

Children, youth and ageing persons

In 2008, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continued its work to ensure that every child received the best possible start in life; was fully immunized and protected from disease, including HIV/AIDS, and disability; had access to a quality primary school education; and was protected from violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination.

Progress was achieved in realizing the commitments set out in "A world fit for children", the final document of the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly on children, held in 2002. Many countries had incorporated the commitments into their planning by developing plans of action for children's issues.

UNICEF continued its focus on five areas for 2006–2009: young child survival and development; basic education and gender equality; HIV/AIDS and children; child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse; and policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights. In 2008, UNICEF cooperated with 155 countries and responded to emergencies in 78 countries.

Progress and constraints with respect to the well-being of youth and their role in society were recorded in implementing the 1995 World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

The United Nations continued its action to implement the 2002 Madrid International Plan Action on Ageing. In February, the Commission for Social Development completed the first review and appraisal of the International Plan. In July, the Secretary-General provided the outline of a strategic implementation framework for the Plan. In December, the Assembly encouraged Governments to build capacity to eradicate poverty among older persons by integrating ageing issues into poverty eradication strategies and national development plans. The Assembly also stressed the need for additional national capacity-building.

ted in response to Assembly resolution 58/282 [YUN 2004, p. 1175], the Secretary-General reviewed progress achieved in realizing the commitments relating to children and young people set out in the Declaration and Plan of Action contained in the session's final document entitled "A world fit for children", adopted in resolution S-27/2 [YUN 2002, p. 1169]. Those commitments focused on promoting healthy lives; providing quality education; protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence; and combating HIV/AIDS.

Progress had been achieved in promoting healthy lives and in other health-related goals, but not at the required pace, said the Secretary-General. Child mortality was declining globally, but the proportion of fully immunized children was far from the 2010 target of 90 per cent set at the 2002 special session. There were concerns about several other child health issues such as diarrhoeal diseases and undernutrition. The number of deaths due to measles had continued to fall, and sub-Saharan Africa had achieved the UN goal of cutting measles deaths by 90 per cent well before the target date of 2010. Advances had been made in eliminating maternal and neonatal tetanus. Vaccination coverage through at least two doses of tetanus toxoid vaccine or tetanus-diphtheria toxoid vaccine was estimated at 69 per cent in 2006, while an estimated 81 per cent of newborns were protected against neonatal tetanus through immunization—up from 79 per cent in 2005. Coverage rates increased in a number of countries through routine immunization systems and campaigns.

About half of all countries had early childhood care and education programmes for children under three. Sub-Saharan Africa had made significant progress in expanding primary school enrolment. Some 91 developing countries had achieved gender parity in primary enrolment. Yet some 50 million girls were still not attending primary school, of whom nearly three quarters belonged to excluded groups. Girls continued to be excluded from education more often than boys. In most developing countries, girls continued to face discrimination with regard to access to school. As a result, they comprised about 57 per cent of all out-of-school children. As many countries had limited capacity for the provision of education beyond the primary level, it was estimated that 185 million children of secondary school age were missing out on secondary education, and that 127 million of them were still attending primary school.

Children

Follow-up to 2002 General Assembly special session on children

In his sixth report [A/63/308] on the follow-up to the General Assembly's twenty-seventh (2002) special session on children [YUN 2002, p. 1168], submit-

As for improvements in child protection since the special session, nearly 60 countries had produced national child labour statistics, and special efforts were being made to collect data on children engaged in hazardous work. A total of 29 countries had collected data on child discipline, and 27 on female genital mutilation/cutting, by the end of 2007. Many countries were strengthening their overall child protection capacities, including legislative and enforcement systems. There was a growing understanding of the significance of systematic approaches to protection, primarily through legal and social welfare systems and through addressing social norms. Progress had been considerable in data gathering, birth registration and reduction of child labour, and many countries were implementing plans to address violence against children. However, despite those successes, challenges persisted in protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence. Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest proportion of children under five who were not registered at birth—two out of three. The largest number of unregistered children was in South Asia—nearly 23 million. National child protection capacities remained weak overall, and funding was inconsistent and unpredictable.

Progress continued to be made towards the goals of the special session relating to HIV and children, albeit at a pace slower than desired. Globally, children under the age of 15 accounted for 2.1 million of the estimated 33.2 million people living with HIV in 2007. Some 420,000 children were newly infected with HIV, and 290,000 had died of AIDS in 2007 alone. Sub-Saharan Africa was home to nearly 90 per cent of all children living with HIV. There had been progress in combating the HIV pandemic since the special session. By the end of 2006, 21 low- and middle-income countries were on track to meet the 80 per cent antiretroviral coverage target for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV by 2010. There was also progress in many countries in the protection and care of children affected by AIDS and in access for those children to social services.

Many challenges remained, including inadequate attention to the rights of children in the most vulnerable and marginalized sections of society. Emergencies resulting from both man-made and natural causes posed huge constraints on the achievement of international development goals. Measures to ensure and coordinate disaster prevention as well as rapid humanitarian response and reconstruction needed to be expedited.

Measures suggested by the Secretary-General included the implementation of high-impact interventions, as well as sustained efforts for developing education and health care systems. Filling funding gaps required attention by Governments and the interna-

tional community. Recent advancements in resource mobilization, such as for combating HIV, indicated the importance of the timely provision of resources for achieving the goals of the special session. At the same time, a renewed focus on communication for development should be pursued. The journey to 2010 and 2015, the years in which most targets for children converged, would be demanding. Achieving the goals would require a greater sense of urgency to address surmountable obstacles.

The Secretary-General noted that failure to achieve the goals adopted at the special session on children would undermine efforts towards realizing the aspirations of the Millennium Declaration. He called for scaled-up responses by Governments, increased commitments from the international community and broader and more focused partnerships to achieve the goals of the special session.

General Assembly action. Taking note of the Secretary-General's report, the General Assembly, in **resolution 63/241** (see p. 739), called upon States to create an environment in which the well-being of the child was ensured, including by strengthening international cooperation. By **resolution 63/113** (see p. 1215), the Assembly invited States to expand their activities in the framework of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World, 2001–2010 [YUN 2001, p. 609].

United Nations Children's Fund

In 2008, UNICEF remained committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) [YUN 2000, p. 51] and the goals contained in the document "A world fit for children", adopted by the General Assembly in resolution S-27/2 [YUN 2002, p. 1169], at its twenty-seventh (2002) special session on children (see above). UNICEF's work was also guided by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the Assembly in resolution 44/25 [YUN 1989, p. 560], and its Optional Protocols (see p. 737). Its mission was to defend children's rights, help meet their basic needs, ensure their survival and increase their opportunities to flourish. It was also mandated to rally political will and resources to invest in children's well-being; respond to emergencies to protect children; work with partners to provide a rapid response for those in need; and ensure special protection for the most disadvantaged children, such as victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, violence and exploitation and those with disabilities. The Fund further aimed to promote equal rights for women and girls and encourage their full participation in developing their communities, and work towards the human development goals adopted by the world community.

In line with its 2006–2009 medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) [YUN 2005, p. 1284], UNICEF continued to focus its work on five priorities—young child survival and development; basic education and gender equality; HIV/AIDS and children; child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse; and policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights.

The annual UNICEF flagship publication, *The State of the World's Children 2008* [Sales No. E.08.XX.1], focused on child survival, observing that child mortality was a sensitive indicator of a country's development. Investing in the health of children and their mothers was not only a human rights imperative: it was a sound economic decision and one of the surest ways for a country to set its course towards a better future. Thus, it was central in achieving MDG 4, which sought to reduce the global under-five mortality rate by two thirds between 1990 and 2015. Examining the survival rates and health of children, the report outlined what needed to be done to reduce the number of child death from 9.7 million in 2006 to around 4 million by 2015. That would require accelerated action on multiple fronts: reducing poverty and hunger; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases; increasing the usage of improved water and sanitation; and providing affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis. It would also require a re-examination of strategies to reach the poorest, most marginalized communities.

In 2008, UNICEF cooperated with 155 countries, areas and territories: 44 in sub-Saharan Africa, 35 in America and the Caribbean, 35 in Asia, 20 in the Middle East and 21 in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Total expenditures were \$3,081 million in 2008, an 11 per cent increase from \$2,782 million in 2007. Expenditures on programme assistance rose from \$2,517 million in 2007 to \$2,808 million in 2008, an increase of 12 per cent. Combined expenditures on programme support at \$167 million, management and administration at \$74 million, and centrally shared cost at \$10 million, amounted to \$251 million, an increase of \$1 million or 0.4 per cent compared to 2007. UNICEF operations in 2008 were described in the *UNICEF Annual Report 2008*, the UNICEF annual report to the Economic and Social Council [E/2009/6] and the annual report of the Executive Director on progress and achievements against the Fund's extended 2006–2013 MTSP [E/ICEF/2009/9 & Corr.1].

In 2008, the UNICEF Executive Board held its first regular session (29 January–1 February), its annual session (3–5 June) and its second regular session (15–18 September), all in New York [E/2008/34/Rev.1], during which it adopted 23 decisions.

By **decision 2008/215** of 18 July, the Economic and Social Council took note of the annual report of UNICEF to the Council covering the year 2007 [E/2008/6 & Corr.1]; the Board's report on the work of its first regular session of 2008 and on the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and World Food Programme (WFP) [E/2008/34/Rev.1]; and the extract from the Board's report on its 2008 annual session [E/2008/L.8].

On 18 September, the Executive Board adopted the programme of work for its 2009 sessions [E/2008/34/Rev.1 (dec. 2008/13)].

