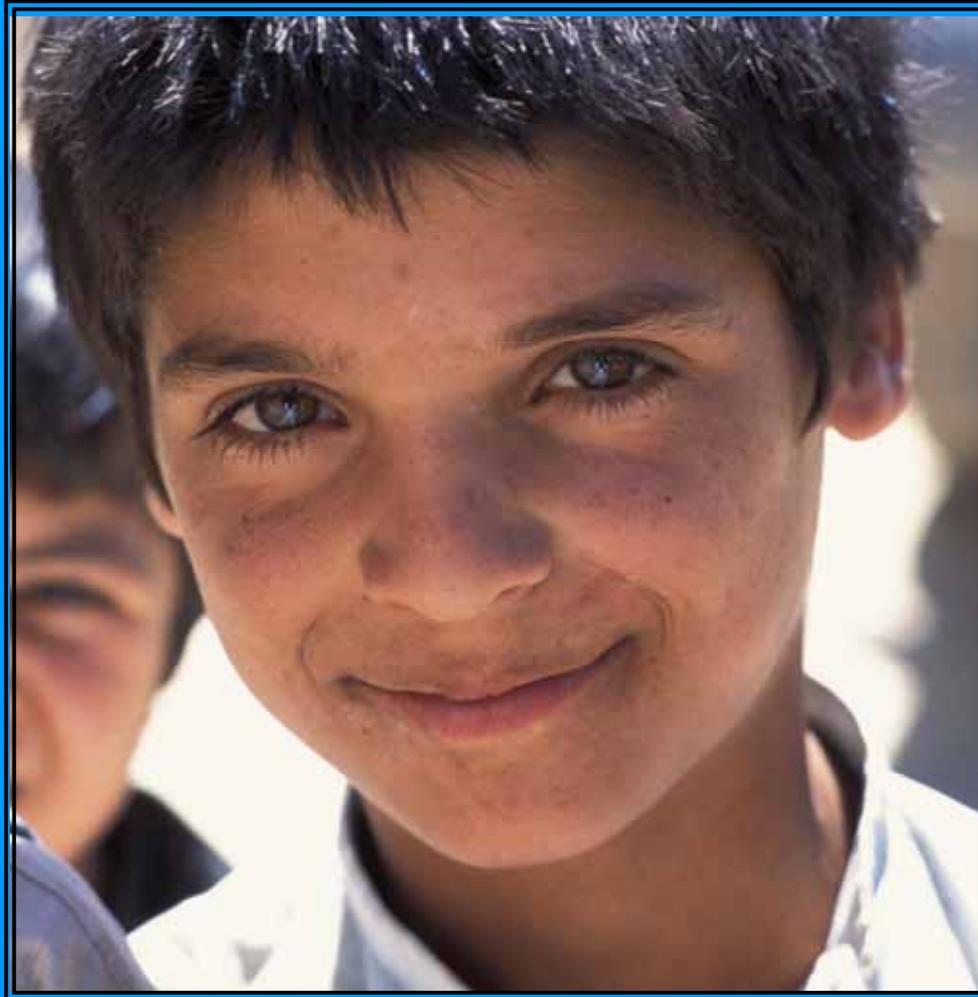


# UNICEF AFGHANISTAN COUNTRY PROGRAMME OF COOPERATION 2006-2008



For every child  
Health, Education, Equality, Protection  
ADVANCE HUMANITY

unicef 



*UNICEF Afghanistan/2003/Edward Carwardine*

*As Afghanistan moves from a period of post-conflict reconstruction towards a critical phase of long-term, sustainable development, UNICEF has embarked on a new Programme of Cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan - a programme that aims to give every child and mother the best chance to grow and develop, and make their full contribution to the future of the nation.*

*This programme is based on the principles of leadership and ownership by the Government; UNICEF's contribution is to support the Government in fully implementing policies for women and children, enhancing its technical capacity at national and provincial level, and meeting its commitments to the Millennium Development Goals.*

