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*For action***United Nations Children's Fund**

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**Country programme recommendation\*\*****Albania****Addendum***Summary*

The present addendum to the country note submitted to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2000 contains the final country programme recommendation for Board approval.

It contains a recommendation for funding the country programme of Albania which has an annual planning level of \$1,000,000 or less. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve the amount of \$3,445,000 from regular resources, subject to the availability of funds, and \$15,000,000 in other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, for the period of 2001 to 2005.

\* E/ICEF/2000/14.

\*\* The original country note provided only indicative figures for estimated programme cooperation. The figures provided in the present addendum are final and take into account unspent balances of programme cooperation at the end of 1999. They will be contained in the summary of recommendations for regular resources and other resources programmes (E/ICEF/2000/P/L.27).

## Basic data

(1998 unless otherwise indicated)

Child population (millions, under 18 years)	1.1
U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	37
IMR (per 1,000 live births)	30
Underweight (% moderate and severe)	..
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	22
Literacy (% male/female)	../.
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female) (1995)	95/97
Primary school children reaching grade 5 (%) (1994)	82
Access to safe water (%)	..
Routine EPI vaccines financed by Government (%) (1997)	0
GNP per capita (\$US)	810
One-year-olds fully immunized against:	
Tuberculosis	87 per cent
Diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus	96 per cent
Measles	89 per cent
Poliomyelitis	97 per cent
Pregnant women immunized against tetanus	65 per cent

## The situation of children and women

1. In transitional Albania, social conditions, unemployment and average incomes remain among the worst in Europe. Progress has been hampered by a series of emergencies, which have included a severe polio epidemic in 1996, traumatic and violent civil unrest in 1997, and the dramatic influx of Kosovar refugees in 1999. Violence towards children and women remains a backdrop to the transition. The data below is restricted to figures not included in the country note submitted to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2000 (E/ICEF/2000/P/L.15).

2. Actual rates of infant and maternal mortality are believed to be much higher than presented in the basic data table due to under-reporting. Geographical disparities in mortality rates are significant. The infant mortality rate is almost twice the national average in some northern districts. Acute respiratory infections (ARI) are the main cause of infant mortality, accounting for 32 per cent of total infant deaths.

3. Protein-energy malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies remain serious public health problems. An Institute of Public Health study (1993) found that 63 per cent of children aged 8-10 years showed signs of severe iodine deficiency. The Government has passed a decree banning the importation of non-iodized salt, but import controls remain weak. Locally-produced salt is non-iodized, and prospects for control have diminished since the destruction of the production factory in 1997 and the emergence of dispersed small-scale producers.

4. The transition has placed a strain on Albanian youth. This is reflected in the rise in drug abuse, school drop-out, delinquency, and children living and working on the street. Official figures estimate some 10,000 drug addicts in Albania, mostly Tirana-based youth. Juvenile involvement in homicides and other violent crimes is among the highest in the region. These problems are exacerbated by the absence of measures for supporting and constructively engaging at-risk youth.

5. Although only 41 cases of HIV infection were reported by December 1999, the national AIDS programme estimates that the number could be up to 50

times higher. Those affected are mainly males, and 90 per cent are from 20 to 35 years of age and drug users.

6. There are no juvenile courts and few qualified personnel to handle juvenile cases. Pre-trial deprivation of liberty is common, and the separation of minors and adults in detention is inadequate. Underlying social factors contributing to juvenile crime are not addressed, and no linkages exist between judicial, law enforcement and social structures. The Government, however, has issued a comprehensive national plan of action to address these issues.

### **Programme cooperation, 1996-2000**

7. UNICEF cooperation played an important role in placing child protection issues on the national political agenda. UNICEF advocacy was instrumental in the creation of an intersectoral working group on juvenile justice, which produced a comprehensive plan of action for the protection of child perpetrators and victims of violence. A UNICEF-supported comparative analysis of Albanian legislation contributed to efforts to make the country's laws compatible with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. A survey on street children helped draw attention to and generate policy debate on this growing phenomenon, and a UNICEF-supported pilot initiative demonstrated an approach for reaching street children with schooling. Pilot projects dealing with abandoned and institutionalized children helped point to alternative policy approaches for especially vulnerable groups of children. Workshops were organized that provided key child care professionals with an introduction to the concepts of child stress management and psychosocial support.

