actions at local levels, often at the municipal level.

2. This report summarizes the midterm reviews (MTRs) that were conducted in Argentina, Ecuador and Guatemala in 2012. These MTRs highlight the significant contributions by UNICEF and its partners to addressing major challenges for children and women and achieving the Millennium Development Goals with equity. Important lessons are derived from the work on capacity development, addressing the rights of the most excluded and disadvantaged children, and influencing policies at national and subnational level.

## **Midterm reviews**

### **Argentina**

3. The MTR of the country programme of cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of Argentina for 2010-2014 was conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It began with an update of the analysis of the situation of children and women. Consultations took place with government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and centres of excellence at national and provincial levels, aimed at identifying progress made towards achieving results with equity. Another objective of the MTR was to identify opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation.

### **Update on the situation of children and women**

4. Argentina has made progress in fulfilling the rights of children and adolescents. Laws at national level and in most provinces have been adapted to reflect the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international treaties. Increased employment and development of social protection policies have helped reduce poverty levels. Social expenditure has grown to 60 per cent of the national budget, with a nominal increase of 83 per cent from 2010 — without considering the inflation rate. In 2010, the budget devoted to children reached 8 per cent of gross domestic product. Since late 2009, the cash transfer programme (Universal Child Allowance) has helped to improve the lives of 3.6 million children and adolescents and their families. However, challenges remain in implementing policies that are consistent with the new legal framework, reducing gaps based on income and geographic location, and protecting vulnerable social groups.

5. Investment in education over the last decade exceeded 6 per cent of gross domestic product. Preschool coverage for children aged 3 to 4 years increased from

39.1 per cent to 55.2 per cent in 2010, and for children under 5 it reached 91.4 per cent. However, regional disparities remain deep: The gap in school attendance at preschool level between the provinces of Buenos Aires and Chaco (which is one with the most challenging socio-economic indicators) for children aged 3 to 4 is 27 per cent. Primary level coverage was almost universal in 2010, with repetition and overage being the main bottlenecks. While repetition rate decreased, the average remained 5.9 per cent, and there are 85,500 children who are of the age to attend primary level but are excluded from the educational system.

6. In secondary education, challenges are also significant: 470,000 children between 12 and 17 years are not in school, while 1.4 million students are at risk of dropping out. National coverage for adolescents aged 12 to 17 years at the secondary level was 89 per cent in 2010, but secondary school enrolment rates are lower in the provinces in the north. Child labour is an obstacle to boys' school attendance, while for girls it is pregnancy.

7. The child mortality rate has declined over the past two decades, although less in the last decade, falling from 27 to 14 per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2011. Neonatal mortality needs to be addressed through better coordination and management of hospital care, more humane and quality services, and reduction of gaps between provinces. Maternal mortality, at 55 per 100,000 live births according to United Nations inter-agency estimates, has fallen little since 1990, meaning that Millennium Development Goal 5 will probably not be reached. Maternal deaths are linked to issues of services similar to those affecting neonatal deaths.

8. Twenty-two out of 24 provinces have Comprehensive Child Protection Laws aligned with the National Comprehensive Child Protection Law, but challenges remain in its implementation. Progress has been made in collecting data, which reveal that 14,675 children were without parental care in 2011 and 6,218 adolescents were in conflict with the law nationwide. Of more than 50,000 victims of domestic violence reported between 2008 and 2012, 30 per cent were boys or girls. During the same period, 490 trafficked boys and girls were rescued.

9. Substantial progress has been made in developing legislation and public policies, but strategies are needed to improve the knowledge, attitudes and practices of children and adolescents and their families in order to improve outcomes. Efforts are needed to improve news coverage of vulnerable populations and increase awareness of violations of children's and adolescents' rights in the media and the public discourse.

10. Three disadvantaged groups are identified in Argentina: adolescents at risk of vulnerability; children and adolescents from indigenous and migrant groups; and children and adolescents with disabilities. The proportion of people from indigenous groups lacking education is almost double the proportion in the total population. While there is a favourable regulatory framework for children and adolescents from migrant groups, they face obstacles in realizing their rights to health and birth registration due to institutional practices that have not been adapted to the rules. Disabilities afflict 12.9 per cent of the population, rising to more than 16 per cent in the north of Argentina.

### **Progress and key results at midterm**

11. The MTR concluded that the programme of cooperation is relevant for Argentina and acknowledged the support provided by UNICEF.

12. **Health and nutrition for women and children.** Progress has been significant in this component. Of the 110 public-sector maternity units delivering more than 1,000 babies per year, 74 have joined the Safe Motherhood and Family-Centred Initiative. This connects them to the plans, policies and programmes of the Ministry of Health, which helps to remove obstacles to reductions in maternal and neonatal mortality rates. Another 21 maternity hospitals with fewer than 1,000 annual deliveries were identified in 9 of the 10 priority provinces to participate in this initiative, reaching 50 per cent coverage of all births during 2010-2011. In coordination with centres of excellence, this initiative also supported ongoing training through a virtual campus, reaching more than 4,000 professionals.