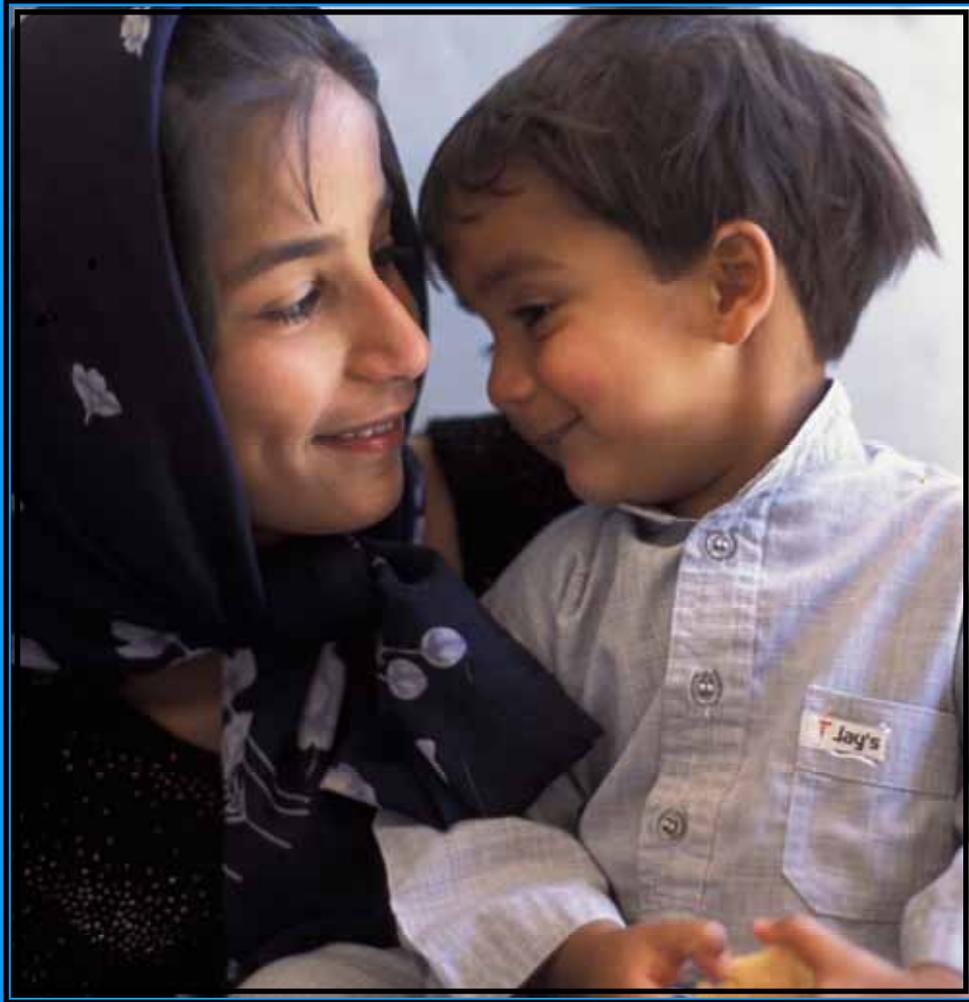
# Creating a stronger Afghanistan for children

Afghanistan has some of the worst child development indicators in the world. UNICEF's Country Programme aims to reverse the trend, and build a stronger nation for its children and mothers. Specific targets for UNICEF's work are drawn from the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the same period, and include:

- To reduce under-5 mortality by 22 per cent, from 220 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2005.
- To reduce the maternal mortality ratio by 25 per cent, from 1,600 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2005.
- To reduce children's and women's malnutrition (including virtual elimination of iodine deficiency disorders, a 30 per cent decrease in underweight children under the age of three years and a 30 per cent decrease in anaemia among children and women); in 2005, 54 per cent of children in Afghanistan were chronically malnourished.
- To increase literacy rates among 15- 49 year old females by 50 per cent and increase girls' primary school net enrolment by 20 per cent by the end of 2008. In 2005, female illiteracy was 85 per cent, and girls' primary school attendance was just 40 per cent.
- To provide 3 million children and young people with the skills, knowledge and confidence to manage life's challenges.
- To ensure a greater national awareness on HIV/AIDS; while only 49 positive cases of HIV have been officially recorded in Afghanistan, lack of understanding on causes of transmission presents a great risk to the onset of an epidemic.
- To increase access to sustainable safe drinking water and permanent improved sanitation by 20 per cent. In 2005, only 23 per cent of households had access to clean drinking water.
- To support the Government of Afghanistan in strengthening its capacity to monitor and report violations of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- To strengthen national capacity for emergency preparedness and response, and thus reduce suffering, loss of life and potential abuses of children's rights associated with sudden crises.