8. UNICEF cooperation made a contribution to the process of education reform. UNICEF, together with the World Bank and Soros Foundation, supported the completion of a comprehensive education sector analysis and an "Education White Paper" — two key guiding elements for reform efforts. UNICEF-supported studies on primary student drop-out and repetition stimulated policy discussions. UNICEF also supported pilot initiatives aimed at demonstrating new approaches for improving the quality and relevance of learning. The most important of these was the Ministry of Education interactive learning initiative involving curriculum reform, combined with new interactive learning and teaching methods. The first national conference on pre-primary education, with UNICEF

support, served as the starting point for the development of a medium-/long-term policy for pre-primary education. Following up on this conference, UNICEF was a main supporter of the introduction of a new, child-centred model for improving the quality of care and learning in pre-schools and kindergartens.

9. UNICEF played a key supporting role in Government efforts to achieve the goals set by the World Summit for Children in the areas of child health, nutrition and maternal health. An immunization coverage cluster survey carried out at the end of 1999 revealed that, with the technical and material assistance of UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), high levels of vaccination coverage had been achieved and sustained. No confirmed cases of polio have been recorded since 1997. Material support, combined with support to in-service training, has also helped to consolidate national programmes for controlling diarrhoeal diseases and ARI. On a broader level, an extensive national primary health care (PHC) system assessment, carried out in collaboration with the Institute of Public Health, has helped to guide health sector reform efforts. UNICEF advocacy contributed to new pieces of legislation on nutrition — one based on the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes and the other a decree banning the importation of non-iodized salt. A knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviour study on reproductive health, conducted in conjunction with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), WHO, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is giving impetus to the development of a comprehensive policy addressing reproductive health issues.

10. During the Kosovo crisis, UNICEF developed the Child-Friendly Spaces initiative, which aimed at securing basic education, health, recreational activities and psychosocial assistance for the child refugees living in camps and collective centres. Based on the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, this initiative helped to safeguard children's rights to survival, development, participation and protection in emergency.

### **Lessons learned from past cooperation**

11. Major lessons learned from past cooperation were summarized in the country note.

## Recommended programme cooperation, 2001-2005

### Estimated annual expenditure

(In thousands of United States dollars)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Total
<i>Regular resources</i>						
Early childhood care and development	155	160	160	160	160	795
Children and youth development and participation	175	165	160	155	150	805
Social policy and communication for development	160	163	169	174	179	845
Cross-sectoral costs	200	200	200	200	200	1 000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>3 445</b>
<i>Other resources</i>						
Early childhood care and development	600	600	600	600	600	3 000
Children and youth development and participation	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	1 200	6 000
Social policy and communication for development	900	900	900	900	900	4 500
Cross-sectoral costs	300	300	300	300	300	1 500
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3 000</b>	<b>3 000</b>	<b>3 000</b>	<b>3 000</b>	<b>3 000</b>	<b>15 000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 690</b>	<b>3 688</b>	<b>3 689</b>	<b>3 689</b>	<b>3 689</b>	<b>18 445</b>

12. The number and names of the specific programmes have been revised since submission of the country note to accommodate the cross-sectoral nature of the overall country programme, in particular related to the development, protection and participation of children and youth. The integrated community services component is now part of the social policy and communication for development programme.

### Country programme preparation process

13. Informal consultations and strategy discussions held with key partners started in July 1999 and culminated in a formal country strategy meeting. Participants included the ministers and other officials from the Ministries of Health, Education, Social

Services and Women, Culture and Sport, and Justice, as well as representatives from other United Nations agencies, donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

### Country programme goals and objectives

14. The overall aim of the country programme will be to support the Government and local authorities, civil society, communities, and women and children themselves in implementing the principles embodied in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

15. In specific terms, the country programme will contribute to the achievement of the following key

national objectives by the year 2005: (a) to reduce infant and maternal mortality; (b) to achieve universal salt iodization (USI); (c) to strengthen parental awareness of early childhood development (ECD) practices through advocacy and development of working models of 25 low-cost, community-based centres; (d) to reverse declining school attendance and revitalize the education sector through support to policy reform and the development and replication of pilot schools practising interactive learning; (e) to increase the participation of youth in the democratization process by developing youth parliaments in 12 regions; (f) to enhance the capacity of institutions and communities to respond to the challenge of protecting and reintegrating children in conflict with the law, those with disabilities, those in institutional care, and others; (g) to demonstrate local models of informal, holistic and community-based children's services in 10 key localities; (h) to strengthen the capacity of key institutions for social analysis and effective planning on children's issues; and (i) to improve and develop public dialogue, debate and awareness of children's and women's rights' issues in the media and the Parliament.