13. In the four provinces with the highest post-neonatal mortality, primary health care has been supported, and cooperation between indigenous community leaders, NGOs and health officials has been strengthened. Dialogue between authorities and community leaders was supported to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene, and to support a comprehensive approach to early childhood development. More than 10,000 adolescents participated in projects to improve their knowledge, attitudes and practices in sexual and reproductive health, including HIV and AIDS. The Minister of Health signed the global declaration A Promise Renewed, another significant step towards addressing bottlenecks in reducing maternal and infant mortality.

14. Support was provided to the design and implementation of national education policies and programmes, within the overall framework of achieving equity and implementing the Initiative for Children and Adolescents out of School, the Educational Goals for 2021 and the National Education Law.

15. **Inclusion and quality education for children and adolescents.** This component is aimed at improving the quality of primary and secondary education, reducing drop-out rates and promoting educational reintegration of out-of-school adolescents.

16. In support of inclusive and quality education, assistance was provided for the development and implementation of innovations that have been incorporated into provincial policies and for implementation of policies at scale. These included (a) school self-evaluation, emphasizing rights and quality, in 1,800 primary and secondary schools in six provinces, including schools aimed at students from indigenous groups; (b) development of new secondary school formats for vulnerable adolescents; (c) support to the Ministry of Education to implement the National Comprehensive Sexual Education Act and Programme and the National Programme for Prevention of Addictions; (d) implementation of programmes to teach life skills and support student centres in more than 6,000 facilities; (e) support to the National Anti-Bullying Campaign in School; (f) strengthening of rural schools; (g) inclusive and quality education for children and adolescents with disabilities; and (h) introduction of protocols to prevent mistreatment and abuse of children and adolescents in the educational system.

17. Partnerships were established with centres of excellence to develop knowledge on issues affecting migrant adolescents, extended school time in vulnerable

contexts, adolescents in large urban centres, conflict and violence in schools, educational opportunities to reduce failure and inclusive education.

18. **Child protection.** This component continued to support improvements in reducing violence against children and adolescents. A national survey was completed on children and adolescents without parental care and in conflict with the law. In the province of Buenos Aires the programme contributed to development of the first integrated information system on children and adolescents requiring protective measures.

19. With the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and Family (SENNAF), the programme supported advances in systematizing innovative alternatives to imprisonment. To support victims of violence, greater coordination was promoted through (a) support for consolidation of four inter-provincial teams that adopted comprehensive protocols on sexual abuse; (b) cooperation to establish domestic violence offices in four priority provinces; (c) assistance to revise police training plans and training for officers in women's police stations in the province of Buenos Aires, and incorporating such training into a curriculum that reached more than 2,000 police officers; (d) training of 500 officials and technicians nationwide to facilitate rescue and assistance to victims of trafficking; and (e) with SENNAF and the International Organization for Migration, support for reintegration, return to school and family strengthening of trafficking victims.

20. Community mechanisms were strengthened for protection of children and indigenous women and prevention of violence in two provinces, reaching 1,500 children and adolescents. Inclusive education strategies with community strengthening were also supported to promote the rights of children with disabilities in four provinces. Collaboration with the Ministry of Labour provided technical assistance towards eradicating child labour in garbage dumps and brick factories.

21. **Monitoring and communication for child rights.** Advances were registered in knowledge, attitudes and practices of maternity health teams across the country regarding neonatal mortality. Awareness was raised on violations of the rights of children and adolescents, which helped in placing several key issues on the public agenda, including issues related to the situation of indigenous children, maternal mortality, violence in schools and discrimination against adolescents. This positioned UNICEF as a key ally of the State in campaigns (e.g., bullying), promotion of specific public policies (e.g., scholarships for indigenous students, provincial programmes offering special care to indigenous people) and creation of thematic working groups nationwide. Media coverage of children's issues increased, especially on issues concerning indigenous children, and the use of derogatory terms associated with adolescents declined. Training was developed to improve news coverage of child rights topics, helping to raise these issues on the public agenda.

22. Since 2010, as part of a strategy of evidence-based advocacy, 35 studies and reviews have been published. UNICEF supported the preparation of 47 guides and manuals, 68 sets of outreach materials and 73 videos in collaboration with 85 partners and 22 centres of excellence. The result was analysis and information to support the advancement of all programme components.