Programme policies

In her annual report to the Economic and Social Council covering 2008 [E/2009/6], the Executive Director described action taken by UNICEF to promote child rights and ensure that sustainable results for children were achieved in close partnership with Governments, the UN system and non-governmental organization (NGOs). The report provided information on funding for operational activities for development of the UN system; contribution to national capacity development and development effectiveness; and improved functioning of the UN development system. It addressed policies and initiatives to foster South-South cooperation, gender equality and the transition from relief to development. The UNICEF action plan in response to the triennial comprehensive policy review (TCPV) of operational activities for development of the UN system [YUN 2007, p. 874] would be periodically reviewed. A senior-level steering committee was overseeing progress in implementing the TCPV recommendations and reported regularly to the Executive Director.

Medium-term strategic plan (2006–2009)

A report of the Executive Director [E/ICEF/2008/18] provided information on the midterm review of the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) 2006–2009. The review, carried out during the first half of 2008, drew on a wide range of sources, including the latest available data on child-related indicators for the MDGs, information on progress towards MTSP targets, as well as major evaluations undertaken during the reporting period.

Extensive consultations were undertaken on the validity, use and relevance of the MTSP. A questionnaire generated responses from 32 Member States, including 9 Executive Board members and 16 programme countries. A vast majority (90 per cent) of respondents indicated that the MTSP significantly con-

tributed to improving their understanding of UNICEF's work. Most respondents agreed that the MTSP assisted in monitoring the work of the organization and enhanced their understanding of the strategic objectives of UNICEF. A majority (58 per cent) of the 12 national committees that provided feedback indicated that the design of the MTSP helped them communicate UNICEF's work to supporters, partners and the general public. A survey of all UNICEF country offices confirmed the usefulness of the MTSP for working with partners to design, focus and review planned results for children. UNICEF assumed significant responsibilities as the global lead for the nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) clusters and as co-lead for the education and the emergency telecommunications clusters. Water safety plans had been introduced by key countries in Asia, while home drinking water treatment helped contain the spread of cholera in Africa. The *Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS* campaign [YUN 2005, p. 1290] had provided a platform for UNICEF to put children at the centre of the global fight against AIDS. Major areas of progress in basic education and gender equality included standard-setting and policy development for early learning, parent education programmes and the launch of a global child-to-child approach, aimed at providing cost-effective school-readiness interventions for young children. As for collecting and analysing information on the situation of children and women, UNICEF provided data dissemination through the database system DevInfo, used by 103 countries as their national platform for MDG monitoring. The Fund also piloted in several countries EmergencyInfo, a decision-support system for emergency response.

Yet a range of new challenges had become apparent. Capacity for sanitation and hygiene remained weak and sustainability remained a concern. Much remained to be done for vulnerable children and families in building national justice systems, laws and policies; strengthening social norms and values to prevent violence, abuse and exploitation; promoting school readiness; integrating prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and paediatric AIDS treatment into health systems; strengthening HIV/AIDS services in emergencies; and improving the contribution of UNICEF to gender equality.

The report suggested extending the MTSP by two years, to the end of 2011. As explained in a UNICEF background note [E/ICEF/2008/25], such extension would allow the MTSP cycle to be harmonized with the cycles of the strategic plans of UNDP and UNFPA, and would bring the following MTSP (2012–2015) in line with the 2015 deadline for achieving the MDGs.

On 18 September [dec. 2008/14], the Executive Board endorsed the general conclusions of the mid-term review, including the adjustments envisaged for

the remaining period and the implications identified for preparing the next plan. Recognizing the benefits of extending the period of the MTSP in order to align it with the strategic planning cycles of UNDP and UNFPA, and align the subsequent UNICEF strategic planning cycle, covering the 2012–2015 period, with the target date for the MDGs, the Board extended the period of the current MTSP by two years, until the end of 2011. The Executive Director was requested to report at the Board's 2010 session on the MTSP performance and results. A discussion on the end-of-cycle review of the extended MTSP would be held at the first regular session of 2011.

On 5 June [dec. 2008/11], the Board took note of the Executive Director's report on progress and achievements against the MTSP, covering 2007 [YUN 2007, p. 1206]. It requested UNICEF to give high priority in the annual report to information and analysis on key challenges in achieving results in each focus area to support progress towards critical goals and targets for children.

MTSP support strategies

At its February session, the Executive Board had before it the UNICEF child protection strategy [E/ICEF/2008/5] for endorsement as the official strategy documents for programmes of protection and for achieving the MDGs within the context of the MTSP. The strategy addressed issues such as building national protection systems, supporting social change, strengthening child protection in conflict and natural disasters and leveraging results through the strategic use of resources.

On 1 February [dec. 2008/1], the Board took note of the draft and acknowledged the need for further consultations.

On 5 June [dec. 2008/12], the Board endorsed the UNICEF child protection strategy [E/ICEF/2008/5/Rev.1] as the support strategy document for programmes and actions in support of child protection, developed for the implementation of the MTSP.

Medium-term financial plan (2008–2011)

In September, the Executive Board considered the planned financial estimates for the period 2008–2011 [E/ICEF/AB/L.5]. The UNICEF secretariat recommended that the Board approve the framework of planned financial estimates for 2008–2011 and the preparation of programme expenditures submitted to the Board of up to \$915 million from regular resources in 2009, subject to the availability of resources and the continued validity of those planned financial estimates. The Board was also requested to approve the annual transfer of \$30 million to the reserve for after-service health insurance for the period 2010–2011.

The Board approved those recommendations on 18 September [dec. 2008/20].

Global strategy for collaborative relationships and partnerships

In response to a 2007 request [YUN 2007, p. 1208] of the Executive Board, the UNICEF secretariat submitted in June a preliminary concept note [E/ICEF/2008/12 & Corr.1] on a global strategy for collaborative relationships and partnerships. The note outlined the rationale, proposed content and process for developing such a strategy. It noted that UNICEF had been working with partners to improve the lives of children since its inception. Those partnerships were of various kinds: programmatic partnerships to achieve better outcomes for children in programme countries; partnerships in global policy development; partnerships in resource mobilization; and partnerships in advocacy for promoting child rights. UNICEF country programmes of cooperation were implemented with national and local partners. Also important were partnerships and collaborative relationships for resource mobilization at all levels, many of which were forged and maintained at country level. From IKEA in India to the Nakumatt supermarket chain in Kenya, the private sector was making significant social investments to support child survival, protection, education and other areas critical for children. In Latin America and the Caribbean, UNICEF was working with Nickelodeon to use a charismatic cartoon character to inspire positive change in the lives of children. UNICEF also engaged in a wide range of partnerships with humanitarian NGOs to provide critical assistance to children in times of emergencies.

The strategy would help to guide the organization's engagement with others. It would help to address the rapidly evolving external landscape to position UNICEF as a partner of choice to deliver results for children. The guiding principles in developing the strategy would be: ensuring that collaborations and partnerships, individually and collectively, were making the maximum possible contribution to achieving outcomes for children; ensuring that children were consistently at the centre of the national and international socio-economic policy and development agendas; and supporting UNICEF efforts to expand interventions and leverage resources for children.

The report concluded that a consultative process for developing the strategy would be pursued, for discussion at the annual session of the Executive Board in 2009. The strategy would build on the global mandate of UNICEF as well as on the diversity of experience that covered different regional and country levels, and on the range of stakeholders and partners for children.

The Executive Board in June requested UNICEF to hold consultations with the Board in autumn 2008 and spring 2009 to provide updates on progress in developing the strategy and to consult on outstanding issues.

Evaluation system

In response to a 2006 Executive Board decision [YUN 2006, p. 1366], the UNICEF secretariat submitted a report on its evaluation policy [E/ICEF/2008/4] to ensure that UNICEF had timely, strategically focused and objective information on the performance of its policies, programmes and initiatives. The report noted that UNICEF conducted evaluations at five institutional levels, reflecting the organizational accountability framework: local or project, country programme of cooperation, regional, global strategic, and institutional performance. At the global level, evaluation served to assess UNICEF performance against the objectives and targets set in the MTSP. Evaluation was also conducted to analyse the contribution of UNICEF to global strategies in collaboration with key partners, particularly the achievement of the objectives of the Millennium Declaration and MDGs. Regarding the evaluation with partners, UNICEF would need to seize the growing opportunities to participate in multi-partite evaluations, thereby drawing attention to results and impact for children on the evaluation agendas of other organizations. The implementation of the evaluation policy and the evaluation function would be reviewed periodically to draw lessons and make improvements. The first such review would take place in 2010.

On 1 February [dec. 2008/4], the Executive Board approved the evaluation policy as outlined in the report and called upon UNICEF to conduct evaluations of operations at the country level in close consultation with Governments, also assisting them in developing national evaluation capacities. UNICEF should also submit a biennial work plan to the Board and report annually on the evaluation function and evaluation findings and recommendations. The Executive Director was requested to safeguard the integrity and independence of the evaluation function and to submit a review of the evaluation policy at the second regular session in 2009.

In accordance with that decision, the UNICEF secretariat in July submitted a report on its evaluation function and major evaluations in UNICEF [E/ICEF/2008/21], which provided information on the state of evaluation functions in UNICEF at country, regional and global levels and strategic orientations for its strengthening. The report noted that, in 2006–2007, 495 evaluations had been conducted in the five focus areas of MTSP, as well as in other areas.

The UNICEF Evaluation Office provided leadership and management of the evaluation system. The Office, in cooperation with the UNICEF Office of Internal Audit, was developing a new tool—the Programme Performance Assessment—to measure the contribution of country offices to national development and humanitarian efforts. The approach was being developed in a number of pilot countries and would be reviewed after 18 months.