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

16. The priorities of the new country programme are based on the future priority actions for children and the UNICEF global medium-term plan for 1998-2001 (E/ICEF/1998/13 and Corr.1). The priorities include polio eradication and measles elimination, support for education and health reform, and the revitalization of civil society. New vaccines will be introduced as part of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization initiative. Regionally, where possible, policies on youth and education will be harmonized with those of the South-Eastern Europe Stability Pact. UNICEF is also serving as a major facilitator for a number of activities, including a Children's Alliance Movement, as part of the future actions for children, leading up to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children in 2001.

17. Support to social policy development will be stressed as a key cross-sectoral emphasis of the programme, while the effects of decentralization will be a particular focus of the communication for development programme.

### **Programme strategy**

18. UNICEF will focus on the cross-cutting, rights-based programming that spans the stages of the life cycle. Thus, the country programme will promote gender mainstreaming and a holistic approach to children's services, while seeking to build on the strong role of the family. Activities will aim to empower families through improved information on child-related issues and the development of governmental policies and social development strategies. To ensure programme continuity, if other resources do not materialize, regular resources will be used to support high-priority core activities, while other resources will be used to build on these activities. Regular resources will be used for health, education, justice reform and policy, and communication and advocacy, while other resources will be allocated for expanding ongoing pilot activities as well as for additional innovative projects.

19. In line with globally identified priorities, the early childhood care and development (ECCD) programme will focus on children under-five years old, their mothers and the promotion of a good start in life for all children. The children and youth development and participation programme will address children during middle childhood and adolescence, emphasizing universal access to good quality basic education, and the development and participation of adolescents. The social policy and communication for development programme will provide cross-cutting support through promoting integrated basic services at the local level, and through broader policy reform, capacity-building and communication.

20. Contributing to the development of social policy and legislation will be a key strategic emphasis of UNICEF cooperation. UNICEF will seek to redress the balance of a preoccupation with macroeconomic development and to support the Government in accelerating urgently needed social sector reforms, which will be supported alongside initiatives aimed at demonstrating new and innovative policy approaches. Examples will include the interactive learning initiative and the community development project. Support will be extended to a range of applied research efforts to improve social data for policy-making.

21. UNICEF will work with the UNDP gender programme in supporting national reporting on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and in

research efforts aimed at highlighting and generating policy debate on women's rights. Coordination and training programmes for women's NGOs will be supported in an effort to increase their effectiveness and reach. UNICEF will provide technical expertise and material support to the development of centres providing basic services for women victims of violence. Finally, UNICEF will support women's reproductive health promotion and improved maternal health care, within the framework of broader health care reforms.

22. The *ECCD* programme will contribute to ensuring the survival and development rights of children during their first five years of life. Improving the care environments enjoyed by young children will be the programme's main strategic focus. UNICEF will address: (a) the quality of care received by young children (and their mothers) within the health care system; (b) nutrition-related care and practices; and (c) the home and community care environments of young children. Communication efforts promoting improved care, targeting parents, health workers, teachers and other key caregivers, will be an important cross-cutting dimension of the programme.

23. In maternal and child health, the programme will focus on the introduction of the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) initiative. This will be a vehicle for strengthening the case management and communication skills of first-level health workers and for improving the organization and management of health services, monitoring and evaluation, and promoting parental participation in correct home management of childhood illness. Until this is fully established, UNICEF will continue to support national control of ARI, control of diarrhoeal diseases and immunization interventions. Promoting improved reproductive health will be an important project focus, in cooperation with UNFPA, the United States Agency for International Development and other partners. Support will be extended to capacity-building of health personnel, the development of an effective system of emergency obstetric care, education activities targeting current and future mothers, and the establishment of pilot community-level mother support groups.

24. UNICEF-assisted interventions will focus on nutrition-related care and practices, with an emphasis on combating micronutrient deficiencies and their effect on children. In support of national efforts to

eliminate iodine deficiency and achieve USI by the year 2005, UNICEF will support the social marketing of iodized salt, the mobilization of consumer groups in support of iodized salt, the strengthening of capacity to control imported salt, and the rehabilitation of destroyed iodized salt production facilities, in Coordination with other United Nations partners. Iron and other micronutrient deficiencies will also be addressed primarily through the development of targeted supplementation strategies for young women. Promoting breastfeeding, complementary feeding and young child feeding practices will be other important areas of emphasis. Breastfeeding promotion efforts will focus on extending the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative network, establishing mother-to-mother support groups and monitoring implementation of the law on breast-milk substitutes.