23. The programme also focused on addressing bottlenecks related to management and coordination of policies for children and adolescents. Advancement of children's rights was aided by consolidation of systems of indicators and DevInfo-

based observatories in seven priority provinces and two ministries, one national and one provincial. Additionally, it was agreed with SENNAF and the Federal Council for Children, Youth and Family to (a) work in all 24 provinces on the collection, use and dissemination of information on the living conditions of children and adolescents and (b) contribute to the design, implementation and monitoring of public policies. Preparation of the country's first multiple indicator cluster survey in collaboration with SENNAF is a step forward in identifying vulnerable population groups, allowing data to be gathered on 45 indicators where information gaps previously existed. Public spending on children is being monitored for the first time in 5 of the 10 priority provinces.

### **Resources used**

24. The programme for 2010-2014 started with an approved planning ceiling of \$40 million, which was increased to \$50.65 million in 2012, of which \$3.75 million was regular resources and \$46.90 million was other resources. Almost all of the other resources (95 per cent) were received from private sector fundraising, mostly individual pledge donors, within Argentina itself. This income has been increasing regularly. Consequently, in 2012 Argentina began contributing to regional and global resources, in addition to having a fully funded country programme. Implementation rates remained high over the first years of the programme.

25. UNICEF in Argentina has a long tradition of linkage with the private sector and the sports world in promoting the fulfilment of children's and adolescents' rights. This relationship is not limited to resource mobilization, making work on corporate social responsibility increasingly relevant. These partnerships have been developed under the Strategic Framework for Partnerships and Collaborative Relationships approved by the UNICEF Executive Board in 2009.

### **Constraints and opportunities affecting progress**

26. Budget allocations for children have been increasing. The federal structure presents an opportunity, considering that provinces have significant autonomy in provision of goods and services. However, this structure also poses challenges in translating public policies into relevant programmes and quality services in health care, education and protection.

27. More inter-sectoral coordination is needed for implementation of child rights. The MTR clarified the crucial role of provincial governors in promoting this coordination. The provincial ministers recognized the positive contribution of UNICEF in facilitating discussions on key issues affecting children. The MTR also recognized provincial ministries for expanding adoption of innovative strategies. In this context, greater programme convergence at provincial levels could lead to more effective contributions to the country's children and adolescents.

28. At the national level challenges include: (a) expanding systematic use of information about children disaggregated by population groups and geographic location; (b) addressing the situation of adolescents in large urban centres; (c) improving the planning and management of maternity services, specifically in terms of more rational geographic distribution of services; (d) establishing an Office of Ombudsman for Children; and (e) completing harmonization of the national legal framework on juvenile justice.

**Adjustments made**

29. Overall, the MTR concluded that the programme is relevant and that no major adjustment was required. However, it suggested a sharpening of the focus by strengthening national and subnational capacities for design of evidence-based, equity-focused policies and programmes. These should be based on the updated analysis of the situation of children and the results from a bottleneck analysis and key evaluations. More emphasis should be placed on addressing the rights of the most disadvantaged and excluded children and adolescents, including those from indigenous groups, those with disabilities, migrants and poor adolescents in large urban centres. The MTR discussions highlighted the importance of UNICEF support in pursuing child-related goals set by the national and provincial governments. Representatives of government counterparts, civil society, centres of excellence and the private sector have commented that UNICEF contributions are relevant and valued by the Government and Argentinian society.

30. While maintaining the desired results established for the country programme for 2010-2014, some adjustments in strategies were suggested for the period 2013-2014. These include giving priority to 10 provinces in northern Argentina and Buenos Aires province and strengthening cross-cutting aspects, including knowledge management and further development of evidence for informed decision-making. South-South cooperation is encouraged as a framework for exchanges between countries to enhance opportunities for joint development actions. In coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNICEF will expand its support for South-South and triangular cooperation, including for the subregional initiative *Niñ@ Sur* (Child-South).

31. All programme components will seek to strengthen the focus on early childhood development by promoting national and provincial policies for children under 5 years old with an intersectoral approach. Follow-up actions to implement recommendations from the evaluation of the child protection component will be prioritized as a part of the comprehensive response to violence. UNICEF will advocate for expansion and improvement of protection services in the prioritized provinces. The programme will also continue generating, disseminating and using information, with a focus on disaggregating statistics by territories and populations, and monitoring the national budget allocated to children.

**Ecuador**

32. The MTR of the 2010-2014 programme of cooperation was conducted with inputs from a wide range of stakeholders, including government, civil society, faith-based organizations and the private sector, in coordination with the Technical Secretariat for International Cooperation. The MTR aimed at documenting progress, strengthening alignment of the programme with the results of the National Development Plan for Good Living (2009-2013) and linking national strategies. It was also focused on identifying future areas of cooperation between UNICEF and its partners.

33. Ecuador has undergone a crucial transformation that started with 2008 Constitution, which aims to change the State and its relationship with the society, the economy, the territory of Ecuador as well as the international system. In this framework several key laws have been approved by the National Assembly,

paramount institutional arrangements have taken place, a new public management system has been developed, among other structural changes for the nation.

