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Country programme document

Armenia

Summary

The country programme document (CPD) for Armenia is presented to the Executive Board for discussion and approval at the present session, on a no-objection basis. The CPD includes a proposed aggregate indicative budget of \$4,265,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$16,974,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period January 2026 to December 2030.

* [E/ICEF/2025/27](#).



Programme rationale

1. Armenia is an upper-middle-income country that has made progress towards several Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has welcomed achievements while also identifying areas that require further prioritization and investment to address disparities and gaps, to realize the rights of all children. Armenia has a population of 2.9 million permanent residents, with children making up 23 per cent of the population, totalling 673,146.¹ This marks a 2.9 per cent decrease in population since 2011.² Demographic trends, shaped by fertility patterns (1.7 children per woman),³ migration dynamics and the refugee situation are influencing social structures in Armenia, leading to greater demands on social services and a rising dependency ratio in an ageing population. The country hosts 115,388 refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh, including an estimated 36,000 children, who arrived in late September 2023 or were escorted through the Lachin corridor between December 2022 and September 2023. They joined 26,700 people displaced since the 2020 conflict.

2. The economy of Armenia has benefited from positive economic performance, with an average annual growth rate of 10.5 per cent⁴ in 2022–2023 and a gross domestic product growth rate of 6.2 per cent,⁵ exceeding the global average. However, the economic development of Armenia is being slowed by several challenges, including limited industrial diversification, an uncertain geopolitical environment and reliance on remittances.

3. The poverty rate (average poverty line) in Armenia decreased from 34.1 per cent in 2009 to 23.7 per cent in 2023, with rural poverty reported at 27 per cent compared to urban poverty at 21.5 per cent. Poverty is higher among children, with 31.7 per cent living below the national poverty line in 2023, and 17.3 per cent experiencing multidimensional poverty.⁶ Refugees, as well as communities in disaster-prone and climate- and conflict-affected areas, are particularly at risk of falling into poverty and face higher risks of loss of assets and income.

4. While expenditure on health, education and social protection in Armenia have increased in nominal terms over the past five years, financing of social sectors as a percentage of the gross domestic product, with expenditures of 1.5 per cent on health, 2.5 per cent on education and 7.5 per cent on social protection in 2023⁷ (including 1.7–1.9 per cent on social assistance)⁸ is below the average of upper-middle-income countries. The Committee on the Rights of the Child⁹ recommended that Armenia conduct a comprehensive assessment of children's budgetary needs and increase funding for social sectors, aiming to address gaps and disparities in key child rights indicators.

¹ Statistical Committee, Armenia, Permanent Population Figures of the Republic of Armenia as of 1 January in 2024, Yerevan, 2024.

² Statistical Committee, Armenia, Permanent Population Figures of the Republic of Armenia as of 1 January in 2011, Yerevan, 2011.

³ Statistical Committee, Armenia, The Demographic Handbook of Armenia, Yerevan, 2024.

⁴ World Bank, 'Armenia Overview: Development news, research, data', <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/armenia/overview>, accessed on 30 May 2025.

⁵ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 'Armenia – Transition Report 2023-24', *Country Assessments*, ERBD, London, n.d.

⁶ Statistical Committee, Armenia, Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, Yerevan, 2024.

⁷ Statistical Committee, Armenia, Finance Statistics of Armenia, Yerevan, 2024.

⁸ World Bank, *Armenia Public Expenditure Review: Improving spending efficiency*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2023.

⁹ United Nations, Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Armenia, *CRC/C/ARM/CO/5-6*, United Nations, New York, 14 October 2024.

5. The commitment of Armenia to the Sustainable Development Goals is reflected in the ambitious social, education and judicial reforms outlined in the country's Transformation Strategy, 2050 and other sectoral frameworks and legislative acts. To ensure progress, accelerating these reforms with adequate resources and strengthened monitoring mechanisms is critical. The Voluntary National Review 2024 emphasizes the need for socioeconomic development that addresses structural vulnerabilities, including those related to environmental emergencies, and regional peace.

6. While Armenia has reduced under-5 and neonatal mortality, sustaining progress requires continuous efforts. The infant mortality rate was estimated at 9 per 1,000 live births in 2023,¹⁰ with slow progress over the previous five years. Neonatal deaths account for up to 75 per cent of infant mortality cases, with low birth weight being an important factor of fatality with little improvement in the last five years. Other leading causes of infant mortality include preterm birth complications, childbirth issues, infections and congenital anomalies.¹¹ Child injuries are also a major cause of mortality among children over 1 year old. Despite high immunization coverage, vaccine hesitancy in urban areas contributes to an increasing number of zero-dose children. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends strengthening efforts to reduce neonatal mortality by ensuring equitable healthcare access for newborns, especially in rural areas.