In the context of the 2006–2009 MTSP, UNICEF would strengthen its evaluation function in six main areas: national capacity-building and strengthened national leadership in country-level evaluations; strengthened evaluation within the UN system and with other partners; evaluation in humanitarian crises; evaluations related to MTSP focus areas, strategies and operational effectiveness; strengthened organizational capacity in evaluation; and heightened management attention to the evaluation function.

On 18 September [dec. 2008/22], the Executive Board took note of the report on the evaluation function and major evaluations in UNICEF; noted the steps taken and planned by UNICEF to strengthen evaluation; expressed concern that a key recurrent finding of the internal audit report was UNICEF's weakness in prioritizing evaluation and research activities at field level; and requested UNICEF to report back to the Board in its review of the evaluation policy at the second regular session in 2009 on measures taken to address that finding as well as on additional steps to improve the evaluation function. The UNICEF Evaluation Office was urged to submit to the Board a biennial work plan at its second regular session in 2009.

Concerning the evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF, the Executive Board in June had before it a paper on the topic [E/ICEF/2008/CRP.12]. On 5 June [dec. 2008/10], the Board requested UNICEF to present to the Board at its first regular session of 2009 a management response to all recommendations of the evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF, including actions and timeframes for completion. It also requested UNICEF to ensure and track timely implementation of the evaluation recommendations in accordance with the management response, develop a tracking and monitoring framework to measure progress in implementation, and track and monitor allocations and expenditures for gender equality results. The Board further requested that the annual report of the Executive Director include reporting on progress in achieving gender equality results as an integral element, particularly at the outcome and impact levels.

Emergency assistance

In 2008, UNICEF responded to emergencies in 78 countries. Interventions covered complex emergen-

cies and natural disasters, with continued assistance in chronic crises, from the global rise in food prices to natural disasters in Myanmar and China. The revolving internal Emergency Programme Fund (EPF) loan facility continued to be the fastest, most reliable and flexible funding mechanism available to UNICEF and served as a bridge to other mechanisms. In 2008, \$83.3 million in EPF loans was released to help 38 country responses. Emergency preparedness and response planning remained a central strategy to ensure that staff members were ready to implement a UNICEF response in all humanitarian crises. Eighty-seven per cent of country offices and four regional offices updated their plans in 2008. To address the global rise in food prices, UNICEF allocated \$55 million in additional funds to 60 countries with high levels of nutrition insecurity to address some of the immediate response.

UNICEF served as global cluster lead in nutrition and in water, sanitation and hygiene, as co-lead in education with the International Save the Children Alliance, and as co-lead in emergency telecommunications with WFP and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). UNICEF continued to support the provision of clean water, especially in underserved rural areas and among indigenous communities. The sustainability of services was a high priority. UNICEF focused on strengthening local capacities for operation and maintenance, while also emphasizing the protection of water resources, especially in areas facing water stress. UNICEF also supported the expansion of household water treatment and safe storage, particularly in countries where cholera was endemic. Support continued for national efforts to detect arsenic in drinking water and mitigate its impact on children and families in affected parts of Asia, Africa and the Americas. More than 50,000 water sources were tested in 2008.

In north Sudan, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, UNICEF contributed to new agreements on child soldier disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. In countries in transition, it contributed to the social reintegration of demobilized child soldiers. UNICEF continued to collaborate with partners to provide trauma counselling and psychosocial support to help children and their families cope with the long-term impact of armed conflict and natural disasters. Common activities included recreation and play, parent discussion groups, training of community workers and the provision of psychosocial support to specific groups of children. Child-friendly spaces were also commonly used, and a challenge was to ensure that they provided integrated services for children beyond psychosocial support.

UNICEF continued to respond to the humanitarian needs of conflict-affected people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sierra Leone, which

were among the countries in which UNICEF had supported gender-based violence prevention and response programmes in the areas of medical, psychosocial, legal and socio-economic assistance. It also led the development of an inter-agency training package called “Caring for survivors” and the development of a research study in the DRC on children born of sexual violence in conflict. UNICEF was the co-chair of United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict [YUN 2007, p. 1157], and co-led with the NGO V-Day an advocacy campaign against rape in the DRC, “Stop raping our greatest resource”.

Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative

In response to a 2007 request [YUN 2007, p. 1208] of the Executive Board, the UNICEF secretariat submitted in June a report [E/ICEF/2008/11] on the implementation of the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (ECHUI), an effort to promote sustained actions to address that challenge, based on interventions of proven effectiveness. The report pointed out that 143 million children under the age of five years continued to suffer from undernutrition. Some 51 developing countries, representing nearly half of the countries for which data was available, were not making sufficient progress towards the ‘hunger target’ of MDG 1 as measured by the prevalence of underweight in children under five years of age. Some 18 of those countries were making no progress at all or were retreating in terms of that indicator.

The report noted that maternal and child undernutrition was a contributing cause of more than a third of child deaths and some 10 per cent of global disease burden. While nutrition interventions of proven effectiveness needed to be more widely available to children and families, long-term investments in empowering women, in education and in reducing inequities needed to work in tandem with technical solutions. Nutrition interventions were most effective in the period from pregnancy to two years of age. Although undernutrition occurred widely, four fifths of all undernourished children lived in just 20 countries, with the largest number living in South Asia. Intensified nutrition action in those countries would help to accelerate the achievement of health-related MDGs and greatly contribute to the Goals relating to poverty and hunger reduction, education and gender equality.

The report also noted that ECHUI partners should focus their country support and country-level and global advocacy efforts on four critical areas: increasing coverage of early initiation and continued exclusive breastfeeding; improving micronutrient intakes of mothers and children as well as dietary intake, especially during pregnancy and the first two years of life; preventing and treating severe acute malnutrition

through the expanded use of ready-to-use therapeutic foods, such as Plumpy’nut; and reducing rates of diarrhoea by improving hygiene and parasite control.

Regarding monitoring and evaluation, UNICEF would continue to be one of the lead partners in the initiative, while WFP, as part of its partnership contribution, was expected to continue to host the inter-agency team. Given the food price increases, the focus of the initiative would be adjusted to provide more proactive support to national monitoring of and responses to the impact of the food crisis in vulnerable countries and communities.

UNICEF programmes by region

In 2008 [E/ICEF/2009/9 & Corr.1], UNICEF programme assistance expenditure totalled \$2,808 million, of which \$1,557.9 million (55.5 per cent) went to sub-Saharan Africa; \$775.4 million (27.6 per cent) to Asia; \$135.0 million (4.8 per cent) to the Middle East and North Africa; \$148.5 million (5.3 per cent) to the Americas and the Caribbean; and \$105.0 million (3.7 per cent) to interregional programmes.

Programme expenditures were highest in countries with low income and high under-five mortality rates. The 51 low-income countries—defined as those with a per capita gross national income of \$935 or less—which had a total child population in 2007 of 595 million, or 30 per cent of all children worldwide, received 57 per cent of programme expenditures. Countries with high under-five mortality rates accounted for 64 per cent of total assistance.

In September [E/2008/34/Rev.1], the Executive Board had before it the summaries of the mid-term reviews and major evaluations of country programmes in Eastern and Southern Africa [E/ICEF/2008/P/L.14], Latin America and the Caribbean [E/ICEF/2008/P/L.15 & Corr.1], East Asia and the Pacific [E/ICEF/2008/P/L.16], and Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States [E/ICEF/2008/P/L.17]. The reports reviewed progress made, resources used and constraints faced in country programmes.

Field visits

The visit of members of the Bureau of the Executive Board to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (9–16 February) [E/ICEF/2008/13] sought to gain a first-hand understanding of UNICEF work at the country level and demonstrate concrete examples of UNICEF cooperation with the Government and other partners, including the UN country team. The UNICEF programme of cooperation in the country had five main elements: young child survival and development, water, sanitation and hygiene, basic education, child protection and HIV/AIDS and children. Challenges in-

cluded limited investment in the social sector, limited human resources capacity, the relatively small number of implementing partners and dependency on official development assistance. Noting the Government policy on resettlement, the delegation highlighted the need to ensure the protection of children's rights in such moves, and recommended that the UN country team and UNICEF monitor how the relocation of communities from remote areas to resettled villages affected children. The delegation noted the sense of rapid change in the country, as well as the growing regionalization, and underlined the importance of giving adequate attention to the possible negative side effects of the increased cross-border movement of persons and goods and services. The delegation invited UNICEF to monitor the situation to determine the possible impact on children, and to continue its advocacy and information work about the possible risks and threats to children and youth and their families.

In a joint visit to Haiti (1–9 March) [DP-FPA/2008/CRP.1-E/ICEF/2008/CRP.11], 20 members of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP sought to witness first-hand the operations of the four organizations, including inter-agency collaboration and cooperation. They also sought to gain insight into the contributions the organizations were making to assist Haiti in attaining its national development goals. The delegation found that after four years of crisis, the country was slowly but increasingly gaining in stability and confidence with the help of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the UN development system and the international donor community. Given the challenges the country faced, predictable funding was crucial for humanitarian and recovery programmes. Core funding and funding with low levels of earmarking, such as thematic trust funds, remained the most effective and preferred means for delivering UN programmes. The delegation recommended greater international engagement in supporting the Government in promoting decentralization efforts. The UN country team was encouraged to support South-South cooperation initiatives to meet Haiti's development needs.