These are ambitious aspirations, but are essential to the successful long-term development of Afghanistan. The priorities at the heart of this joint Programme of Cooperation match those of Afghanistan's national development strategy, and contribute towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

# Partnership



UNICEF Afghanistan/2003/Katarina Premfors

*The scale of the challenges facing Afghanistan's children and women demands concerted and coordinated action. The UNICEF Country Programme is based upon effective partnerships in support of the Government of Afghanistan.*

*UNICEF's work is closely linked to the Government's national development priorities, and is designed to support the Government's National Development Framework. UNICEF works in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan, supporting basic service delivery and building capacity at community, district, and provincial level, while an area-based approach uses specific indicators to identify priority actions in different parts of the country.*

The Country Programme of Cooperation is designed to ensure close collaboration both within UNICEF and with other UN agencies and other partners - drawing upon all available resources to maximise effectiveness and achieve lasting results for women and children. A key approach is based upon four joint programmes led by the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the United Nations system, that have direct relation to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

- **Healthy Schools Initiative**  
*MDG 2: Universal primary education and  
MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability*
- **Afghan Integrated Functional Literacy Initiative**  
*MDG3: Gender equality and empowerment*
- **Maternal Mortality Reduction**  
*MDG 5: Maternal mortality*
- **Greening Afghanistan Initiative (GAIN)**  
*MDG 1: Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and  
MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability*

The coordination of each joint programme is handled by a Steering Committee chaired and managed by the Government. UNICEF has been designated as the Administrative Agent and Managing Agent of three of the joint programmes (Healthy Schools, Afghan Integrated Functional Literacy, and Maternal Mortality Reduction).

The programme also strengthens monitoring and evaluation systems at national, provincial and community levels to better target interventions and measure effectiveness.

UNICEF continues to play an active role in multi-actor forums, including partnerships and consultations with donors, NGOs and other agencies.

# Programme structure



UNICEF Afghanistan/2005/Kate Brooks

*The Programme of Cooperation is based upon assuring the basic health and education of women and children. Around this core are the creation of healthy environments in schools and health facilities, and the protection of children from abuse and exploitation.*

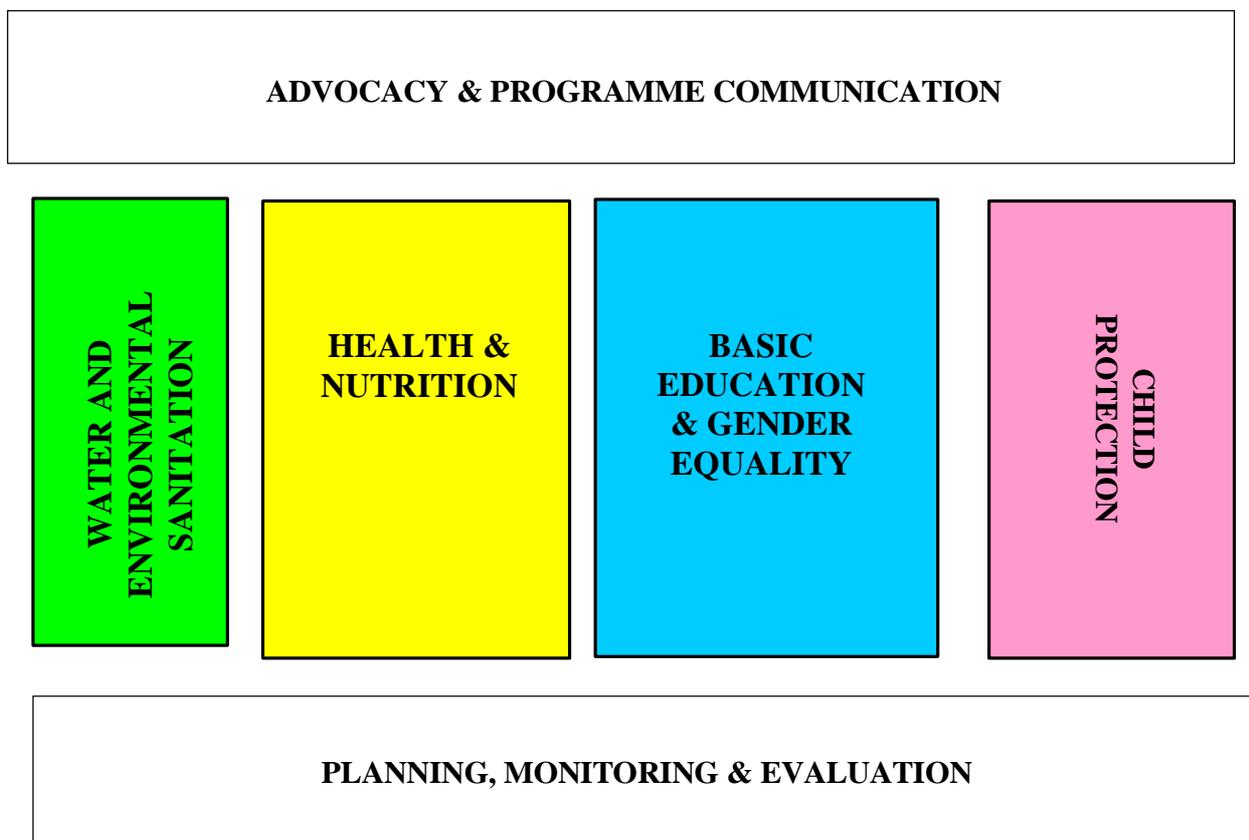
*Cutting across the sectoral programmes are programme communication and advocacy activities, designed to instigate changes in social attitudes towards child rights, and planning, monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of the programme and ensure the continued quality of implementation.*