7. Armenia faces the double burden of malnutrition: 7.2 per cent of children under the age of 5 years are estimated to be stunted and 11.5 per cent are overweight.¹² Overweight among adolescents is at 22 per cent, with boys (26 per cent) more affected than girls (17 per cent).¹³ Malnutrition is linked to household poverty and inadequate feeding practices. Armenia ranks highest among 50 countries for sweets consumption among adolescents, with 64 per cent of girls and 56 per cent of boys (aged 15 years) eating sweets multiple times daily.¹⁴ Food insecurity affects 20 per cent of households and 54 per cent are at risk. In 2024, it was particularly high in regions hosting a large refugee population, such as Armavir, Syunik and Aragatsotn, while Lori, Gegharkunik and Shirak have historically had higher rates.¹⁵

8. Armenia is also facing rising mental health challenges among adolescents, with diagnosed disorders among those aged 15–17 years increasing nearly threefold in the past seven years.¹⁶ Adolescent girls in Armenia report significantly higher emotional distress, with 41 per cent experiencing low mood (versus the average of 25 per cent in other countries), heightened nervousness and greater loneliness.¹⁷ The protracted

¹⁰ United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation, *Levels & Trends in Child Mortality: Report 2024*, UN IGME, New York, 2025.

¹¹ Ministry of Health, Armenia, Health System Performance Assessment, Yerevan, 2023.

¹² UNICEF, World Health Organization and World Bank, *Levels and Trends in Child Malnutrition: UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Group joint child malnutrition estimates: Key findings of the 2023 edition*, UNICEF and World Health Organization, New York, 2023.

¹³ World Health Organization, 'Prevalence of overweight among adolescents aged 10-19 years (BMI > +1 standard deviations above the median (crude estimate))', [https://platform.who.int/data/maternal-newborn-child-adolescent-ageing/indicator-explorer-new/MCA/prevalence-of-overweight-among-adolescents-aged-10-19-years-\(bmi-1-standard-deviations-above-the-median-\(crude-estimate\)\)](https://platform.who.int/data/maternal-newborn-child-adolescent-ageing/indicator-explorer-new/MCA/prevalence-of-overweight-among-adolescents-aged-10-19-years-(bmi-1-standard-deviations-above-the-median-(crude-estimate))), accessed on 30 May 2025.

¹⁴ Rakić, Jelena G. et al., A focus on adolescent physical activity, eating behaviours, weight status and body image in Europe, central Asia and Canada: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children international report from the 2021/2022 survey, Volume 4, WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, 2024.

¹⁵ World Food Programme, *Sixth Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment in Armenia*, WFP, Rome, 2024.

¹⁶ National Institute of Health, Armenia, Health and Healthcare: Statistical Yearbook, Yerevan, 2024.

¹⁷ Cosma, Alina et al., A focus on adolescent mental health and well-being in Europe, central Asia and Canada: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children international report from the 2021/2022 survey, Volume 1, WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, 2023.

crisis and repeated escalations since 2020 have negatively impacted mental health, particularly among refugee and conflict-affected children, especially in border communities. According to the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment, 26 per cent of surveyed refugee households who arrived in Armenia in 2023 have at least one member in an emotionally unstable state.¹⁸ The Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended “addressing mental health challenges among children, especially children from Nagorno-Karabakh, by increasing the availability and quality of psychological and psychiatric services”.¹⁹

9. Armenia has high primary and lower secondary enrolment rates, with over 90 per cent participation and near parity in access to education for girls and boys.²⁰ However, preschool access remains a challenge, with only 36.2 per cent of children aged 0–5 years, 68.6 per cent²¹ of children aged 3–5 years and 4.1 per cent of children under 3 years of age enrolled.²² Urban enrolment for children aged 0–5 years (45.9 per cent) is nearly double that in rural areas (23.5 per cent), with notable disparities between the capital Yerevan and the regions.²³ In 2023, 24 per cent of children aged 0–6 years from extremely poor households were enrolled, compared to 37 per cent from poor households and 44 per cent from non-poor households.²⁴ Barriers include limited awareness of the importance of preschool education, limited availability of kindergartens and unaffordable costs for families. Children with disabilities face additional challenges due to inaccessible infrastructure, limited availability of adapted learning materials, a shortage of trained teachers, inadequate early identification and intervention, inadequate support services and negative social norms.

10. Learning quality remains a challenge, with 27 per cent of late-primary-age children not proficient in reading, and 20 per cent of students not achieving the minimum proficiency level by the end of primary school (22.1 per cent among boys and 17.5 per cent among girls).²⁵ While Armenian fourth graders showed improved scores in mathematics, there was a decline in science performance in 2023.²⁶ Outdated curricula and declining teaching quality have weakened the education system, prompting reforms to introduce a new national curriculum with updated science,

¹⁸ Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and UNICEF, Multi-sectoral needs assessment of refugees (households) from Nagorno-Karabakh, Yerevan, 2024.