During a visit to Niger (29 March–4 April) [E/ICEF/2008/15], members of the UNICEF Executive Board observed the UNICEF field operations and the work of the UN country team in order to understand the relationship of the Niger-UNICEF country programme of cooperation to national development priorities, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and bilateral development assistance. They observed that like many other least developed countries, Niger faced a critical time as the MDGs target date of 2015 drew closer. The Government recognized the challenges and obstacles facing the country, as well as the measures needed to overcome them, but that recognition was not uniformly present

at all levels of government. The delegation observed that resource constraints and low level of capacity experienced by Niger amplified the importance of promoting greater coherence, cooperation and collaboration among the members of the UN country team. A full scaling-up of UNICEF programmes would benefit the children of Niger. For resource reasons, the UNICEF-supported multi-sectoral programmatic interventions were carried out only in a handful of communes. It was therefore intended that similar interventions in other communes would be supported by other development partners, while ensuring that the same standards were applied.

UNICEF programmes by sector

In 2008, UNICEF programme expenditures, which were linked to the five organizational priorities established in 2005 under the 2006–2009 MTSP [YUN 2005, p. 1284], totalled \$2,808 million [E/ICEF/2009/9 & Corr.1], a 12 per cent increase over 2007. The largest share of expenditure, \$1,418.5 million (50.5 per cent), went to young child survival and development, followed by basic education and gender equality (\$597.8 million, or 21.3 per cent), child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse (\$307.6 million, or 11.0 per cent), policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights (\$267.6 million, or 9.5 per cent) and HIV/AIDS and children (\$187.2 million, or 6.7 per cent). Some \$29.7 million (1.1 per cent) was expended in other areas. Programme support costs amounted to an additional \$167 million.

Programme expenditures increased substantially in 2008 in all five MTSP focus areas compared to 2007. Overall shares in total expenditure remained stable except for a 2 percentage point fall in the share of young child survival and development, due mainly to trends in other resources. The share of HIV/AIDS and children continued to be well below the amount projected when the MTSP was adopted in 2005. Despite the crisis that occurred in world financial markets, UNICEF was able to protect its investment portfolio and produce a healthy return.

Young child survival and development

In 2008, UNICEF continued to work with partners to scale up a package of low-cost, high-impact child survival interventions through support for integrated child health events and routine health services. The number of countries supporting Child Health Days, integrating the delivery of immunization with other interventions, increased to more than 50. Furthermore, 138 countries had introduced the *Haemophilus influenzae* type B vaccine into their infant immunization schedules by the end of 2008. The number of measles deaths worldwide fell from an estimated

750,000 to 197,000 (74 per cent) from 2000 to 2007. The number of deaths from measles in sub-Saharan Africa also declined dramatically, from an estimated 395,000 in 2000 to 45,000 in 2007. Maternal and neonatal tetanus were eliminated in Bangladesh and in two additional states in India in 2008. As a core partner of the Polio Eradication Initiative, UNICEF provided leadership in vaccine procurement in all polio-affected countries. In 2008, more than 2 billion doses of oral polio vaccines were delivered through UNICEF. Wild polio virus transmission continued in the four endemic countries: Afghanistan, India, Nigeria and Pakistan. UNICEF support to polio eradication also included intensified communication designed to increase community demand for vaccination.

Full coverage (two doses) of vitamin A supplementation in the least developed countries had increased to an average of over 80 per cent. That progress was largely due to integrated delivery strategies and improved coverage in hard-to-reach areas. Thirty-two countries, almost half of them in sub-Saharan Africa, had reached the goal of at least 80 per cent coverage. In 2008, UNICEF supplied over 800 million capsules, representing an increase of nearly 31 per cent over 2007.

In its efforts to combat malaria, UNICEF procured about 4 million diagnostic test kits and over 19 million insecticide-treated mosquito nets for 48 countries in 2008. All sub-Saharan African countries with available data had shown good progress in increasing the use of those nets among children under five. With regard to malaria case management, 45 countries in sub-Saharan Africa had changed their treatment policies, with 38 of them implementing the more effective artemisinin-based combination therapies. UNICEF procured 31 million combination therapy treatments; globally, procurement of such treatments increased to around 130 million.

Although progress had been made in preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV and in paediatric treatment for HIV and AIDS, only 4 per cent of HIV-exposed children began cotrimoxazole prophylaxis within two months of birth. Child Health Days had emerged as the common platform to deliver those interventions and services.

With regard to child survival and development, UNICEF supported targeted complementary feeding programmes for young children, either in selected communities or through integrated campaigns, which resulted in significant increases in local practice of appropriate complementary feeding. It also supported the scaling-up of community-based child nutrition initiatives in several countries. Multiple indicator cluster survey data were used to advocate for increased resources and heightened priority for

young child feeding initiatives, including through new national nutrition policies and protocols. Significant progress was achieved in increasing the rate of exclusive breastfeeding. Thirteen countries, including several in sub-Saharan Africa, achieved gains of more than 20 percentage points between 1996 and 2007, using a comprehensive approach to improving infant feeding practices. Worldwide, 71 countries had national legislation or regulatory provisions in force to protect breastfeeding based on the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. Increased use was being made, with UNICEF support, of evidence-based communication campaigns that featured exclusive breastfeeding along with other key messages. Those were being integrated with programmes addressing HIV in high-prevalence settings.

The number of countries with national programmes that promoted good parenting rose slightly in 2008. The health extension programme of Ethiopia, rolled out with UNICEF support in 2008, included community-based therapeutic feeding centres in over 100 districts. Similar centres and referral systems were established or strengthened in other parts of Africa and Asia.

UNICEF supported WASH activities in 101 countries, including 57 of the 60 countries with both low water and sanitation coverage and high under-five mortality rates. Its cooperation increasingly focused on policies and community efforts for expanding high-impact, cost-effective interventions: hand-washing with soap, sanitation promotion and home drinking-water treatment. Those areas—an essential part of child survival and development strategies—were increasingly integrated with health, nutrition and early childhood interventions. The percentage of programme countries that incorporated into their national development plans measures for achieving the MDGs target on sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation increased from 58 per cent in 2005 to 73 per cent in 2008.

Under the Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies, revised in 2003 [YUN 2003, p. 1205], UNICEF was a strong contributor to humanitarian reforms, serving as the global cluster lead in nutrition and in water, sanitation and hygiene. Emergencies in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe and large-scale natural disasters, such as the China earthquake and the Myanmar cyclone, received significant funding.

Basic education and gender equality

Progress continued in many countries towards achieving the education- and gender-related MDGs. The progress made in increasing primary school enrolment rates in Africa and Asia was undermined by low retention and completion rates. Too many chil-

dren started school at a later age than that prescribed for the first grade. Many of them repeated grades. That resulted in a high proportion of over-aged children in primary school and the crowding out of other children. Social exclusion often was a major barrier to education access. Children from disadvantaged and minority populations, as well as working children and children living in remote areas, added to the numbers of those excluded. Girls within those groups often faced a double disadvantage. In 2008, UNICEF supported capacity development of national partners in major areas: improving quality through child-friendly schools; education policy and reform; and education in emergencies, post-conflict and transition.

UNICEF assisted programmes in all regions to reduce disparities in relation to access to, participation in, and completion of quality basic education. The number of countries with national education plans that included measures to reduce gender disparities had increased rapidly, from 58 in 2005 to 87 in 2008. The number of countries with national education plans that included measures to reduce disparities due to poverty, ethnicity and disability also increased significantly, to 110 in 2008 from 74 in 2005. Measures implemented by countries included free public elementary education, provision of free school supplies, and incentives for girls who performed well. UNICEF support to national sector plans included advocacy for human rights-based planning criteria using information on gender and other disparities, and the co-ordination of funding proposals. UNICEF direct support and contributions to national capacity-building helped to increase girls' enrolment rates significantly in parts of Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Mozambique and other countries. A study of the UNICEF-supported integrated districts programme in India, reaching 4.6 million households, showed an increase in girls' completion rates from 53 per cent in 2005 to 72 per cent in 2008.

There was strong evidence that investment in early childhood development (ECD) prepared children for school, helped to sustain their performance well into the primary cycle and reduced inequalities. Since 2005, the number of programme countries that had national standards for monitoring school or developmental readiness had increased, from 37 to 69. Some 45 programme countries used assessment tools for monitoring school readiness, which in some cases had been developed with UNICEF support. Fifty programme countries had a national policy on universal school readiness. The child-to-child approach for school readiness, which offered new possibilities for improving quality in education, was implemented on a pilot basis in six countries. However, widespread problems persisted, including low investment in ECD and weak links between health and early learning ini-

tiatives. In some countries, a narrow view that upheld kindergartens as the only means of ECD continued to impede progress.

To improve education and address problems of retention and achievement, 78 countries had incorporated life skills-based education in the primary national curriculum, compared to 49 in 2005. Some 47 programme countries had included environmental education or climate change into their primary school curriculum, and 51 had done so at the secondary level. Some 79 programme countries had a national policy against corporal punishment in schools. Governments were also increasingly recognizing the importance of WASH for education quality and achievement. The number of programme countries that developed national plans to provide WASH education to all primary schools increased to 75 in 2008 from 50 in 2005, in many cases with long-term support from UNICEF. The Fund also continued to support the construction of water and sanitation facilities in schools through pilot projects or in emergency situations, benefiting an estimated 3.6 million children in 2008.

An estimated 3.1 million children in emergencies were reached in 2008 through interventions in education, with UNICEF assistance. Those included back-to-school programmes involving large-scale mobilization, which resulted, for example, in a 20.4 per cent increase in primary enrolment in the DCR, as well as continued enrolment gains in Afghanistan and the Sudan.