#### **Update on the situation of children and women**

34. Important progress has been achieved in improving the situation of boys and girls in Ecuador, and the Government has a strong social development agenda. For example, investment in the social services sector amounted to \$6.34 billion in 2011, an increase of \$797.9 million from 2010. The country continues to make major progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of the National Development Plan, which seeks to exceed the minimum objectives of the international agenda.

35. Poverty measured by income amounted to 25.3 per cent in June 2012, a decline of 12.3 percentage points from December 2006. The net enrolment rate in basic education (ages 5 to 14) rose from 92.9 per cent in 2009 to 95.4 per cent in 2011. Net upper-secondary school enrolment (ages 15 to 17) rose from 54.5 per cent in 2009 to 62.5 per cent in 2011. At all levels net enrolment rates in both urban and rural areas are higher among girls than boys. Child and adolescent labour (ages 5-17) decreased from 17 per cent in 2006 to 5.8 per cent in 2011. Child mortality decreased to 15 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2009, compared to 18.2 per 1,000 in 2006 and 21.8 in 2004. (According to United Nations inter-agency estimates the child mortality rate was 20 per 1,000 live births in 2010). Maternal mortality amounted to 67.7 per 100,000 live births in 2009 (the United Nations inter-agency estimate is 140 per 100,000 in 2008).

36. National information systems show progress in reaching the Millennium Development Goals. The country is expected to meet the national goals for the basic education enrolment rate (5 to 14 years old), reducing gender gaps in enrolment rates, the stunting rate, infant mortality, child mortality and neonatal mortality, among others. National averages in education, nutrition and health as well as in protection have improved but reveal inequities when they are disaggregated by geographic location, age group and ethnic group, among other factors.

#### **Progress and key results at midterm**

37. The MTR highlighted the continued relevance of the country programme in a middle-income country with strong economic growth and improving social development indicators but still facing challenges in reaching the most excluded and disadvantaged people. The programme supported the strengthening of national systems, standards and protocols. It also contributed to developing national and subnational capacity in child budgeting, child care, protection and juvenile justice, school inclusion and adolescent participation, bilingual education, disaster risk reduction -particularly in the education sector- and community-based ECD, among other areas, and obtaining statistics and evidence on the situation of children and adolescents for informed decision-making.

38. **Early childhood and adolescent health and nutrition.** This component aimed at strengthening health information on neonatal deaths and supported interventions in the provinces of Tungurahua, Cotopaxi, Chimborazo and Pastaza. As part of extensive efforts to promote exclusive breastfeeding, a large-scale communication campaign reached over 1 million people. The campaign benefited from strong support from two large private sector companies. This initiative was

complemented by implementation of the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative and by surveillance on enforcement of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. Efforts continued towards increasing the percentage of pregnant women tested for HIV to prevent mother-to-child transmission. UNICEF contributed to efforts by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the Pan American Health Organization to address elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis. Support was also provided to evaluate the cold chain in the Amazon province of Morona Santiago, with a goal of identifying the bottlenecks impeding universal immunization coverage. The programme also aided actions to increase access to safe water for families and in schools in two provinces affected by environmental pollution.

39. **Universal education with equity.** This programme component focused on technical assistance in intercultural education, which was reinforced by the Intercultural Education Organic Law, adopted in 2011. Specific attention was given to tracing out-of-school children and reintegrating them into the education system in the provinces along the northern border. Also, technical assistance was provided in designing new curricula in the 11 languages spoken in Ecuador.

40. The programme strengthened the capacities of teachers in the Amazon region to apply the Amazon intercultural bilingual education model and in ethnic education, aimed at enabling children of the Afro-descendent population in Ecuador to realize their right to education. As part of these efforts, and supported by the multi-country Eib-Amaz bilingual education project, extensive attention was given to incorporating disaster risk reduction into the curriculum, including a budget allocation. To provide adolescents with life-skills education, a 200-hour curriculum was developed and implemented in the capital city of Quito. Efforts also continued in preventing dropout from secondary schools, with emphasis on 40 schools in Quito. Evidence for informed decision-making continued to be a priority, realized through implementation of studies and development of statistics. The first national survey on child development was supported.

41. **Strengthening of the comprehensive protection policy.** In this component, the programme continued to aid efforts to align the juvenile justice system with international standards, which were incorporated into the Code for Children and Adolescents. Support was provided for development of an investment plan for special protection and operational procedures for 82 rights protection centres, providing services for 25,000 cases of violence and child abuse annually. Also, 1,500 professionals from service networks were trained in applying protocols on violence, child abuse and institutional care. In the municipality of Guayaquil, the 'red card against violence' initiative taught over 4,000 adolescents about violence prevention and peaceful dispute settlement.