¹⁹ United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations on the Combined Fifth and Sixth Periodic Reports of Armenia*, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, Yerevan, 2024.

²⁰ Data on Armenia from UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Browser, <https://databrowser.uis.unesco.org/view#indicatorPaths=UIS-EducationOPRI%3A0%3AGER.1%2CUIS-EducationOPRI%3A0%3AGER.2%2CUIS-EducationOPRI%3A0%3AGER.3&geoMode=countries&geoUnits=ARM&browsePath=EDUCATION%2FUIS-EducationOPRI%2Fenrol-att&timeMode=range&view=table&chartMode=multiple&tableIndicatorId=GER.1&chartIndicatorId=GER.1&chartHighlightSeries=&chartHighlightEnabled=true>, accessed on 3 June 2025; World Bank, ‘School enrollment, primary and secondary (gross), gender parity index (GPI) – Armenia’, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ENR.PRSC.FM.ZS?locations=AM>, accessed on 30 May 2025.

²¹ Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, ‘Gross enrolment of children 3 -5 years of age in pre-school education’, <https://sdg.armstat.am/4-2-2-a/>, accessed on 30 May 2025.

²² Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, ArmStatBank (database), <https://statbank.armstat.am/pxweb/hy/ArmStatBank/?rxid=9ba7b0d1-2ff8-40fa-a309-fae01ea885bb>, accessed on 30 May 2025.

²³ Statistical Committee, Armenia, Social Situation of the Republic of Armenia for 2023, Yerevan, 2024.

²⁴ Statistical Committee, Armenia, Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, Yerevan, 2024.

²⁵ World Bank and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, ‘Armenia - Learning Poverty Brief 2024’, *Learning Poverty Brief*, No. 193398, World Bank, 2024.

²⁶ Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, TIMSS 2023 International Results Download Center, <https://timss2023.org/download-center/>, accessed on 30 May 2025.

technology, engineering, arts and mathematics standards, and enhanced teacher training, to support employment-relevant skills and civic education. Strengthening measurement of learning outcomes and monitoring of children at risk of dropout remains essential.

11. In 2023, the rate of youth not in employment, education or training stood at 24.4 per cent and 8.4 per cent for the 15–29 and 15–19 age groups respectively, disproportionately affecting girls, young women and young people with disabilities,²⁷ who often face additional barriers due to social norms and other factors. A mismatch between skills provided by the education system and labour-market demands hinders youth empowerment and economic engagement. Adolescents and young people from marginalized communities often face barriers such as poverty and limited access to services and learning opportunities, including through digital tools.

12. Despite the legislative reforms on child protection, violence against children remains widespread. The Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2015-16 reported that 68.9 per cent of children aged 1–14 years experienced physical punishment or psychological aggression, which was more common for boys (70.8 per cent) than girls (66.8 per cent).²⁸ Violence against children is closely linked to domestic violence, with children present in 34 per cent of cases of violence against women.²⁹ Physical fighting is a concern among adolescent boys, especially 13-year-old (35 per cent) and 15-year-old boys (32 per cent), with these averages higher than in other countries.³⁰ Online violence is an emerging concern, with nearly 67 per cent of children under 14 years old and 90 per cent of adolescents aged 15–24 years using the Internet,³¹ which has potential risks. There are still approximately 950 children in state-run orphanages and special schools,³² the vast majority being children with disabilities. The number of children in contact with the law has increased in recent years, while the justice system lacks child-friendly mechanisms to shelter children from secondary victimization and ensure their effective reintegration. The ability to protect children from violence and ensure a supportive family environment is hindered by harmful social norms, inadequate regulatory frameworks, limited community-based services (including family-based alternative care, rehabilitation and psychosocial support services), shortages and inadequate qualification of social service and justice professionals, and gaps in intersectoral coordination mechanisms.

13. While social protection programmes play an important role in reducing poverty, over a quarter of the population remains below the poverty line, and 57 per cent of those affected do not currently receive assistance.³³ Social protection spending prioritizes pensions, and a rebalancing towards child-focused programmes is

²⁷ Statistical Committee of the Republic of Armenia, 'Indicator 8.6.1 – Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment or training', <https://sdg.armstat.am/8-6-1/>, accessed on 30 May 2025.

²⁸ National Statistical Service and Ministry of Health, Armenia, and ICF, Armenia Demographic and Health Survey 2015-16, National Statistical Service, Ministry of Health and ICF, Maryland, USA, 2017.

²⁹ Statistical Committee, Armenia, Survey on Domestic Violence against Women, Yerevan, 2021.