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS had caused an estimated 25 million deaths since HIV was first identified, severely affecting child survival and development, school attendance and livelihoods. It continued to strain health and welfare systems as well as communities and families who were supporting people affected by the epidemic. The call of the *Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS* initiative [YUN 2005, p. 1290] to place children "more front and centre" in the global response had produced tangible results and strengthened partnerships for action. Evidence for advocacy, policy and action at country level had been strengthened by improved knowledge management tools; leadership at the Implementers Meeting of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), held in Uganda; the focus on children at the international AIDS conferences in Mexico and Senegal; and expansion of academic partnerships in the Inter-Agency Task Teams on Preventing mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), Paediatrics, Orphans and Vulnerable Children, and HIV and Young People.

UNICEF continued to expand its support to paediatric HIV reduction programmes, working in 102 coun-

tries in 2008. The proportion of HIV-positive pregnant women requiring antiretrovirals who actually received them increased from 10 per cent in 2004 to 33 per cent in 2007. Children also benefited, as indicated by an increase in the number of HIV-positive children on antiretroviral therapy from 75,000 in 2005 to nearly 200,000 in 2007. PMTCT service coverage, however, remained far below the medium-term strategic plan target of 80 per cent access to antiretrovirals for PMTCT. UNICEF procurement for HIV/AIDS commodities totalled \$68.7 million in 2008. Antiretrovirals represented 81 per cent by value of the total commodities procured, followed by HIV rapid diagnostic test kits (16 per cent, or 12 million) and tests for sexually transmitted infections (3 per cent). Paediatric treatments still accounted for less than 5 per cent of antiretrovirals; some 95 per cent of antiretrovirals procured in 2008 were for PMTCT.

Regarding the proportion of children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, worldwide in 2007 there were an estimated 15 million children who had lost one or both parents to AIDS, including nearly 12 million in sub-Saharan Africa. Many millions more were orphaned due to other causes: household survey data in 47 countries showed that orphanhood from all causes exceeded 5 per cent in many countries, and was over 20 per cent in Lesotho, Rwanda, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Weaknesses persisted in monitoring the situation of orphans and other vulnerable children and in evaluating the response. Fragmented efforts and weak coordination were common. Some countries, such as Uganda, had developed quality standards for the care and support of orphans and vulnerable children.

The number of programme countries that integrated HIV/AIDS education into the national secondary curriculum rose to 79 in 2008. UNICEF continued to work with partners to improve awareness among schoolchildren on HIV prevention, with encouraging progress in countries such as Ghana and Mozambique. However, reaching marginalized children, including displaced children and refugees, continued to pose significant challenges for outreach programmes and information campaigns. Studies in several countries highlighted the need to better tailor education and outreach campaigns towards women and girls.

UNAIDS programme coordination

At its second regular session in September, the Executive Board considered a report [E/ICEF/2008/24] on recommendations and decisions of relevance to UNICEF adopted at recent meetings of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board. Issues addressed in the report included the status of implementation of the Global Task Team (GTT) recommendations and follow-up to the GTT independent assessment;

collaboration with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; gender sensitivity of AIDS responses; the cycle of UNAIDS unified budget and workplan; the Second Independent Evaluation of UNAIDS; and the process for nominating the UNAIDS Executive Director.

Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse

Improved protection of children in 2008 resulted from greater political commitment and the strengthening of national policies, international standards and guidance. Continued efforts were made throughout the year to enhance the evidence base of child protection through gender analysis of key child protection issues; inclusion of disaggregated data on child protection in national reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child; support to multiple indicator cluster surveys, demographic and health surveys and other household surveys; community-based child protection networks; specialized databases on child protection violations; and the expansion of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism in accordance with Security Council resolution 1612(2005) [YUN 2005, p. 863].

The Fund promoted devoting greater attention to issues such as gender-based violence and the recruitment of children, and played a leadership role in the expansion of inter-agency initiatives under the cluster system for emergencies. Through participation in major international forums, UNICEF also ensured that children's issues were highlighted in relation to landmines and other indiscriminate or illicit weapons. Psychosocial support was more systematically included in UNICEF emergency response. However, the poor availability of sex-disaggregated data continued to constrain child protection advocacy and programme development. Only 14 programme countries had sex-disaggregated data on child protection indicators for all age groups.

UNICEF supported programmes to end female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in 14 countries. UNICEF and UNDP started a Joint Programme and Trust Fund for the accelerated abandonment of FGM/C within a generation in 17 countries in Africa, with initial implementation in eight countries. Several African countries demonstrated progress following efforts to mobilize influential leaders as partners for change.

Over one third of programme countries (46 countries) had incorporated child protection related to emergency preparedness and response into national planning mechanisms by 2008, and 30 other countries had made partial progress. UNICEF support helped to strengthen national capacity for monitor-

ing child rights violations and for protecting children in emergencies. In countries with declared emergencies in 2008, 62 per cent of UNICEF offices supported training for government and non-government partners on child protection in emergencies, and 59 per cent supported national systems for monitoring and reporting violations in accordance with Security Council resolution 1612(2005).

Important progress was made in all regions in establishing legal and policy frameworks in line with international standards promoting deprivation of liberty as a measure of last resort. In many countries, UNICEF facilitated broad consultative processes, including with children. In cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNICEF developed guidance for juvenile justice legislative reform and a model law for justice in matters involving child victims and witnesses of crimes. The Fund also promoted due process and protection of the rights of former child soldiers who had come in contact with the law.

UNICEF offices in some 50 countries reported progress on alternative care in 2008, including the development of comprehensive reintegration plans and the piloting of “small group homes”— family-like environments for children without suitable parental care. Efforts to improve national social work capacity increased, with over 35 countries reporting significant progress. UNICEF, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, worked with ministries of labour and universities to recognize social work as a profession and to create capacity to train personnel. The Fund also supported the establishment of community-based networks for child protection in several African countries. In India, UNICEF facilitated the creation of an Internet-based tracking system for separated children in 36 cities, working with over 55 national NGOs.

Policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights

UNICEF continued to work with partners to strengthen capacities to design and implement social and economic policies, child-focused legislative measures and budgetary allocations that enabled countries to meet their obligations under the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child [YUN 1989, p. 560] and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women [YUN 1979, p. 895]. To that end, the Fund supported the collection of data and information on children and women to inform strategic decision-making; supported participation by children and young people; promoted research and policy analysis on children and women;

and engaged in advocacy and policy dialogue with decision-makers.

The UNICEF-supported DevInfo, a database system for compiling and disseminating data on human development, had been critical in making key data available to Governments, UN and bilateral partners, and international NGOs to help them make informed decisions on policy and programmes for children. During 2008, UNICEF supported 63 countries in consolidating DevInfo implementation in the field. That resulted in more than 2,000 national and UN professionals being trained in the use of the system. Some 121 countries were using DevInfo, and 221 databases had been published by countries and organizations. In addition, UNICEF launched a child mortality database that informed users on how estimates were calculated and the data underlying the adjusted annual inter-agency estimates of under-five mortality.

The Fund supported programme countries in conducting participatory Situation Analyses of the rights of children and women. In addition to Situation Analysis reports, the UNICEF website hosted an increasing number of staff working papers. In 2008, seven working papers were added on migration and remittances, four on legislative reforms for child rights, and two on food prices and the financial crisis. Overall, UNICEF sponsored 76 major thematic studies related to children and women in 2008, in addition to comprehensive Situation Analyses. Over two thirds of those used a human rights framework, and over half used a gender analysis framework.

UNICEF also supported national sector-wide approaches in 44 countries, compared to 38 in 2005, and in an increasing number of countries (13) contributed directly to basket funding mechanisms. The continuing strategic engagement with the World Bank helped to leverage significant levels of new funding for programmes for children in countries around the world, notably through the Education for All Fast Track Initiative, and also for early childhood development, nutrition and HIV prevention.

The Fund worked with other UN agencies and partners in coordinating advocacy and programme support for achieving global commitments for adolescents. That included a Joint Programming Framework on Adolescent Girls and ‘most-at-risk adolescents’ tools developed as part of a UNAIDS prevention toolkit.

Operational and administrative matters

UNICEF finances

In 2008, UNICEF income totalled \$3,390 million, an increase of \$377 million (13 per cent) over 2007 and 10 per cent higher than forecast in the financial plan. Income to regular resources decreased by 2 per cent to \$1,085 million, and fell behind the 2008 fi-

nancial plan by \$51 million (5 per cent). UNICEF derived its incomes mainly from Governments, which contributed \$2,040 million (60.2 per cent), and from private sector sources, which contributed \$986 million (29.1 per cent). The balance came from inter-organizational arrangements, with contributions of \$256 million (7.6 per cent), and other sources, with contributions of \$108 million (3.2 per cent).

Budget appropriations

On 1 February [dec. 2008/7], the Executive Board approved a regular resources programme budget for the 2008–2009 biennium [E/ICEF/2008/P/L.1 & Corr.1] in the amount of \$28,750,000 (other than the Emergency Programme Fund). It authorized UNICEF to transfer, if necessary, between programme fields an amount not exceeding 10 per cent of the approved budget of the fund to which the transfer was made. The Board also approved a programme budget ceiling of \$456,826,000 for other resources for the 2008–2009 biennium, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions. Funds in excess of indicated amounts for specific programme areas and regions could be received, provided that the total amount of funds received was within the approved limit.

The Executive Board also considered the biennial support budget for 2008–2009 [E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.1] and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) [E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.2]. On 1 February [dec. 2008/2], it approved a gross appropriation of \$912.8 million for the biennial support budget, to be offset by estimated income of \$223 million, resulting in an estimated net appropriation of \$689.8 million. It requested the Executive Director to include in future budget submissions an annex on budget estimates by cost category for major objects of expenditure, with information on cost efficiencies achieved against targets and indicators therein, and to report on the estimates and efficiency targets in the annual financial reporting. The Board approved the amount of \$26.2 million from regular resources for covering the UN mandated central-shared security cost. It also requested the Executive Director to present the 2010–2011 biennial support budget for Executive Board approval at the second regular session of 2009.