*The programme reaches out to all 34 Afghan provinces, with a special focus on those areas where indicators show the greatest disparities. In addition to four Zonal Offices outside Kabul, UNICEF has also established outposts in these key provinces, to bring UNICEF staff closer to priority communities.*

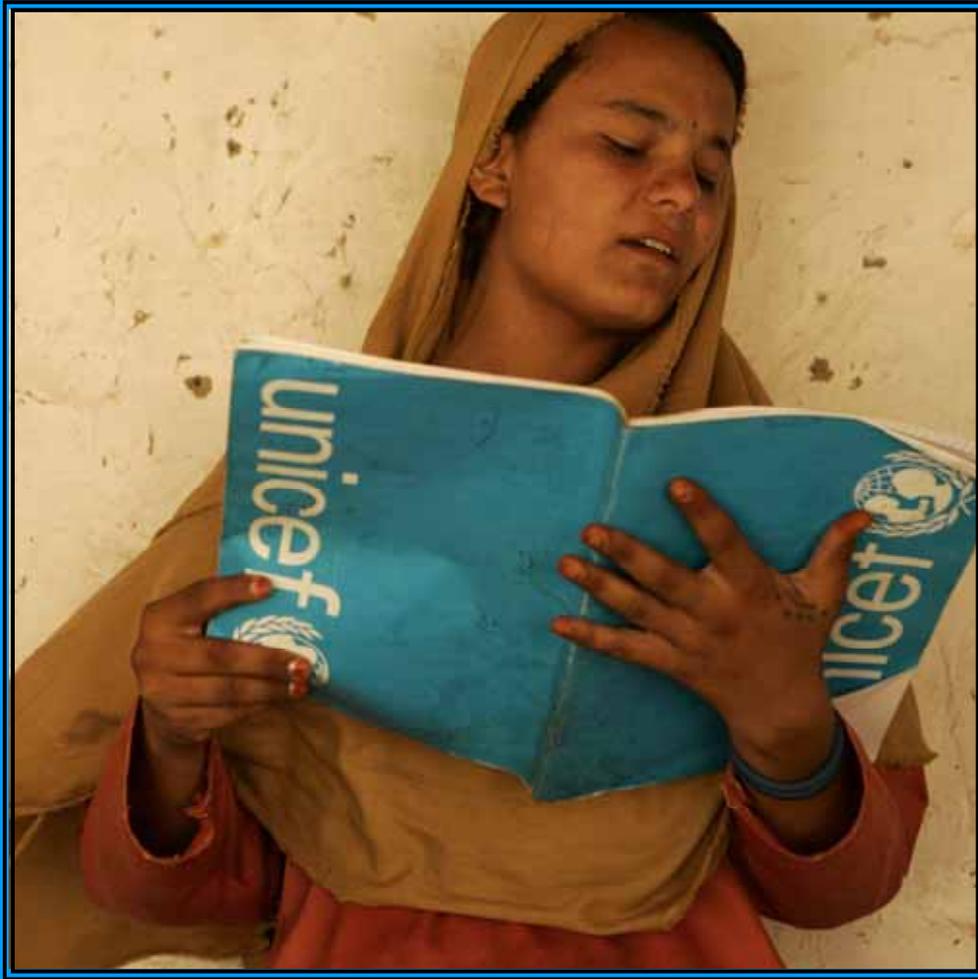
Activities supported by UNICEF within the Programme of Cooperation have been designed after extensive consultation with other partners, and are fully consistent with national development priorities.