³⁰ Cosma, Alina et al., A focus on adolescent peer violence and bullying in Europe, central Asia and Canada: Health Behaviour in School-aged Children international report from the 2021/2022 survey, Volume 2, WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, 2024.

³¹ International Telecommunication Union DataHub (database), 'Armenia: Individuals using the internet', <https://datahub.itu.int/data/?e=ARM&c=701&i=11624&d=Age&v=chart>, accessed on 3 June 2025.

³² Calculation done by UNICEF based on data provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, 2024.

³³ World Bank, *Armenia Public Expenditure Review: Improving spending efficiency*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2023.

needed.³⁴ The family benefits programme covers half of the poorest households and less than half of the poorest children,³⁵ limiting its impact in reducing child poverty. Armenia has universal disability benefits and a childcare allowance for children under the age of 2 years. However, both face issues of effectiveness in terms of covering extra costs. Despite notable progress, the social protection system faces several challenges, including financing constraints combined with spending inefficiency, issues with targeting mechanisms, poor coordination between various stakeholders, a shortage of social service workforce professionals, and significant service accessibility barriers for rural and vulnerable populations. Despite existing legal provisions, stronger family-friendly policies are needed.

14. Armenia ranks seventy-fifth on the INFORM Risk Index (3.9) and is exposed to significant environmental and climate hazards, which affect children's well-being and access to services. Seismic risk is ranked high, with a 20 per cent chance of potentially damaging earthquakes in the next 50 years.³⁶ In 2024, severe flooding and landslides impacted two regions, damaging infrastructure and livelihoods across 37 communities. Air pollution is worsening, particularly in urban areas, causing adverse health outcomes, with an estimated 24 per cent chance of stroke and ischaemic heart disease deaths attributed to it.³⁷ The country also experiences humanitarian challenges, with a significant refugee population compared to the national population that still faces challenges in securing basic livelihoods and accessing services, and needs additional support to address mental health issues. Communities bordering Azerbaijan face similar challenges due to risks of military escalation.

15. The review of the Strategic Programme for the Protection of the Rights of the Child in Armenia³⁸ identified weak monitoring systems lacking comprehensive data, with the most recent DHS dating back to 2015–2016. As a result, tracking progress towards child-related Sustainable Development Goal targets remains challenging. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends establishing a comprehensive, disaggregated data-collection system, strengthening administrative data on children in need of protection, and ensuring data-sharing across ministries to inform policy, monitoring, and implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocols.³⁹ The first-ever Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey is expected to partly fill these gaps.

16. The evaluation of the 2021–2025 country programme recommended continuing work on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and integrating emergency preparedness into long-term policy reforms in Armenia, recognizing its importance in the volatile context. The UNICEF 2024 global evaluation on emergency preparedness highlighted Armenia as a positive example, noting that inter-agency partnerships and proactive co-leadership with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and other government entities have established the leading role of UNICEF in cash response, child protection and education working groups, enabling an expansive and timely refugee response.

³⁴ Ramírez López, Betina et al., *Assessment of the Social Protection Floors in Armenia*, UN-Women, Tbilisi, 2021.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Armenia RiX Spotlight for Common Country Assessment*, UNDRR, Geneva, 2024.

³⁷ World Health Organization, *Health and Environment Scorecard: Armenia*, WHO, Geneva, 2023.

³⁸ Tadevosyan, Anna, *Final review and Evaluability Assessment of the Strategic Programme for the Protection of the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Armenia DOE 2017-2021*, UNICEF, Yerevan, 2022.

³⁹ United Nations, *Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Armenia*, *CRC/C/ARM/CO/5-6*, United Nations, New York, 14 October 2024.

Programme priorities and partnerships

17. The country programme envisions that, by 2030, all children and young people in Armenia exercise their rights and reach their full potential in a nurturing, safe and resilient environment, supported by quality, shock-responsive and adequately resourced national systems. To this end, the programme focuses on three priorities that are key to accelerating the agenda for children: nurturing care in the early years; learning and skilling; and protecting the most vulnerable.

18. The programme aligns with the Armenia Transformation Strategy, 2050, the Programme of the Government of Armenia, 2021–2026 and sectoral strategy documents. It is derived from the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), 2026–2030, particularly Outcome 1, focused on human capital and well-being, covering education, health and protection; Outcome 3, focused on green transition for resilience; and Outcome 4, focused on governance for a sustainable future. In addition, in response to the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the universal periodic review by the United Nations Human Rights Council, UNICEF, alongside United Nations agencies and development partners, aims to support the Government in accelerating key legislative and policy reforms critical to advancing child rights.