On the same day, on the basis of a UNICEF report [E/ICEF/2008/P/L.2], the Executive Board approved [dec. 2008/5] additional regular resources for 14 country programmes totalling \$42.7 million. It also approved [dec. 2008/6], on the basis of a UNICEF report [E/ICEF/2008/P/L.3], \$246,100,000 in additional resources for 13 country programmes.

On 5 June [dec. 2008/8], the Executive Board approved the aggregate indicative budget for 9 country programmes, amounting to the following totals for

regular and other resources, respectively, by region: Africa, \$266,373,900 and \$444,590,000; Americas and the Caribbean, \$1,492,200 and \$9,619,500; South Asia, \$58,851,900 and \$147,584,000; Middle East and North Africa, \$30,427,000 and \$240,000,000.

According to a July report [E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.4], an amount of \$5,891,211 from regular resources would be used to cover those overexpenditures for completed projects financed from other resources for which no additional support had been forthcoming. The report noted that the allocation of regular resources would allow UNICEF to finalize the accounting for other resources for the period to 31 December 2005.

On 18 September [dec. 2008/16], the Executive Board approved the aggregate indicative budget for 10 country programmes, amounting to the following totals of regular and other resources, respectively, by region: East and Southern Africa, \$83,577,500 and \$298,282,000; West and Central Africa, \$34,387,200 and \$124,500,000; the Americas and the Caribbean, \$10,864,800 and \$59,640,000; Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States, \$600,000 and \$3,500,000; East Asia and the Pacific, \$5,063,000 and 55,000,000; the Middle East and North Africa, \$600,000 and \$2,000,000. Additionally, the Board on the same date [dec. 2008/17], having considered the draft country programme documents presented to the Board at its second regular session of 2008, requested the UNICEF Executive Director to ensure that country programme results and performance data consolidated over the programme duration were made available on the UNICEF website at the end of the country programme cycle. It urged UNICEF to increase its efforts to present draft country programme documents for discussion at the annual session of the Executive Board and requested UNICEF to provide at the annual session a short explanation of the reasons for deferring draft country programme documents to the second regular session.

In response to a 2003 Executive Board decision [YUN 2003, p. 1212], the UNICEF secretariat in September submitted a report [E/ICEF/2008/20] on implementation of the modified system for allocation for regular resources for programmes. The report informed the Board on lessons learned since 2003, and proposed modifications to the system. In line with Board decisions, UNICEF continued to review the situation of the countries near or at the established graduation level, where regular resource assistance would cease, as well as the level and types of engagement required for children in those countries. Concerns regarding the extent of disparities in development indicators and their implications for children had increased in both least developed countries and middle-income countries. It was also increasingly evident that many of the most common factors that threatened children's rights

and created vulnerabilities among children, such as violence, marginalization and effects of migration, were not confined to low-income countries alone. In 2008, allocations for cooperation in upper middle-income countries amounted to 2 per cent of total regular resources allocations, or \$13.9 million. The secretariat would pursue innovative and effective options for cooperation modalities to further benefit the children of such countries. The secretariat would also monitor and review the implications for children of implementing the regular resource allocation system, including those modifications, and to advise the Executive Board of any issues arising from the review.

On 18 September [dec. 2008/15], the Executive Board endorsed the report on the implementation of the modified system, decided to maintain the system with a number of modifications, and requested a report on the topic at its second regular session in 2012.

On the same date [dec. 2008/21], the Executive Board, on the basis of a UNICEF secretariat report [E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.8], approved \$21.4 million as an additional requirement from regular resources to cover security measures mandated by the UN. The Board also authorized the UNICEF Executive Director, on an exceptional basis, to access up to an additional 20 per cent (\$4.3 million) of that amount during 2008–2009. UNICEF would limit the use of those funds to new and emerging security mandates, as defined in the UN Department of Safety and Security directives, and would report to the Board on the use of those funds in its annual report of the Executive Director on progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan.

Audits

In the annual report to the Executive Board on internal audit activities in 2007 [E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.7 & Corr.1], the Director of the Office of the Internal Audit (OIA) stated that OIA had completed 23 country office audits, one zone office audit and one audit of a joint UN office. Two of the audits were related to the response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. All completed audits met OIA's performance standards for planning, implementation and reporting. Each of the audits included a risk statement that described why the finding were important and should be addressed, a statement of the facts found in the audit, and one or more recommendations to establish adequate control over the identified risk. In 2007, OIA issued 444 risk observations and 75 positive practice observations. A positive observation was made when all aspects of a particular work process step in an audited area were found to function as expected. OIA issued 51 high-risk observations to field offices, in the areas of programme management (31 per cent), supply manage-

ment (22 per cent), financial controls (18 per cent), cash transfers to implementing partners (16 per cent) and implementation of prior audit recommendations (10 per cent).

On 18 September [dec. 2008/23], the Executive Board took note of that report and requested that UNICEF closely consult with the Board in preparing the accountability framework foreseen for the first regular session of 2009, including by presenting a draft of the framework prior to the session. The Board expressed concern about the high percentage of unsatisfactory ratings by audited field offices, especially in the areas of programme management, cash assistance and supply assistance. It called upon the UNICEF management to address those issues by following up closely with country offices that had unsatisfactory ratings and by implementing measures to strengthen the performance of all country offices and to report back in 2009. The Board requested the UNICEF management to report on progress made and lessons learned in implementing the harmonized approach to cash transfers, including in connection with the development of procedures and reporting mechanisms, in conjunction with the annual report on internal audit at the second regular session in 2009.

In a July report [E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.9], the UNICEF secretariat described steps taken to implement the recommendation of the Board of Auditors on the Fund accounts for the 2004–2005 biennium. The report focused on those recommendations that either were not implemented or only partially implemented at the time of the previous report [YUN 2007, p. 1218].

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 48/216 B [YUN 1993, p. 1207], the Secretary-General in September transmitted to the Assembly a report [A/63/327/Add.1] on the implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors contained in the Board's report on UNICEF [A/63/5/Add.2 & Corr.1] for the biennium ended 31 December 2007. The Secretary-General provided information on the status of implementation, the office responsible, the estimated completion date and the priority for each recommendation.

Resource mobilization

UNICEF continued to collaborate with Governments to mobilize regular and other resources. By the ninth pledging event in January, 48 countries had committed \$383.8 million for 2008 regular resources. By year's end, 109 Governments had contributed to UNICEF resources. Total income from public sector donors (Governments, intergovernmental organizations and inter-organizational arrangements) amounted to \$2,295 million—an increase of 17 per cent over 2007. Out of that amount, \$616 million was received from

public sector donors for regular resources, \$1,057 million for other resources-regular, and \$623 million for other resources-emergency. While regular resource contributions from the private sector and NGOs declined by 8 per cent, from \$392 million to \$361 million, contributions to other resources in those categories increased by 32 per cent, from \$476 million to \$626 million. The lower level of regular resources income classified as "other income" was largely caused by unfavourable exchange rate movements that affected the valuation of outstanding payments and income from investments.

The United States remained the largest donor to UNICEF (\$301 million), followed by the United Kingdom (\$213 million), Norway (\$197 million), the Netherlands (\$196 million) and Sweden (\$170 million). Overall thematic funding in 2008 increased by 17 per cent, due to the increase in the humanitarian category, from \$294 million to \$343 million. In addition to contributions from 18 Governments and 32 national committees, thematic funding was also provided by the European Commission for the first time. The public sector contributed 68 per cent of all thematic funds in 2008. The top 10 donors to thematic funds contributed \$178,881,000.

UNICEF overall income for humanitarian assistance was \$735 million. Funding included 75 appeals and requests for humanitarian assistance. Consolidated appeals were relatively well funded, receiving 63 per cent of requirements. Flash appeals attracted 68 per cent of the requirements. The other crises were the least funded, with 43 per cent of their financial needs met.

International Public Sector Accounting Standards

In September, the Executive Board had before it a note [E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.10] on developments in implementation by UNICEF of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), as called for in General Assembly resolution 60/283 [YUN 2006, p. 1580]. The note proposed that UNICEF report periodically to the Executive Board on progress towards IPSAS adoption.

Private Fundraising and Partnerships

The Executive Board in January had before it a report on the 2008 Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP) workplan and budget [E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.3], according to which PFP in 2008 would generate a projected sum of \$746.4 million in net consolidated income, of which \$395.3 million would be for regular resources and \$351.1 million for other resources. That would be achieved with expenditures of \$124.3

million. PFP incorporated the functions of the previous Private Sector Division, elements of fund-raising and national committee for UNICEF support of the Regional Office for Europe, the entire Office of Public Partnerships, and management of the UNICEF International Goodwill Ambassador programme. Core work regarding partnership and advocacy remained financed through the UNICEF biennial support budget [E/ICEF/2008/1]. For 2007, the total net consolidated income was estimated at \$694.9 million. The actual result for 2006 was \$734.9 million, which included the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami emergency funds of about \$50.0 million.

On 1 February [dec. 2008/3], the Executive Board approved budgeted expenditures of \$124.3 million for the 2008 PFP work plan. It authorized UNICEF to re-deploy resources between the various budget lines up to a maximum of 10 per cent of the amounts approved and to spend an additional amount between Executive Board sessions, when necessary, up to the amount caused by currency fluctuations, to implement the 2008 approved work plan. The Board also renewed investment funds with \$21.4 million established for 2008. It authorized UNICEF to incur expenditures in the 2008 fiscal period related to cost of goods delivered (production and purchase of raw materials, cards and other products) for the 2009 fiscal year up to \$34.1 million, as indicated in the PFP medium-term fundraising plan. It approved an interim one-month allocation of \$11.0 million for January 2009, to be absorbed in the annual PFP budget for 2009, and also approved the PFP medium-term fundraising plan for 2009–2012.