25. The ECD component will emphasize improving the home care environment of young children. Support will centre on the adaptation and application of the Better Parenting initiative in Albania. The initiative involves the development of an integrated, multi-channel information, education and communication approach for reaching parents with selected messages on care and stimulation for young children. It will cover the health and nutritional, in addition to the cognitive and psychosocial, dimensions of ECD. Improving community early childhood care (ECC) will be another emphasis. As part of efforts to expand access, UNICEF will support the establishment of model neighbourhood care centres in private homes or community buildings, under the responsibility of mothers. Building on a successful pilot initiative implemented during the 1996-2000 country programme, UNICEF will also support the adaptation and introduction of a child-centred and participatory model of child development in a minimum of 25 Albanian kindergartens.

26. The *children and youth development and participation* programme will contribute to ensuring the development, participation and protection of children during middle childhood and adolescence (from 6 to 18 years of age). This programme will seek to guide the development of policies that affect this group and initiatives that illustrate new policy approaches.

27. In the education area, the UNICEF-assisted programme will focus on reforms aimed at improving the schooling system's capacity to respond to the

development needs of young people. The quality and substance of primary education will be addressed through expanding the interactive learning initiative. This initiative combines curriculum reform with the introduction of more interactive learning methods. A similar approach will be used for promoting healthy lifestyles and civic responsibility in secondary schools. Support will also be provided for strategies for providing hard-to-reach groups (e.g. Roma children and children in hiding affected by vendettas in the north of Albania) with basic schooling. The non-formal component of the project will support strategies for promoting healthy lifestyles among youth, including HIV/AIDS prevention.

28. In order to promote the participation of children and young people, UNICEF will support replication of two pilot youth parliaments established in 2000 into Albania's 12 prefectures. This will be implemented as part of broader efforts to promote youth participation in the democratization process within the framework of the working group on young people of the South-Eastern Europe Stability Pact. Support will also be extended to strengthen the capacity of the Albanian Youth Council and student councils to manage youth participation activities.

29. The programme will focus on juvenile justice reform and children in need of special protection measures. The juvenile justice component will be focused on three areas: technical assistance for policy reform; training and support for those involved in the juvenile justice process through the phases of prevention, detention, trial and sentencing; and the development of community rehabilitation approaches. Technical support will be provided for the development of youth units in each administrative police area and a community resource, training and study centre for juvenile offenders. Support will be given for initiatives aimed at demonstrating new policy approaches for protecting and integrating other groups of especially vulnerable children and women, including vocational training and job creation schemes for especially vulnerable youth; and counselling, support and access services for girls, children at risk and those living with disabilities.

30. The *social policy and communication for development* programme will promote and support the development of policies addressing children's and women's rights. In the context of the national decentralization process, and in cooperation with

national partners, UNICEF will provide support to demonstrate and test new approaches for delivering services to children and women locally; help ensure that policy makers and the public can access information needed for planning for children and women; draw public and political attention to children and women; and contribute to national emergency preparedness.

31. In support of community development, UNICEF will contribute to strengthening and expanding services available to children and women in needy communities. This will be done through promoting integrated service delivery approaches that emphasize greater community involvement and ownership. By improving local service delivery capacity, it will also represent an approach for ensuring that the decentralization process does not negatively affect children. Building on the Child-Friendly Spaces initiative deployed during the Kosovo emergency, which showed the effectiveness of involving communities in coordinated action for children, mechanisms will be created through which local actors cooperate in the design and delivery of local services in accordance with jointly identified needs. The programme will support the development of new local-level services in areas such as health promotion, ECC, informal learning and community environmental management as well as the practical reform of services such as PHC and primary schooling, along lines defined by communities themselves.