19. The programme's priorities were shaped through a consultative process with the Government, United Nations agencies, national partners and children, informed by the previous country programme evaluation and recent assessments, including risk analyses, the gender equality programme review and the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Lessons drawn from the country programme evaluation highlight that the comparative advantage of UNICEF is in long-standing advocacy and policy engagement through holistic approaches that contribute to reform processes with critical institutional knowledge, localization of international best practices and innovation. Therefore, the programme will focus on continuing to support the Government in implementing several ongoing key legislative reforms designed to address systemic child rights issues at scale, building on the contributions of the previous country programme. Strengthened coordination with United Nations agencies under the UNSDCF and leveraging of the convening role of UNICEF with multiple stakeholders can further enhance impact and contribute to synergetic collaboration and pooling of resources. Guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and human rights principles, the programme prioritizes the realization of child rights for all girls and boys, particularly those at risk of being left behind.

20. The programme focuses on supporting the acceleration of ongoing national legislative and policy reforms to drive transformative systemic changes for sustainable results for children at scale. Key areas include strengthening accountable institutions to reduce disparities in access to quality social services – especially for vulnerable children such as those in rural areas, children with disabilities, children living in poverty and/or deprived of a family environment, and refugees – and enhancing communities' and systems' resilience to climate-induced/other risks. Multisectoral and multi-partner synergies will be leveraged to mobilize resources, facilitate public-private partnerships and promote coordinated and virtuous engagement of multiple stakeholders, including the Government, civil society, international financial institutions (IFIs) and the private sector, to scale up evidence-based solutions in national policies and programmes. Social and behaviour change (SBC) efforts will engage children, caregivers and communities to promote positive behaviours and practices.

21. The three programme priorities – nurturing care in the early years, learning and skilling, and protecting the most vulnerable – will be achieved through work in four sectoral components, following the logic of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, the UNSDCF

and the distribution of responsibilities within the Government of Armenia. Sectoral components – health and nutrition; education and skills; child protection and child rights monitoring; and social policy and resilience – are supported by the programme effectiveness component.

Health and nutrition

22. Contributing to the first and third priorities, this component aims to ensure that children, particularly those in remote areas, benefit from universal, accessible and quality health and nutrition services. It responds to recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to reduce neonatal and infant mortality, and child morbidity by ensuring equitable access to healthcare, especially in rural areas, and to address mental health challenges, especially among refugee children. It also addresses the remaining challenges of the immunization agenda, and emerging environmental health risks for children.

23. Aligned with the Government's health reforms under the National Healthcare Development Strategy, 2023–2026 and the Universal Health Insurance reform, the programme will facilitate policy advice to update and revise relevant health policies and strategies to ensure that they are shock-responsive, and that they effectively respond to the needs of children, especially those that may be left behind. A strong health information management system, providing up-to-date and comprehensive data, will be essential for supporting integrated services, including improved referral mechanisms.

24. Building on these reforms, UNICEF will support the strengthening of primary healthcare to enhance the quality of care and facilitate access across the country, especially in rural areas. Efforts will include policy advice for updating and developing clinical standards and procedures to improve preventive, curative and shock-responsive care, also through the expansion of home visiting services. UNICEF will support quality assurance mechanisms, to ensure sustainable improvements in service delivery. UNICEF will prioritize the introduction of functional mechanisms for a continuum of care to strengthen mental health services at the regional level. In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the programme will prioritize institutional and professional capacity-building at the national and local levels, introducing standards to enhance the quality of child health services.

25. To reduce the double burden of malnutrition, UNICEF will continue to support the Government in promoting breastfeeding, early childhood nutrition and healthy nutrition of school-aged children through its healthy lifestyle action plan. Initiatives around SBC will focus on engaging adolescents, communities, mothers and fathers on child development and nurturing care, nutrition, vaccination, early identification and intervention for children with disabilities, developmental delays and mental health challenges. These efforts will be supported by building on adolescent-friendly platforms and supporting the scale-up of nutrition counselling and parental education centres at the primary healthcare level with the Ministry of Health.

Education and skills

26. This component envisions interventions feeding into both nurturing care in the early years, and learning and skilling. It aims to ensure that children and young people, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education, and acquire skills for the future. It responds to the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on improving quality of education, on ensuring that children with disabilities have access to inclusive education in mainstream schools, and on advancing early childhood care and education (ECCE) policy implementation.

27. Aligned with the State Programme of Education Development until 2030, UNICEF will support the development of innovative and cost-effective models to expand ECCE services, by improving standards and guidelines for service quality, and facilitating coordination and public-private partnership mechanisms to build on synergies and leverage joint resources for scale-up. Policy dialogue will continue to advance ECCE reforms with sustainable funding solutions, including making one-year pre-primary education mandatory and expanding ECCE for children aged 0–2 years. This is expected to better meet the needs of children from the poorest quintiles and rural areas, children with disabilities, developmental delays and special educational needs, and children affected by displacement due to conflict and natural disasters.