Country programme approval process

The Executive Board had before it an April report [E/ICEF/2008/P/L.13] containing recommendations to increase the other resources ceiling for country programmes previously approved by the Board, as the contributions to other resources for country programmes had exceeded, or were expected to exceed, the planning levels originally approved by the Board. The Fund recommended that the Board approve \$251,230,050 in other resources for approved country programmes for 27 countries. On 5 June [dec. 2008/9], the Executive Board approved additional other resources in that amount for the remaining periods of those programmes, subject to the availability of other resources contributions.

At the September session, UNICEF requested [E/ICEF/2008/P/L.28] that the Executive Board approve \$98,064,270 in additional regular resources to allow uninterrupted implementation of 24 country programmes previously approved.

On 18 September [dec. 2008/18], the Executive Board approved additional regular resources in that amount to fund the approved country programmes of the 24 countries for 2009, whose regular resources planning levels, based on the modified allocation system and estimated global levels of programmable regular resources, were higher than the levels originally approved by the Board.

Joint programming

The joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP/UNFPA and WFP (New York, 29 January–1 February) discussed progress towards achieving the MDGs. Introducing the background paper and discussion on behalf of the four participating organizations, the UNICEF Deputy Executive Director highlighted the uneven picture of progress given by recent data and said that a collective sense of urgency was needed if the MDGs were to be met. Various delegations noted progress made but expressed concern that several countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, were not on track.

Recommendations made by delegations to accelerate progress, included: emphasizing Government leadership and national ownership as well as increased support from multilateral organizations in scaling up efforts; taking more “bottom-up” approaches so that marginalized groups benefited from scaling-up; ensuring the availability of UN staff to support country efforts; reaching out to the private sector and NGOs; and encouraging South-South cooperation in sharing and implementing good practices. More attention should be given to addressing debt relief for poor countries, the fulfilment of aid promises by donor countries, unequal trade relations, gender inequality and the degradation of the environment.

The joint meeting also discussed feedback from “Delivering as one” pilots. The UNFPA Executive Director noted that feedback from the pilots showed that the UNDAF formed the foundation of the “One United Nations” approach and was derived from national development priorities. Joint programming and programmes had received positive reviews. The strategic alignment of UN support to national development would reduce duplication and transaction costs, and the initiative’s overall direction was positive.

On disaster risk reduction, the WFP Deputy Executive Director emphasized adaptation and the need to mitigate the risks of natural disasters and build resilience among those most likely to be hardest hit. There was an urgent need to engage fully in disaster risk reduction, and UN organizations could do more to mitigate risks and build resilience. A stronger link between humanitarian and development efforts was

needed to reduce the impact of disasters on vulnerable communities.

JIU reports

In January, the Executive Board considered a secretariat note [E/ICEF/2008/6] on reports of the Joint Inspector Unit (JIU) of relevance to UNICEF. The note provided information on reports prepared between October 2006 and October 2007, action taken by UNICEF and views held on the issues raised by the inspectors. During that period, JIU issued five reports of interest to UNICEF on age structure of human resources in UN system [JIU/REP/2007/4]; Goodwill Ambassadors in the UN system [JIU/NOTE/2006/1]; lessons learned from the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster [JIU/REP/2006/5]; voluntary contributions in UN system organizations [JIU/REP/2007/1]; and UN system staff medical coverage [JIU/REP/2007/2]. The Board took note of the report at its January session.

Innocenti Research Centre

In July, UNICEF submitted to the Executive Board a progress report [E/ICEF/2008/23] on the work of the Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) (Florence, Italy) in strengthening the capacity of UNICEF, partner Governments and institutions to respond to the needs of children and to promote a strong global ethic for children. The report reviewed implementation by IRC of its 2006–2008 programme of work and proposed a one-year extension of the programme. The 2006–2008 work programme had enhanced the role of IRC in the generation and brokering of knowledge, and strengthened its partnerships with organizations and research institutions in the various regions, with an emphasis on developing countries.

In September [dec. 2008/19], the Executive Board, following the recommendation of the report, authorized the extension of the Centre’s programme until the end of 2009 to ensure its alignment with the UNICEF strategic planning process, with the programme of work for the Office of Research 2010–2011, and with the UNICEF biennial support budget for 2010–2011. It also authorized an increase in the other resources ceiling of \$7 million, for a total other resources ceiling of \$24 million for the period 2006–2009. The Board invited all donors to contribute to the Centre’s programme activities. The UNICEF Executive Director was requested to inform the Executive Board, through informal consultations in the first half of 2009, on the future direction, focus and details of the organizational arrangements for the research function, in view of the discussions on that function for the preparation of the biennial support budget for 2010–2011.

Youth

World Programme of Action for Youth

In 2008, United Nations policies and programmes on youth continued to focus on efforts to implement the 1995 World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 50/81 [YUN 1995, p. 1211]. The Programme of Action addressed problems faced by youth worldwide and identified ways to enhance youth participation in national and international policy- and decision-making.

The Programme of Action identified 10 priority issues for youth: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women, and participation in society and decision-making. In resolution 60/2 [YUN 2005, p. 1296], the General Assembly added five additional issues of concern to young people: globalization, the increased use of information and communication technology, HIV/AIDS, the increased participation of young people in armed conflict as both victims and perpetrators, and the growing importance of intergenerational relations in an ageing global society. The World Youth Report 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1295] and a related report of the Secretary-General [ibid.] suggested that the 15 priority areas of the Programme of Action be grouped into three clusters—youth in the global economy, youth in civil society and youth and their well-being. By resolution 60/2, the Assembly took note of those three clusters and requested their use in future analyses of the implementation programme.

Youth and their well-being

Expert group meeting. A report of the Secretary-General [A/64/61-E/2009/3] summarized the conclusions of the expert group meeting on goals and targets for the World Programme of Action for Youth (New York, 19–21 May), which suggested numerous goals and targets for the cluster “Youth and their well-being”, one of the three clusters of the World Programme of Action. The meeting was attended by representatives from Member States, youth-led organizations and other NGOs, as well as UN programmes, regional commissions and specialized agencies. The goals and targets were chosen for their global relevance, scope and measurability.

The goals and targets for health highlighted the need to have access to affordable and comprehensive health information and services, including on diseases related to lifestyle choices. They aimed at minimizing the prevalence of reproductive health morbidities and

mortality, promoting training for health professionals in identifying and treating common sexually transmitted infections, and ensuring that health facilities had adequate resources for providing youth-friendly care and counselling.

Halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS could not be achieved without a specific focus on youth, and that would require that all young people were knowledgeable about HIV and how to prevent it. Thus, the recommended goals and targets sought to ensure that those most vulnerable to infection were reached, and that their social and economic vulnerability was given attention. The availability of opportunities for testing was also important in stemming the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Proposed goals and targets on reducing substance abuse by young people focused on both supply and demand reduction. Attention was given to youth access to substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation programmes, as well as the need to include in those programmes alternative income-earning strategies and skills training.

In the area of juvenile justice, the goals and targets recognized that the first key step was to reduce the involvement of youth in crime. Access to education and training, as well as increased employment opportunities, were seen as key in achieving that end. Protection of youth offenders in the justice system was emphasized, in particular by ensuring the separation of juvenile from adult judicial and penal systems and by reducing the number of juveniles committed to locked institutions.

Regarding gender, the goals and targets highlighted the need to ensure the availability of facilities and services required for the full engagement of girls and young women in society, and the need to engage boys and young men in promoting gender equality. The goals and targets also sought to eliminate violence against women and girls, including by addressing gender-based violence in all basic education curricula, and by ensuring that every case of violence against girls and young women was investigated and prosecuted.

Interventions to address the engagement of youth in armed conflict should, above all, focus on building a culture of peace. That required the involvement of education systems, as well as reducing the prevalence of light weapons. Also addressed was the need to engage youth in conflict prevention and reconstruction.

Youth employment

Commission for Social Development action. The Commission for Social Development, at its February session [E/2008/26] (see p. 1204), discussed trends in

youth employment under its priority theme “Promoting full employment and decent work for all”.

Economic and Social Council action. As recommended by the Commission, the Economic and Social Council, by **resolution 2008/18** (see p. 1205), urged the development and implementation of integrated policies and strategies that promoted full employment and decent work opportunities for youth, including those living in rural areas; integrating youth employment into national development strategies; and encouraging young people’s entrepreneurship, including through entrepreneurship education. The Council called on Governments to promote access to work through policies that enabled the creation of new quality jobs for young people and facilitated access to those jobs; and stressed the importance of the Youth Employment Network [YUN 2001, p. 1100] as a national, regional and international peer exchange mechanism.

Ageing persons

Follow-up to Second World Assembly on Ageing (2002)

Commission for Social Development. The Commission for Social Development, at its forty-sixth session (6–15 and 22 February) [E/2008/26], completed the first review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002 [YUN 2002, p. 1194], which was adopted by the Second World Assembly on Ageing [ibid., p. 1193]. In 2004 [YUN 2004, p. 1192], the Commission, decided to review and appraise the Plan of Action every five years; in 2006 [YUN 2006, p. 1382], the Commission decided to start the first global cycle of review and appraisal in 2007 and to conclude it in 2008. The global theme for the first review and appraisal was “Addressing the challenges and opportunities of ageing”.