42. To address trafficking of children and women, almost 900 civil servants on the southern border received training and orientation in identifying and dealing with trafficked individuals. Emphasis was also put on increasing birth registration rates through the installation of 37 birth registration units in maternity wards in 14 provinces, registering 98,000 children. Efforts also continued in addressing child labour through an evaluation of the national Child Labour Elimination Programme and publication of *An Ecuador without Child Labour*, coordinated by the Labour Ministry and with support from a private enterprise group. Additionally, the programme aimed at increasing the social sector budget, with particular attention to

addressing the rights of children in the most remote areas. Budget and expenditure analyses were prepared for 2010 and 2011. In 2012, a project for special protection for children and adolescents obtained eight times more funding than in 2010.

43. Aiming to improve efficiency and equity in social planning and investment at the local level, 217 Canton Councils for Children and Adolescents were supported. The programme also supported knowledge generation by contributing to implementation of the first survey on children and adolescents and preparation of the *State of the Rights of Children and Adolescents in Ecuador 1990-2010*.

#### **Resources used**

44. The programme for 2010-2014 started with an approved planning ceiling of \$20 million, \$3.75 million in regular resources and \$16.25 million in other resources. Resources were received from thematic and set-aside funds as well as from some bilateral donors and increasingly from in-country donations from private sector fundraising and individual donors. Implementation rates remained high over the first years of the programme.

#### **Constraints and opportunities affecting progress**

45. The MTR recognized that greater integration and coordination among the various programme components will be needed to reach the most excluded and disadvantaged children in Ecuador. The Government pursues an ambitious social agenda, defined in the current National Development Plan and other related strategies, such as the Equity and Social Mobility National Strategy, the Knowledge and Human Talent National Strategy, and the new National Development Plan 2013-2017, to be approved by the National Planning Council after the presidential inauguration. The Government prioritizes early childhood and adolescence through the National Agenda for Children and Adolescents Equality 2012-2013. Programme results are well aligned with these social policy instruments, providing good opportunities to build on these synergies and achieve large-scale results.

#### **Adjustments made**

46. While the desired results established in the country programme will remain, the MTR recommended important changes to the scope of the programme, to respond more efficiently to the profound transformations of the State, and to national priorities, specifically in quality of education, birth registration and positive adolescent development. Knowledge generation will be expanded in all programme components through studies with centres of excellence and monitoring of the situation of children, adolescents and women.

47. In the health and nutrition component, emphasis will be placed on implementation of a primary health care model in priority cantons. Promotion of breastfeeding will be intensified as a strategy to reduce chronic child malnutrition and a contribution to implementation of A Promise Renewed. Education efforts will focus on the quality of education. In strengthening comprehensive child protection, the programme continues working to enhance the juvenile justice system, increase birth registration rates and prevent violence against children. Overall, more emphasis will be put on implementation of policies and programmes aimed at reducing disparities and inequalities at the local level.

## Guatemala

48. The MTR assessed the degree of progress relative to the results proposed in the country programme of 2010-2014, recognizing changes in the context, identifying key factors influencing implementation and agreeing on necessary adjustments.

49. Evidence relating to progress in programme implementation and on the situation of children and adolescents was reviewed through a series of meetings with key partners. Special emphasis was given to analysis of cross-sectoral themes such as gender, multicultural relevance and communication for development. The MTR coincided with the introduction and implementation of the Monitoring of Results for Equity System (MoRES), which informed the reformulation of programme results and strategies.

50. The outcome of the MTR was discussed with state institutions, United Nations agencies, NGOs and donors. It was agreed upon with the Secretariat of Planning and Programming of the Presidency.

### Update on the situation of children and women

51. Guatemala is a country with large-scale inequities in many of the indicators related to children and women, demonstrating the challenges the country faces in ensuring universal access to social services.

52. As the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2010 recognized, Guatemala has a good legal and policy framework for children; the challenge is implementation, which is closely linked to resource limitations. The Government has demonstrated its political commitment through its efforts to mobilize the country and international cooperation around three main priorities: the Zero Hunger Pact; a Pact for Peace, Security and Justice; and a Fiscal Pact. Annual public investment aimed at children increased from \$167 to \$222 per child from 2009 to 2012. However, the proportion of the budget aimed at children is diminishing as part of the overall national budget. Coverage of state services is consequently limited, in turn reducing the capacity to address major challenges at the subnational level, particularly among rural indigenous people.

53. The poverty rate decreased from 56.2 per cent of the population in 2000 to 51 per cent in 2006 but then increased to 53.7 per cent in 2011, according to the World Bank. This is far off the trend needed to achieve a 31.4 per cent poverty rate by 2015, the target for achievement of Millennium Development Goal 1. According to the National Survey of Living Conditions 2006 and 2011, the percentage of children and adolescents living in poverty increased from 59.2 per cent in 2006 to 62.2 per cent in 2011. Poverty among indigenous groups in 2011 was 79.1 per cent and among rural residents it was 76.1 per cent. These figures should be compared to 49.3 per cent among the non-indigenous population and 43.7 per cent in urban areas.

