

THE STATE OF ERITREA

INTEGRATED ECD POLICY

Creating a fair start for children

Final Draft

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FOREWORD

The concern and efforts to ensure the right of every child to survival, growth and development and the realization that an investment in children is an investment in the future are not a new development in this country. Parents treasure, wish and struggle for the best for their children although many lack the necessary resources. Even during the war, Early Childhood Development was given due consideration within the given socio-economic constraints. More recently the Government Macro policy underscores the importance of mother and child services and the need to provide children with legal and social protection.

The Government ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1994 and formulated policy guidelines for Early Childhood Education and Care in 1995; Primary Health Care, Food security and HIV/AIDS in 1998. Several articles in the 1997 National Constitution also affirm the ECD imperative.

During 2000 the country embarked on an extensive project of ECD through a World Bank credit scheme. The integrated project was based previous efforts and interventions, which had been undertaken with limited capacity. The goal of the Eritrea Integrated ECD project has been to promote the basic needs for healthy growth and holistic development of children under six years of age, children of primary school age and children in need of special protection. This is done through provision of support services to enhance child health and nutrition; early stimulation and learning; and child protection. There is no doubt a child who receives a combination of these services benefits more, and performs better than those who do not enjoy similar opportunities.

The project has served as a pilot of an integrated approach to ECD. The experience provided lessons and insights for the development of this integrated policy. Therefore, this policy builds on the strengths of programme activities and the implementation structure that are already in place.

The policy provides a framework for Government, Regional Administration, institutions, communities, families and International and National Development Partners for investing in and implementing integrated ECD programmes that contribute towards realizing the rights of children and making the global goal of creating a World Fit for Children a reality.

The Government calls upon all stakeholders and development partners across sectors of civil society, the private sector, relevant institutions and interest groups to support the implementation of this policy.

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Minister of Education

Chairman ECD National Steering Committee

ACRONYMS

CBOs:	Community Based Organizations
ECD:	Early Childhood Development
FBOs:	Faith Based Organizations
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organizations
NUEW:	National Union of Eritrea Women
NUEYS:	National Union of Eritrea Youth and Students
OVC:	Orphans and Vulnerable Children

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conception of Early Childhood Development

The term Early Childhood Development (ECD) refers to a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for young children, their parents and caregivers. Its purpose is to protect the child's right to develop to his/her full physical, emotional, social and cognitive potential.

Child development refers to the holistic well being of the child. This includes the opportunity for the child to grow in an environment of love and nurturing that caters for nutrition, health, water and sanitation needs of the child in homes, communities and institutions; facilitates child protection and participation; and enhances early stimulation and learning through an interaction with people and the environment.

Realizing that the base for all human development is laid in the formative years, interventions at this stage are regarded as essential. Thus, as part of its broad based development strategy, the Government regards equal access to basic education, preventive and curative health services, psychosocial care and support services for children as a fundamental condition to achieving its long range goal of reducing poverty, disease and other factors that hinder the social, cultural and economic advancement of its entire population.

In this regard, the Government has formulated and is implementing national economic and social development policies and strategies; among these is the Macro-Policy of 1994 that mapped out short, medium, and long-term reconstruction and development programmes. The policy identified human capital formation through education and health as the main strategy for long-term national development, as it seeks to ensure every child's right to life and development to his/her full potential.

1.2 Challenges

Major challenges are to: improve child and maternal health and nutrition; increase access to antenatal and post natal care and support services; reduce infant mortality and maternal mortality; minimize incidence of childhood diseases; increase opportunities for early stimulation and learning for children of the age below eight years; increase care and support services for orphans, children with disabilities and those with other vulnerabilities including those affected by barriers such as geographical remoteness.

2.0 RATIONALE

Eritrea recognizes that much of the capacity for success in life depends on the quality of prenatal care of mothers, nutritional adequacy during pregnancy, and physiological and psychosocial nurturing of children, during early childhood. This is based on the prevailing evidence that children who receive quality care and early stimulation to enhance their health, physical, intellectual, and socio-emotional development, are healthier and stronger as children and later as adults, fit better into society, do better in school, and become more successful in life and hence contribute more to the socio-economic development of their country than their counterparts. The Government therefore strives to fulfill its obligation to children in these respects.

Government also recognizes that Early Childhood development is an important platform for achieving the goal of Basic Education for All, espoused in international and regional declarations and conventions. ECD is also seen as a long-term strategy for poverty reduction as acknowledged in the country's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2003.