In response to a 2007 request of the Commission [YUN 2007, p. 1231], the Secretary-General submitted a report [E/CN.5/2008/7 & Corr.1] on the preliminary assessment of the first review and appraisal of the Plan of Action. The report addressed a range of socio-economic issues, such as income security, intergenerational solidarity and care provision, human resources development in health care, research on ageing and policy action, and age-friendly cities. It noted that since the Second World Assembly, Governments had introduced a wide range of policies and programmes aimed at addressing challenges stemming from population ageing.

The Secretary-General recommended that the Commission invite Governments and other major

stakeholders to continue their cooperation with the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), as the UN global focal point on ageing, in implementing the Madrid Plan of Action, including by contributing to the development of the strategic framework for implementing the Plan. The Commission might request the Secretary-General, in preparing that framework, to consult Governments, inter-governmental organizations, UN bodies, academia and NGOs on its substantive and practical content. The Secretary-General might also be requested to improve the institutional capacity of the UN system, including maintaining and strengthening the focal points on ageing, so that they might further the implementation of the Plan of Action and the elaboration of its framework. Finally, The Commission might emphasize that the framework should include proposals for improving international cooperation on ageing to support implementation of the Plan of Action.

The Commission had before it the report [E/CN.5/2008/2] of the regional commissions on the regional implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, which provided regional perspectives on the activities related to the implementation of the Plan, underlined challenges in the regions and offered recommendations for consideration by the Commission. On 8 February, the Commission held a panel discussion, with the participation of the executive secretaries of the regional commissions, on the regional review and appraisal of the Plan of Action.

On 22 February, the Commission adopted a resolution [E/2008/26 (res. 46/1)] on the first review and appraisal of the Plan of Action, in which it recognized the successful conclusion of the first review and appraisal of the Plan of Action and its results at the international, regional and national levels. The Commission encouraged Governments to integrate the concerns of older persons into their policy agendas and to participate in the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, including by improving data collection and sharing ideas, information and good practices. Member States were invited to develop their national capacity to address the national implementation priorities identified during the review and appraisal exercise. The Secretary-General was requested to submit to the Commission’s 2009 session a report on the analysis of the conclusions of the first review and appraisal exercise, including a strategic implementation framework based on the analysis of national activities since 2002. The framework was to identify future policy priorities, including measures for international cooperation to support national implementation activities.

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 62/130 [YUN 2007, p. 1232], the Secretary-General in July submitted a report [A/63/95] on follow-up to the Second World

Assembly on Ageing, which summarized the results of the first review and appraisal of the Madrid Plan of Action and outlined a strategic implementation framework, requested by the Assembly.

Member States had made considerable strides in implementing policies that benefited older persons, said the report. Policy efforts made by Governments were often wide-ranging and innovative, and focused on: establishing new social protection mechanisms, such as social pensions in some developing countries or reforms to stabilize retirement and pension schemes in the more developed regions; extending health-care benefits to older persons; adjusting labour markets and care systems to correspond to accelerated population ageing; increasing the participation of older persons in various areas of society, including promoting the employment of older persons; giving attention to training in geriatrics and gerontology; preventing discrimination against and abuse of older persons; establishing intergenerational solidarity programmes; and enhancing the awareness of ageing-related issues.

Several UN entities carried out capacity development in the follow-up to the Second World Assembly, such as data collection and analysis (Population Division of DESA, United Nations Statistics Division, UNFPA); formulation of national population policies and programmes on issues related to demographic ageing and training of personnel (UNFPA); provision of recommendations to individual Member States on how to strengthen their employment and labour-market policies (International Labour Organization) and how to promote the participation of older persons in rural development and food security strategies (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). The World Health Organization focused on capacity-building for primary health-care services for older persons, support for active ageing in urban areas and integration of health and social care policies. The World Bank provided support for countries undertaking reforms of their pension systems.

Since the adoption of the Madrid Plan of Action, DESA assisted several Member States in their implementation of the Plan. As a result of a joint DESA-UNFPA advisory mission to Armenia in 2007, the Government decided to develop a national strategy on ageing based on evidence obtained from a national survey, which was completed in June 2008. DESA needs assessment missions to Moldova in April and to Kazakhstan in June helped those Governments to identify priorities for further action on ageing. A stakeholder workshop in June assisted the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis to revise and finalize a draft policy on ageing.

Turning to the proposed strategic framework, the report said that it would focus on two major dimensions of the implementation process: determining

key priority areas to focus on in the second half of its first decade; and building national capacity on ageing issues. Although the focus would be on national implementation activities, another objective of the framework was to improve international cooperation on ageing, including the institutional capacity of the UN system to support national policy efforts on ageing.

The Secretary-General proposed that the General Assembly recommend that Member States devise strategies for overcoming obstacles to the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action based on life-course and intergenerational solidarity approaches in order to increase the likelihood of success in the years ahead. Member States were encouraged to choose national priorities that were realistic, feasible and achievable; to develop targets and indicators to measure progress in implementation; and to present their views on the outline of the strategic implementation framework so that they could be reflected in the final draft, to be presented to the Commission for Social Development in February 2009. The Assembly might also recommend that Member States raise greater awareness of the Plan of Action; reaffirm the role of UN focal points on ageing; increase technical cooperation efforts; expand the role of the regional commissions on ageing issues; facilitate the coordination of national and international NGOs on ageing; and enhance cooperation with academia on a research agenda on ageing.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 18 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committee [A/63/424] adopted **resolution 63/151** without vote [agenda item 55 (c)].

Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 57/167 of 18 December 2002, in which it endorsed the Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, its resolution 58/134 of 22 December 2003, in which it took note, inter alia, of the road map for the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, and its resolutions 60/135 of 16 December 2005, 61/142 of 19 December 2006 and 62/130 of 18 December 2007,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,

1. *Recognizes* the successful conclusion of the first review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, and its results at the international, regional and national levels;
2. *Encourages* Governments to pay greater attention to building capacity to eradicate poverty among older persons, in particular older women, by mainstreaming ageing issues into poverty eradication strategies and national development plans, and to include both ageing-specific policies and ageing-mainstreaming efforts in their national strategies;

3. *Encourages* Member States to strengthen their efforts to develop national capacity to address their national implementation priorities identified during the review and appraisal exercise, and invites Member States that have not done so to consider a step-by-step approach to developing capacity that includes the setting of national priorities, the strengthening of institutional mechanisms, research, data collection and analysis and the training of necessary personnel in the field of ageing;

4. *Also encourages* Member States to overcome obstacles to the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action by devising strategies that take into account the entirety of the human life-course and foster intergenerational solidarity in order to increase the likelihood of greater success in the years ahead;

5. *Further encourages* Member States to place particular emphasis on choosing national priorities that are realistic, feasible and have the greatest likelihood of being achieved in the years ahead, to develop targets and indicators to measure progress in the implementation process and to present their views on the outline of the strategic implementation framework contained in the report of the Secretary-General so that they can be reflected in the final draft of the framework to be presented to the Commission for Social Development at its forty-seventh session, in February 2009;

6. *Recommends* that Member States increase awareness-raising of the Madrid Plan of Action, including by strengthening networks of national focal points on ageing, working with the regional commissions and enlisting the help of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat to expand media coverage on ageing issues;

7. *Invites* Governments that have not done so to designate focal points for handling follow-up of national plans of action on ageing;

8. *Invites* Governments to conduct their ageing-related policies through inclusive and participatory consultations with relevant stakeholders and social development partners, in the interest of developing effective policies creating national policy ownership and consensus-building;

9. *Stresses* that, in order to complement national development efforts, enhanced international cooperation is essential to support developing countries in implementing the Madrid Plan of Action, while recognizing the importance of assistance and the provision of financial assistance;

10. *Encourages* the international community to support national efforts to forge stronger partnerships with civil society, including organizations of older persons, academia, research foundations, community-based organizations, including caregivers, and the private sector, in an effort to help to build capacity on ageing issues;

11. *Calls upon* Governments to ensure, as appropriate, conditions that enable families and communities to provide care and protection to persons as they age and to evaluate improvement in the health status of older persons, includ-

ing on a gender-specific basis, and to reduce disability and mortality;

12. *Encourages* Governments to continue their efforts to implement the Madrid Plan of Action and to mainstream the concerns of older persons into their policy agendas, bearing in mind the crucial importance of family intergenerational interdependence, solidarity and reciprocity for social development and the realization of all human rights for older persons, and to prevent age discrimination and provide social integration;

13. *Encourages* the international community to enhance international cooperation to support national efforts to eradicate poverty, in keeping with internationally agreed goals, in order to achieve sustainable social and economic support for older persons;

14. *Encourages* the international community and the relevant agencies of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to support national efforts to provide funding for research and data-collection initiatives on ageing in order to better understand the challenges and opportunities presented by population ageing and to provide policymakers with more accurate and more specific information on gender and ageing;

15. *Recommends* that Member States reaffirm the role of United Nations focal points on ageing, increase technical cooperation efforts, expand the role of the regional commissions on ageing issues and provide added resources for those efforts, facilitate the coordination of national and international non-governmental organizations on ageing and enhance cooperation with academia on a research agenda on ageing;

16. *Reiterates* the need for additional capacity-building at the national level in order to promote and facilitate further implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action, as well as the result of its first review and appraisal cycle, and in that connection encourages Governments to support the United Nations Trust Fund for Ageing to enable the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat to provide expanded assistance to countries, upon their request;

17. *Recommends* that ongoing efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, take into account the situation of older persons;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to translate the *Guide to the National Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing* into all official languages of the United Nations so that it can be used more effectively by Member States, and encourages Member States to translate the *Guide* into their respective languages when appropriate;

19. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including information on the promotion and protection of human rights as they pertain to older persons.