Management of the programme reflects the critical transition within Afghanistan, from post-emergency to developmental programming, and sees the Government of Afghanistan exercising leadership of programme design, management and implementation. Responsibility for programme management rests with the heads of Government Ministries. For each project, a Government official, working with a designated UNICEF counterpart, has overall responsibility for planning, managing and monitoring project activities. In each sector, key results have been identified, against which progress can be evaluated on a regular basis.

UNICEF provides the necessary technical and resource-based support to the Government to achieve those results.



# Basic education and gender equality



UNICEF Afghanistan/2005/Kate Brooks

*“Reducing **gender disparity** in education, **improving quality** for all children”*

The programme aims to reduce gender disparity in basic education, improve the quality of education for all children, including those with disabilities, and increase women's literacy.

To expand access to education, UNICEF supports communities to provide appropriate learning opportunities for out-of-school girls, and ensure that girls have access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene education. Education supplies are provided to students in primary schools, with an emphasis on reaching girls. Accelerated learning courses are supported for out-of-school girls who are over-age to facilitate their integration to the formal school system. UNICEF is also working with the Government to provide adult literacy classes for women.

At the national level, UNICEF and the Government are developing a comprehensive teacher-training system in primary education. This includes strategies for enlarging the pool of female teachers, through advocacy to promote the recruitment, career development and remuneration of women teachers, which has proven to increase the enrolment and attendance of girls in school. The new system also revises the way student achievement is assessed, develops textbooks for primary and lower-secondary education and creates a policy framework for child-friendly schools.

UNICEF is supporting the Government to enhance policy-making regarding girl's education, the reduction of gender disparities and the promotion of child-friendly approaches. Drop-out rates will be reduced through improvements in the learning environment, and support for initiatives such as Parent Teacher Associations that bring families and schools closer together. Support is also provided to improving management and information systems.

# Health and nutrition



UNICEF Afghanistan/2003/Katarina Premfors

*“Reducing **infant, child and maternal mortality** by scaling up **high impact programmes**”*

UNICEF and the Government are striving to reduce infant, child, maternal and neonatal mortality by scaling up high-impact mother and child survival and growth intervention packages as well as the promotion of family- and community-care practices.

To substantially increase immunization coverage, greater emphasis is placed on the expansion of routine immunization services with strong linkages made to existing health and nutrition areas, such as iron-deficiency, anaemia and vitamin A and other micronutrient deficiencies. UNICEF also continues to support supplementary immunization activities to contribute to polio eradication, measles control, and maternal and neonatal tetanus elimination. Sector-wide, there is a strong component of Information and Education Communication, which prioritizes access to hard-to-reach families in rural areas with a goal of increasing utilization of health services.

UNICEF and its partners are also introducing community-based Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses, the promotion of insecticide-treated nets against malaria, infant breastfeeding from 0-6 months and young child nutrition-monitoring and therapeutic feeding programmes.

In view of Afghanistan's high rates of maternal mortality, strong advocacy for improved emergency obstetric care is being undertaken at all levels and new models developed for community-based safe motherhood initiatives

While Afghanistan remains a low prevalence country in terms of HIV/AIDS, UNICEF and the Government are committed to reducing the risk of infection by focusing on injection safety, awareness-raising, assuring the safety of blood supply, the prevention of parent-to-child transmission and risk-prevention education on issues such as needle-sharing.

A comprehensive school health programme is being introduced, including hygiene education, life skills emphasizing HIV/AIDS and drug-use prevention, and school-based multi-micronutrient supplementation.