54. The country is also not making sufficient progress in reducing chronic malnutrition. Virtually half of children under 5 (49.8 per cent) suffer from stunting. According to the latest Demographic and Health Survey, the stunting rate reaches 66 per cent among indigenous people (compared to 36.2 per cent among non-indigenous people), 58 per cent in rural areas (compared to 34.3 per cent in urban areas), 69.3 per cent if the mother has no education (compared to 14.1 per cent if

she has higher education) and 70.2 per cent in the poorest quintile (compared to 14.1 per cent in the richest quintile).

55. Primary school enrolment increased significantly from 2000 (85.4 per cent) to 2009 (98.3 per cent) but then dropped considerably, to 92.7 per cent, only two years later. This indicates that achieving Millennium Development Goal 2 is unlikely. The national average for years of schooling stood at 5.98 in 2010, below the Latin American average of 7.8. However, in Guatemala City the average is 8.35 years, compared to 6.36 years in other urban areas and a mere 3.84 years in rural areas (National Institute of Statistics, 2010). Poor children in rural areas have an average of 2.2 years of schooling, and among rural children living in extreme poverty the figure falls to 1.59 years. Eliminating gender disparity in education (Goal 3) seems achievable as there has been a positive trend towards gender parity at all levels of education.

56. According to the latest United Nations inter-agency estimates, child mortality was 30.4 per 1,000 live births in 2011, having decreased from 78 per 1,000 in 1990, indicating probable achievement of Goal 4. On the other hand, the chances of achieving the target for maternal mortality, 55 deaths per 100,000 live births, are low. The latest United Nations inter-agency estimates indicate that 120 women died of pregnancy-related causes per 100,000 live births in 2010. National data report 136 maternal deaths per 100,000. Goal 6, involving the fight against HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases, is likely to be achieved. The percentage of pregnant women who were HIV positive in 2009 was roughly half of what it had been in 2006 (0.27 per cent versus 0.53 per cent). The incidence of malaria was lower in 2009 (0.9 per 1,000 population ) than the Millennium Development Goal target (2.22).

57. With 92 per cent of Guatemalans using an improved drinking water source in 2010, the safe water target of Goal 7 has been reached (UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme, 2012). The sanitation target (81 per cent using an improved sanitation facility) is also likely to be reached, with 78 per cent having access in 2010 (UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme, 2012).

58. The children of Guatemala face other severe challenges, most importantly violence and impunity for it, which are intricately linked. Around 14 people suffered a violent death every day in 2012, about 7 per cent of them under age 18, according to the Ombudsman. Violent deaths have gone down slightly for three years, but Guatemala remains among the eight most violent countries in the world. In addition, impunity is extremely high, according to the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala. More than 96 per cent of crimes are not solved, and violence costs the country the equivalent of 7.3 per cent of gross national product annually.

59. There are no disparities in birth registration by gender, area of residence or ethnic group, yet 4.5 per cent of children are not registered.

60. Guatemala has high levels of vulnerability to natural disasters, which occur annually, especially in the rainy season. According to the assessment by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the damage and losses caused by tropical storm Agatha in late May 2010, combined with the almost simultaneous eruption of the Pacaya volcano, totalled \$982 million. The earthquake in November 2012, 7.2 on the Richter scale, caused an estimated loss of \$128 million.

**Progress and key results at midterm**

61. **Health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, and HIV.** In this component, support was provided to the National Strategy for the Reduction of Chronic Malnutrition. While further efforts are required to expand geographic coverage, an important result was achieved: the UNICEF-led mass media campaign ‘Your turn’ positioned chronic malnutrition as a priority for the country. A baseline survey had indicated that the general population did not recognize it as a major problem. As a result of the campaign, the theme was incorporated into all political plans. In 2012 the new Government launched the Zero Hunger Plan, aiming to reduce chronic malnutrition by 10 per cent in four years. A specific budget for the priorities within the Plan, focused on the child’s first 1,000 days, will provide continuity to planned strategies.

62. With the introduction of MoRES, a bottleneck analysis was conducted in the eight municipalities prioritized by the Zero Hunger Plan. It clearly revealed that chronic malnutrition is more related to poor feeding patterns than to the absence of food. This key information has been analysed with the Government and other partners, and interventions have been modified accordingly to help reach the targeted 10 per cent reduction. Communication for development has been an important strategy to achieve behaviour change aimed at reducing chronic malnutrition and raising awareness of child protection issues.

63. Nutritional surveillance improved significantly after the introduction of daily monitoring of acute malnutrition in health centres and communities and through the use of better recording tools. The programme helped ensure required inputs for detection and treatment of acute malnutrition, thereby reducing infant mortality. A paediatric nutrition care policy at the hospital level was also implemented.

64. Reduction of malnutrition demands an integrated approach. In this regard, the programme has promoted Ministry of Health stewardship on water and sanitation. Additionally, three models of innovative technologies for water supply and sanitation were validated at the local level, offering the potential for scaling-up by municipal authorities.