28. Building on ongoing reforms, UNICEF will continue leveraging strong partnerships among education stakeholders to enhance learning outcomes and skills development through evidence-based policy advice, improved coordination, including between the national and subnational levels, and SBC initiatives. Efforts will focus on ensuring that children are ready for school and acquire foundational skills, and that adolescents and young people are prepared for life and work, also considering emerging opportunities and risks stemming from digital learning and use of artificial intelligence, and the increased need for pedagogical-psychological support, including for children with disabilities. UNICEF will support strengthening of education data and governance systems to improve tracking of learning outcomes, attendance and other risk factors to improve retention and student performance, especially among girls and boys with disabilities, refugee children, and children living in poverty and in rural areas.

29. The programme will support the operationalization of the recently adopted law on youth policy by supporting the formulation of regulatory frameworks for youth engagement platforms and the role of communities and youth workers, and by testing innovative skills development programmes for adolescent girls, boys and youth who live in rural/remote areas, have disabilities or are refugees, with the goal to prepare them for life and work transitions. Additionally, SBC initiatives will leverage digital platforms to raise awareness among national and local stakeholders on participation, disaster risk reduction, and climate action, emphasizing adolescents' role in decision-making. Public-private partnerships will be facilitated and leveraged to sustain these efforts.

Child protection and child rights monitoring

30. Combining contributions to nurturing care in the early years and protecting the most vulnerable, this component aims to ensure that children, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from integrated and shock-responsive child protection and justice systems, and evidence-informed child rights monitoring and coordination mechanisms. Within the framework of the ongoing child protection reforms, UNICEF will support efforts aligned with the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to accelerate the adoption of the draft Law on Child Rights and Child Protection System and the amendment of the Family Code and related legal documents. The programme will focus on developing by-laws and regulations to operationalize the legislation, and facilitating dialogue among government and non-government stakeholders to ensure that adequate coordination mechanisms are in place and that resources are mobilized in a synergetic and efficient manner.

31. UNICEF will contribute to operationalizing the new legislation with policy advice to professionalize and regulate the child protection workforce at the local level, and introduce additional measures to prevent and address violence against children and unnecessary separation of children from families. This will include developing

and revising case management, including gatekeeping, and referral mechanisms, and strengthening community-based services to ensure an effective continuum of care, including during humanitarian crises. The focus will be on prioritizing alternative over residential care and preventing abandonment of children, particularly those with disabilities, and promoting child-friendly justice, including diversion, reintegration/rehabilitation and restorative justice. The programme will strengthen the child protection data system to improve quality assurance and coordinated service delivery.

32. The programme will address violence against girls and boys by building institutional capacity to enhance knowledge on child rights, child protection risks and related preventive measures. Parenting support programmes will be institutionalized to achieve scale and leveraged to promote positive parenting practices, including parenting children with disabilities and children active online. UNICEF will also promote the mental health and well-being of children and caregivers through online and offline psychoeducation, while strengthening psychosocial support mechanisms through community-based services.

33. The programme will also provide policy advice to strengthen child rights monitoring and reporting through national human rights institutions and coordination mechanisms, and to promote the use of disaggregated data and evidence to leverage resources and partnerships and improve policies for children.

Social policy and resilience

34. This component contributes primarily to the third priority and aims to ensure that children and families benefit from comprehensive and shock-responsive social protection systems, and adaptation and mitigation measures that address vulnerability to poverty and climate-induced/other risks.

35. As part of ongoing social reforms, UNICEF will continue to support efforts aligned with recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to accelerate the implementation of the new social protection policy framework and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of social sector allocations. The latter includes evidence generation to align Medium-Term Public Expenditure Framework budgets with child-related policies, identifying budget efficiency measures, and strengthening budget monitoring and oversight, while engaging with other stakeholders, and leveraging resources and partnerships.

36. Aligned with the new 2024 law on social assistance and the vulnerability assessment system reform, UNICEF will provide policy advice to design and test fiscally sustainable and quality social protection programmes and family-friendly policies, engaging IFIs, the private sector and other stakeholders in a coordinated manner. This includes developing integrated, modernized data systems for accountability and quality assurance. It also involves support for strengthening the technical capacity of social workers and service providers through systematic learning and certification at scale. The programme will also aim at a more shock-responsive and climate-resilient social protection system, building on the experience of humanitarian cash and voucher delivery in recent emergencies. Information-sharing, participation, and feedback and complaint mechanisms will be strengthened to ensure that families and communities understand their entitlements and how to access social protection services.

37. UNICEF will enhance the capacity of national and subnational authorities and stakeholders to design evidence-based policies, action plans and monitoring mechanisms that strengthen resilience to crises, including climate-induced disasters, and enable mitigation and adaptation strategies that are child-sensitive and take into

account children's views. The programme will also raise awareness among children, parents and other stakeholders on climate action and disaster risk reduction.