# Water and environmental sanitation



UNICEF Afghanistan/2005/Junko Mitani

*“Improving access to **safe water and sanitation,** with a focus on sustainability”*

With only 23 per cent of the population having access to clean drinking water, UNICEF's support for water and sanitation in Afghanistan aims at improving access to safe water and appropriate sanitation, with a clear focus on sustainability of services. Schools and health centres are used as entry points at the community level, where UNICEF strives to contribute to improved health for children and women, as well as improved schools and increased girls' enrolment in primary education.

As reduction in water-related diseases is dependant upon improved knowledge and understanding amongst families, service delivery is complemented by hygiene education in schools and health centres as well as by communication campaigns to influence behaviour change. In order to ensure that services are user-friendly and accessible for young girls and other vulnerable groups, the participation of communities, particularly adolescents and women, is also supported.

At the national level, UNICEF is working with the Government in developing policies and strategies for community-based operation and maintenance of services and infrastructure.

UNICEF is also contributing to the national emergency-preparedness plan by supporting surveillance systems for cholera and other diseases related to water and environmental sanitation.

# Child protection



UNICEF Afghanistan/2004/Kate Brooks

*“Protecting children from  
**violence, exploitation  
and abuse”***

UNICEF is working to protect children against violence, exploitation, and abuse and to ensure that the rights of all children to basic health, education and well-being are upheld.

Initiatives are being supported to eliminate child trafficking, early marriage and forced and bonded child labour and to reduce physical, psychological and sexual violence against children - some of the worst abuses of child rights in Afghanistan. The monitoring and reporting of child rights violations is being supported through the establishment of community-level mechanisms.

Attention is given to adolescents, especially girls, to equip them with skills needed for protection from exploitation and abuse, including the risks of drug use. UNICEF is also contributing to communication campaigns to raise awareness of the implications of under-age marriage and early pregnancies. UNICEF is also supporting the Government to establish a national birth and death registration system, thereby strengthening national planning.

Technical inputs on juvenile justice are provided to counterparts working on the rule of law. In close consultation with all development actors, support is being provided to the independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan in monitoring child rights violations.

Advocacy and technical assistance is being provided to the Government to develop and enforce legal, policy and regulatory frameworks, research, legislation and operational guidelines for the protection of vulnerable children, including those with disabilities, and women.

# Emergency preparedness and response



UNICEF Afghanistan/2002/

*“Ensuring **emergency preparedness and response** in all sectors”*

Like all countries, Afghanistan faces the risk of a natural emergency at any time; the country often suffers from the effects of cold weather, flooding, drought and earthquakes. UNICEF is working with the Government and other partners to ensure that an element of emergency preparedness and response is built into each of its sectoral programmes. In addition to the pre-positioning of emergency supplies, and technical support such as training of Government staff in logistics, UNICEF will ensure that basic activities will be supported in the event of an emergency.

### **In education**

Temporary learning spaces will be set up, teaching and learning materials provided, recreational activities initiated and primary education re-established or initiated.

### **In health and nutrition**

Emergency preparedness will be pursued with local authorities and others, including the development of technical capacity, tools and guidelines for emergency assessment, response, and monitoring. UNICEF will support the Ministry of Public Health and others in responding to the treatment and prevention of severe and moderate malnutrition in emergencies, in coordinating the response and in conducting necessary surveys, surveillance and supply procurement.

### **In water and environmental sanitation**

UNICEF will contribute to the national emergency-preparedness plan by supporting surveillance systems for cholera and other diseases related to water and environmental sanitation. In emergencies, the emphasis will be placed on providing safe drinking water and related supplies and on disseminating key hygiene messages. Support will also be given to the construction of latrines, thereby affording privacy, dignity and protection for women and girls.

### **In child protection**

In emergencies, measures will be supported to prevent the separation of children from caregivers and to identify, register and reunify children and families. UNICEF will also emphasize the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation of children and provide psychosocial care to victims of abuse and/or trauma.





**United Nations Children's Fund**  
**Afghanistan Country Office**  
PO Box 54  
UNOCA Compound  
Jalalabad Road  
Kabul, Afghanistan

Switchboard: +93 (0)799 507 000  
Facsimile: +873 761 924 996  
Email: [kabul@unicef.org](mailto:kabul@unicef.org)