65. Support has also contributed to maintaining the rate of mother-to-child transmission of HIV below 2 per cent. Currently approximately 40 per cent of women have access to HIV testing.

66. **Protection and education.** This component has influenced the formulation of the school curriculum for indigenous children and for pre-primary and secondary levels. This led to strengthening mother-tongue education in half of the country. In addition 7,000 schools (32 per cent of the total) were coded as bilingual and intercultural schools, falling under Law Initiative 4445, which promotes peaceful coexistence. Important initiatives to expand bilingual preschools and kindergartens were developed in the most vulnerable rural and indigenous areas. In coordination with municipal and indigenous authorities and through empowerment of rights-holders, the programme has been supporting nationwide expansion of these initiatives.

67. The high level (98 per cent) of children enrolled in primary school in 2010 was due to a policy of free public education and the conditional cash transfer programme. The challenge is to maintain these levels and improve the quality of education to try to improve educational outcomes and improve access, retention,

promotion and relevance. The MoRES approach underpinned development of the 2012-2016 education strategic plan, which details the main priorities in the sector: community involvement, teacher training and access to adequate learning materials. Joint efforts involving UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, Inter-American Development Bank and United States Agency for International Development, along with the private sector, have resulted in creation of the Reading Programme, an initiative to promote reading and provide books to all schools.

68. Significant progress has been seen in awareness and public discussion of the issues that most affect unprotected children. Several studies supported this achievement, notably the *Jurimetro* study. It measured the degree of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in regulatory frameworks and institutional practice. It also included studies on child marriage, domestic violence, school violence and adoptions. Regular mass media coverage was instrumental in increasing awareness of violations of child rights.

69. Work at the local level led to the creation and operationalization of 30 municipal comprehensive child protection offices and 5 offices in the capital cities of departments. Inter-institutional technical groups at central level have generated demand for greater coordination of the protection system. The level of direct communication between agencies involved in child protection has grown substantially.

70. The programme contributed to establishment of inter-institutional coordination groups that have helped solve operational problems related to re-victimization of children served by the judicial system. This has led to adoption of inter-institutional protocols in the judicial protection system. At central level, a unit within the Attorney General's Office was created specifically to receive complaints about violations of child rights. The unit operates when required or when the necessary competency is lacking within the child/juvenile justice system. This has facilitated operation of the system and reduced court delays. In addition, a model of appropriate care for children in contact with the justice system has been developed, with closed-circuit cameras and child-friendly courtrooms.

71. Improved management of judicial hearings and the use of specialized judges to hear cases involving children and adolescents represent additional progress. UNICEF contributed to creating specialized criminal investigation departments for sexual offenses against children. A strategic partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala has underscored the need to investigate organized crime networks involved in inter-country adoptions. The commission has initiated judicial processes against these networks.

72. Child rights have also been introduced into various laws and regulations, such as the Law against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Trafficking; the Alba-Kenneth Alert System covering searches for missing children; and the Adoption Law, as well as various protocols.

73. **Adolescent development.** This programme component has faced funding shortfalls. However, important progress has been achieved in the past three years in generating opportunities for political dialogue between adolescent networks and municipal authorities. A strategy being implemented in 78 municipalities seeks to strengthen adolescents' ability to analyse the issues affecting them and ensure these

are brought to the attention of those responsible for ensuring their access to, for example, basic services, sexual and reproductive health care, integrated education and youth employment.

74. Generation of legal frameworks according to international standards has been a priority for the United Nations agencies in Guatemala. Thus, UNICEF, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and the United Nations Population Fund have worked with the Congressional Committee on Women on a bill to amend the civil code to increase the legal marriage age for girls from 14 to 18 years, and for boys from 16 to 18 years. With the Commission for Children and Families, a bill has been proposed to prevent violence in schools. These laws are expected to be approved by the Congress in 2013.

75. Other priorities for UNICEF relate to prevention of teen pregnancy and gender violence. Capacity-building among adolescents in eight municipalities focused on establishment of municipal observatories on sexual and reproductive health. Also, adolescent girls in 7 municipalities and 22 communities were trained as mentors to work with other adolescents in preventing domestic violence and gender violence in schools.

76. **Knowledge management.** UNICEF leadership on child rights was strengthened through generation and management of evidence-based information in partnership with the Central American Institute for Fiscal Studies, Prensa Libre and Channel 3. This has included monitoring state investment in children and adolescents and presentation of investment scenarios needed to ensure fulfilment of children's rights in the medium and long term.

77. Preparedness and response to emergencies is a priority theme in each programme component. During the disasters experienced by the country over the past three years, UNICEF, in coordination with the United Nations system and other partners, has led sector working groups that have enabled a significant humanitarian response in line with national norms and the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action. UNICEF will advocate with the Government to include the commitments as a reference in their own guidelines.