Programme effectiveness

38. This component will ensure that the country programme is results-driven, and efficiently managed and communicated. This will be achieved through operational support, strategic planning, monitoring, evaluation, evidence-based decision-making and systematic external communication.

39. Integrated SBC, advocacy and partnerships – including fundraising and private sector engagement – are embedded across all programme areas to enhance reach and influence and ensure sustainability of results for children.

Summary budget table

<i>Programme component</i>	<i>(In thousands of United States dollars)</i>		
	<i>Regular resources</i>	<i>Other resources</i>	<i>Total</i>
Health and nutrition	960	2 204	3 164
Education and skills	960	4 821	5 781
Child protection and child rights monitoring	960	4 507	5 467
Social policy and resilience	960	4 709	5 669
Programme effectiveness	425	733	1 158
Total	4 265	16 974	21 239

Programme and risk management

40. This document, which outlines the contributions of UNICEF to the UNSDCF and national plans, serves as the primary unit of accountability to the Executive Board for aligning results and allocating resources at the country level. Accountability of managers at the country, regional and headquarters levels is prescribed in the organization's programme and operations policies and procedures. The programme will be implemented in coordination with UNSDCF results groups, thus ensuring coherence and synergies with other United Nations agencies.

41. External risks to the programme arise from regional instability as well as emerging global geopolitical dynamics, and the exposure of Armenia to natural disasters, including climate-induced ones. These risks can trigger internal tensions, displacement and humanitarian crises while straining economic growth. The Disaster Risk Management Strategy, 2023–2030, along with the role of UNICEF in the United Nations Disaster Management Team, ensures coordinated emergency preparedness and response in collaboration with the Government. The programme will prioritize the implementation of systematic emergency preparedness measures across all components. UNICEF mitigates internal programme risks by applying the harmonized approach to cash transfers, enhancing accountability to affected populations and measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

42. UNICEF will mobilize financial and non-financial contributions from the Government, the private sector, the United Nations system, and bilateral and

multilateral donors to support the child rights agenda in the country. Collaboration with other agencies will enable synergies and enhance efficiency.

43. The Government will endorse UNICEF efforts to mobilize and leverage resources, assets and expertise from the local and regional private sector to support UNICEF programmes in Armenia, ensuring that all donations received by UNICEF from individuals, corporations, foundations and other private entities are tax exempt, and that donors benefit from tax deduction to the extent permitted by the national legislation. Recognizing the mandate of UNICEF and its legal status as an international organization, the Government shall not subject the aforementioned tax exemption or any other acts to the registration of UNICEF under national legislation applicable to charities. The Government shall ensure that donors to UNICEF enjoy the tax and other regulatory benefits in equal conditions as donors to registered national charitable organizations. The Government will take all necessary regulatory measures to facilitate and promote UNICEF programmes and fundraising operations, including by facilitating the creation of bank accounts and the import and export of funds.

Monitoring, learning and evaluation

44. The programme will be monitored and evaluated based on the results and resources framework and the costed evaluation plan, aligned with UNSDCF, Sustainable Development Goal and national priority indicators. The integrated monitoring, evaluation and research plan will guide evidence generation to inform programming. Performance monitoring systems will track progress against targets set in the multi-year workplans and programme cooperation agreements. To track progress and inform strategic adjustments, UNICEF will conduct annual reviews, along with field monitoring visits, in collaboration with partners.

45. UNICEF will strengthen child rights data ecosystems through national partnerships, collaborating with statistical systems and United Nations agencies to integrate the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey and other child-related indicators to measure programme progress, contribute to national planning processes and inform policy development. UNICEF will conduct evaluations as planned in the costed evaluation plan, prioritizing country-led and joint evaluations to document lessons learned and inform national and UNICEF programming. Developing national evaluation capacity and establishing national evaluation reference groups will ensure ownership and use of findings to inform the programme and national policies.

Annex

Results and resources framework

Armenia – UNICEF country programme of cooperation, 2026–2030

Convention on the Rights of the Child: Articles 1–6, 9–10, 12–14, 17–20, 22–23, 27–29, 31, 33–34, 37, 39–44
National priorities: Armenia Transformation Strategy, 2050, Programme of the Government of Armenia, 2026–2030, Programme for the Protection of the Rights of the Child for 2024–2029, Armenia Demography Strategy for 2024–2040
United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) outcomes involving UNICEF: Outcome 1: By 2030, people, particularly the most vulnerable, enjoy higher quality, inclusive and gender responsive, and shock responsive services and develop their full potential to lead healthy and resilient lives. Outcome 3: By 2030, climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity protection, and sustainable natural resources management is strengthened, through gender-responsive, inclusive and innovative approaches. Outcome 4: By 2030, governance institutions and systems are more responsive, accountable, and transparent, upholding the rule of law, human rights, gender equality.
Related Impact Results of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2026–2029: 1–5