32. Special attention will be given to improving the quality of analysis and use of disaggregated data in policy-making and planning. Support will be extended to the Interministerial Committee on Women and Family and the National Institute for Statistics in producing and distributing a thematic annual report on Albanian children, using the regional MONEE (Monitoring of Eastern Europe) series as a model. Support will also be provided for the publication of a quarterly child rights newsletter, as well as to a range of policy-oriented research activities to build the research capacity of the Social Research Institute, and to strengthen the national documentation and information centre on children's and women's issues. UNICEF will also advocate for and help facilitate the preparation of country reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Interministerial Committee and the Parliament Sub-Committee on Children and Women will be supported with technical expertise,

networking opportunities and experience exchanges to support them in following implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

33. The social communication component will aim to improve dialogue on children's and women's rights among policy makers and the public. UNICEF will work with the Albanian mass media through participatory broadcasting and journalist training. Round-table meetings and policy symposiums, bringing together government officials, NGOs and other concerned partners, and drawing on research efforts, will also be organized. The social communication project will also serve to strengthen all other areas of the country programme through advocacy and information support.

34. The emergency preparedness programme component will help build national governmental and non-governmental capacities for child-focused responses to a range of possible emergencies. Key partners will be an Interministerial Commission for Emergencies and the Ministry of Local Government, as well as local and international NGOs with previous experience of working with UNICEF on the delivery of emergency services. Technical and material assistance will be provided in support of the emergency preparedness capacities of these institutions as well as in support of cooperation between them. UNICEF will continue to chair a monthly child-focused NGO-agency meeting, which would be rapidly mobilized in an emergency, and also participate in regular Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees contingency planning activities.

35. *Cross-sectoral costs* will cover staff salaries (programme and operation officers and one programme assistant); consultants; and programme and project support, including transport and costs of supervision, monitoring and field follow-up of the project implementation.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

36. An Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be developed. A group of measurable impact and process indicators will be developed for each programme area, and the mechanisms through which these indicators will be monitored (e.g. routine reporting systems, special surveys, etc.) will be defined. Examples of process indicators may be the

proportion of first-level health facilities practising IMCI or the numbers of schools and classrooms implementing interactive learning initiative. Legislative changes will also be monitored closely as an indicator of the effectiveness of advocacy efforts. The plan will focus in particular on policy reform initiatives supported by the country programme, and will also be used to inform policy-making.

37. Monitoring and evaluation results will be fed into annual reviews of cooperation with major partners and a comprehensive review of cooperation at the midway point in the programme cycle. Three important research activities planned for 2000 — a multiple indicator cluster survey, a Common Country Assessment and a survey on implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child — will provide baseline data for use in monitoring and evaluation efforts. The annual MONEE-based publication on the Albanian child will ensure updating of baseline data.

### **Collaboration with partners**

38. Closer inter-agency cooperation, including with United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions, will maximize the prospects for child-focused social development. The World Bank and United Nations agencies have been involved in the planning phase of the new country programme and will be closely involved in its implementation. Key partners will be: the World Bank on social policy development and reform; UNFPA on reproductive health and lifestyle-related health risks; the International Labour Organization on child protection issues; WHO on IMCI and PHC; and UNDP and the United Nations Office for Project Services on the promotion of salt iodization. The UNAIDS mechanism will include the above partners in HIV/AIDS control activities.

39. The formation and strengthening of partnerships with other major bilateral and multilateral agencies, including the European Union, and the development agencies of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria and Italy will be emphasized within the framework of existing coordination mechanisms in the health and education, and within the Democratization and Human Rights Working Table of the South-Eastern Europe Stability Pact.



40. Resource mobilization efforts during 2001-2005 will be directed towards sustaining the current high levels of donor interest in UNICEF cooperation in Albania. Local donor missions will continue to be invited to UNICEF programme meetings and field trips to encourage their involvement in the development and monitoring of programmes. A bimonthly bulletin on UNICEF-supported activities will be published, and a UNICEF Albania web site will be created and updated regularly.

### **Programme management**

41. The Ministry of Planning will be the counterpart body for overall coordination of the country programme. Cooperation within each major component of the programmes will be governed by project plans of action signed annually with the relevant ministries, including Health, Education, Social Affairs, Justice and Information. The country programme will be implemented in close coordination with governmental institutions, international and national NGOs, United Nations agencies, funding partners and bilateral agencies, and with the participation of children, women and youth.

42. Changes in the UNICEF staff structure and organization of clusters are proposed to reflect new areas of emphasis and the integration of components in the new country programme. The replacement of an international project officer post for emergencies with an international project officer post for community development will reflect the increased role of the communication for development component in the new country programme.