78. UNICEF has helped to strengthen and articulate networks and digital platforms to inform, educate and motivate adolescents to participate in issues affecting them. A compendium of information and educational material was developed for the prevention and management of disasters from the perspective of children's rights. It is to be used in an interactive platform with easy access through the Humanitarian Network.

79. UNICEF helped prepare a DevInfo database platform with updated indicators at national, regional, departmental and municipal levels. Over three years, 40 studies, surveys and other publications were developed to identify gaps in knowledge on the situation of children, adolescents and women in Guatemala.

#### **Resources used**

80. The programme for 2010-2014 started with an approved planning ceiling of \$34.23 million, of which \$4.23 million was regular resources. Resources were received from thematic and set-aside funds and from bilateral donors. A total of \$26.6 million was spent over the first three years, including funding received for

emergencies. In 2012, an increase in the ceiling of other resources to \$35 million was approved.

### **Constraints and opportunities affecting progress**

81. The Government of Guatemala has demonstrated its commitment to the most disadvantaged children through its three pacts — Fiscal; Zero Hunger; and Peace, Security and Justice. The recently created Ministry of Social Development has been requested to play an important role in strengthening cross-sectoral coordination and integrated treatment of child rights. However, fulfilling these rights requires the State to increase substantially the proportion of the small national budget dedicated to this age group so that far more communities can be reached with basic health, education, judicial and social protection services. Other important constraints are the limited implementation capacity of the State, including at the municipal level.

### **Adjustments made**

82. The 2010-2014 programme of cooperation maintains its four components as approved by the Executive Board in 2009. Changes resulting from the MTR reflect a clearer emphasis on reducing inequities across the country by reinforcing support for capacity development in municipalities facing the greatest challenges in health, nutrition, education and water and sanitation. Greater prominence has been given to communication for development, particularly aimed at reducing stunting through behaviour change among families and strengthening national disaster risk reduction capacities.

83. The geographic approach called for emphasizing the 130 poorest municipalities (out of the total 334) defined by the former Government. The MTR process concluded that UNICEF should further strengthen the integrated approach across programme components and geographically. For the duration of the programme, the geographic focus will be on the municipalities prioritized by the Zero Hunger Pact and those with high rates of violence.

84. Based on an analysis of major barriers and bottlenecks within the health programme, new interventions, strategies and indicators were incorporated to measure changes in household knowledge and practices that can help reduce chronic malnutrition, emphasizing different counselling methodologies through a communication for development strategy. The goal is to increase adolescents' knowledge on HIV and other sexually transmitted infections by incorporating these topics into the adolescent development programme component.

85. In the education programme, the implementation of MoRES has provided a good opportunity to refocus on specific determinants and bottlenecks that hinder progress, such as parents' beliefs on the importance of education and involvement in school management. Another shift is closer monitoring and follow-up of children at risk of dropping out.

86. The adolescent programme now better reflects participation of adolescents in solving problems that affect their lives and accessing information. It specifies that the priority areas are prevention of gender violence, prevention of early marriages and adolescent pregnancies, and prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

87. In child protection, more emphasis will be placed on changing the attitudes of duty-bearers, while giving priority to children's opinions and making them known and considered by the adults responsible for protecting children. As such, UNICEF will be providing technical support to create and strengthen child protection services, both centrally and in the interior. This will involve expanding the number of municipalities with child protection offices and promoting coordination and specialization in justice at the central level and in 10 departments to handle cases referred from the municipal level.

88. Additionally, the programme will reinforce national and local capacity to collect, monitor, analyse and evaluate disaggregated data and public policies, with the aim of reducing inequalities.

## **Conclusion**

89. The three midterm reviews discussed in this report demonstrate the relevance of UNICEF cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean to ensure that children's and women's rights are clearly reflected in policies and actions at national and local levels.

90. The programmes of cooperation in the region reflect the combination of advocacy to influence national policies with simultaneous efforts to ensure tangible results for children at subnational levels. This work focuses on regions and municipalities and addresses the rights of the most excluded and disadvantaged children, including children from indigenous populations. Therefore, continued support to decentralization processes and creation of subnational capacities remain crucial components of supported programmes. Using its convening power to bring diverse stakeholders into the development process, UNICEF also contributes significantly to inter-sectoral coordination and cooperation at all decision-making levels and among development partners, including United Nations agencies.

91. The three MTRs also highlight the importance of targeted strategies focusing on specific population groups in the countries. The introduction of MoRES also provides the opportunity to demonstrate even better the results of policy and programme implementation at the local, often municipal, level. In addition it supports measuring whether the most excluded and disadvantaged children, including children from indigenous groups, benefit from these policies and programmes.

92. In conclusion, the targeted programmes and strategies as implemented in Argentina, Ecuador and Guatemala support progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals with equity.