UNSDCF outcomes	UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
						RR	OR	Total
1	1. By 2030, children, particularly those in remote areas, benefit from universal, accessible and quality health and nutrition services.	Neonatal mortality rate* B: 5 per 1 000 live births T: 4.5	Statistical Committee of Armenia, (ArmStat)	1.1 Health system capacities are strengthened for equitable provision of quality and shock-responsive services to children.	Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA), ArmStat Subnational authorities WHO Civil society organizations (CSOs)	960	2 204	3 164
		Prevalence of malnutrition among children under the age of 5 years (stunting (S) and overweight (O)) B: 7.2% (S); 11.5% (O) T: 7% (S); 11% (O)	ArmStat, WHO	1.2 National and local capacities are enhanced to provide more coordinated nutrition and other services.				
		Surviving infants who received two WHO-recommended vaccines B: 95% T: 97%	WHO and UNICEF estimates	1.3 Parents, influencers and adolescents have increased knowledge and skills for sound child healthcare, nutrition and development practices, and mental well-being.				

UNSDCF outcomes	UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
						RR	OR	Total
1	2. By 2030, children and young people, especially the most vulnerable, benefit from quality pre-primary and secondary education, and acquire skills for the future.	Proportion of children and young people at the end of primary school achieving at least the minimum proficiency level in mathematics – both sexes B: 72% T: 75%	ArmStat	2.1 National and subnational stakeholders have increased capacity to provide safe, quality ECCE services, especially in remote rural areas. 2.2 The education system has increased capacity to provide safe, quality secondary education. 2.3 National and subnational stakeholders have increased capacity to provide quality alternative skills development pathways and promote genuine participation.	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports (MESCS), Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure (MTAI), MLSA, MOH, ArmStat Subnational authorities United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) CSOs, private sector	960	4 821	5 781
		Gross enrolment of children aged 3–5 years in preschool education B: 68.6% (Urban: 68.9%; Rural: 56.4%) T: 72% (Urban: 72%; Rural: 60%)	ArmStat					
		Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in employment, education or training B: 16.9% (Female: 20.3%; Male: 13.8%) T: 15% (Female: 18%; Male: 12%)	ArmStat					
1 and 4	3. By 2030, children, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from integrated and	Proportion of children aged 1–17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or	ArmStat	3.1 Child protection and justice systems have improved capacity to ensure that children are	MLSA, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of	960	4 507	5 467

UNSDCF outcomes	UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
						RR	OR	Total
	shock-responsive child protection and justice systems, and evidence-informed child rights monitoring and coordination mechanisms.	psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month B: 68.9% T: 65%		protected from violence against children and live in caring family environments.	Internal Affairs (MIA), MOH, MTAI, Ministry of High-Tech Industry, ArmStat, Human Rights Defender Subnational authorities United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) UNFPA CSOs			
		Children from orphanages (aged 0–17 years) at the end of the year B: 668 (492 with disabilities) T: 450 (350)	ArmStat	3.2 Children, parents and communities have enhanced knowledge and skills on child rights and how to protect them.				
		Level of integration of measurable commitments on child rights in national planning documents B: To be determined T: 80% integrated	Joint UNICEF/ Government assessment	3.3 National child rights coordination mechanisms have improved capacity to monitor realization of child rights.				
1 and 3	4. By 2030, children and families in Armenia benefit from comprehensive and shock-responsive social protection systems, and adaptation and mitigation measures that address vulnerability to poverty, deprivation and climate-induced/other risks.	Proportion of total government spending on essential services – social protection B: 26.8% T: 27.2%	ArmStat	4.1 National and local stakeholders have enhanced capacities to design, coordinate and implement integrated and shock-responsive social protection and family-friendly policies.	MLSA, MESCS, MOH, MTAI, MIA, Ministry of Environment, ArmStat	960	4 709	5 669
		Share of poor population who receive social assistance, including family benefit B: 45.5% T: 48%	ArmStat	4.2 Public and private stakeholders at the national and local levels have increased capacities for child-sensitive financial management and	Subnational authorities UNDP			

UNSDCF outcomes	UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
						RR	OR	Total
		Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population B: 740.4 T: 700	ArmStat	prioritization of child- focused investments. 4.3 Children, families, and national and subnational authorities have increased capacities to put in place adequate climate and disaster risk mitigation and adaptation actions.	UNFPA World Bank CSOs			
	5. Programme effectiveness					425	733	1 158
Total resources						4 265	16 974	21 239

* Outcome indicator aligned with the UNSDCF indicator.