Eritrea is signatory to global and regional conventions and treaties that recognize the importance of ECD including: The Convention on the Rights of the Child; The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; The African Charter on Human and People's Rights; The Constitution of the World Health Organization; The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and The Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization. This obligation is also embedded in the National Constitution, the Macro policy and in sectoral policies.

And yet many challenges remain. Thus, formulating and implementing an integrated ECD Policy to address the challenges, improve quality, increase access and create a fair start for all Eritrean children, is an urgent national obligation.

3.0 INTEGRATED ECD POLICY GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Policy Goal

The integrated ECD policy aims to promote the basic needs for survival, healthy growth and holistic development of children under eight years of age, including children in need of special protection, to enable them to realize their full potential and develop into productive and responsible youths and adults. The program shall benefit children in difficult circumstances up to the age of 18 years.

3.2 Policy Objectives

- a) Establish a national framework and institutional capacities for the development and provision of quality ECD services at all levels in the administrative structure; provide Basic Requirements, Minimum Standards and Procedural Guidelines to promote quality of ECD services.
- b) Raise awareness on the importance of ECD and advocate for the widespread acceptance and observance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- c) Enhance the capacity of ECD leaders and service providers; improve the quality of services, and increase access through formal and non-formal strategies.
- d) Strengthen the health system and promote child and maternal health, voluntary counselling and testing for HIV/AIDS, and services to reduce mother-to-child HIV transmission to reduce infant and under-five mortality rates and preventing child morbidity and mortality.
- e) Develop and implement a quality formal and non-formal pre-school curriculum; enhance centre-based and non centre-based early stimulation and learning opportunities; increase recreational and cultural activities for all

children including those with disabilities and ensure their smooth transition into elementary school settings.

- f) Improve food security at household and community levels, and the families' income earning capacity in order to sustain an improved quality of life and reduce malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, developmental delays and disabilities among children.
- g) Promote environmental hygiene, access to safe water for domestic use and adequate sanitation.

4.0 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 An integrated approach to facilitate realization of the set goal and objectives

The Policy programme activities will be integrated and co-ordinated at all administrative levels. In the context of this policy integration is defined as "to make whole or complete by adding or bringing together parts" and "to put or bring parts together into a whole, to unify". The first refers to bringing sectors and their components together to add to and or contribute towards the whole, while integration through unification suggests combining of sectors and partners to create one Integrated ECD Institution, with all individuals playing similar and interchangeable roles.

While preparing for integration through unification, use will be made of a combination of the convergence model whereby sectors and groups work to improve the well being of the same children and the model where integration takes place at National and Regional level whereby sectors have equal status, plan common goals, co-ordinate strategies and monitor activities as a team co-ordinated by the ECD Policy Secretariat/Management Team and National ECD Policy Technical Support Committee.

Thus, in the implementation of this ECD policy, integration will be strengthened by the ECD Secretariat/Management Team, National ECD Policy Technical Support Committee, and leaders in the ECD stakeholder Ministries at the levels of planning,

implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Close collaboration will reduce the compartmentalization of the child development services.

Regions shall aim to establish and sustain ECD communities that participate in planning and implementation. Partners shall be encouraged to collaborate with stakeholder Ministries. The following shall be the institutional arrangements.

4.2 Institutional arrangement at different levels

4.2.1 National ECD Policy Steering Committee

The national machinery for ensuring successful implementation of the ECD policy and its programme activities shall be a National ECD Policy Steering Committee consisting of Ministers of ECD Stakeholder Ministries, namely: Labour and Human Welfare, Health, Education, National Development, Local Government and Finance and any other Ministry and organization co-opted by the Committee. The office of His Excellency the President shall nominate the Chairperson for the National ECD Policy Steering Committee.

4.2.2 A National ECD Policy Technical Support Committee

A National ECD Policy Technical Support Committee consisting of Director Generals of ECD stakeholder Ministries and any other co-opted representatives of ECD partners shall be established to support the National ECD Policy Steering Committee and ensure implementation of the policy.

4.2.3 A National ECD Secretariat/Management Team

National ECD Secretariat/Management Team shall be required to carry out the day-to-day functions of ECD Policy programmes.

4.2.4 Regional ECD Policy Technical Support Committee

Headed by the Executive Regional Administrator, this Committee shall report to the National ECD Policy Technical Committee.

Membership shall consist of the Heads of ECD stakeholder Ministries and any others as recommended by the National ECD Policy Steering Committee.

4.2.5 Memhdar Kebabi ECD Committee

Headed by the Memhdar Kebabi Administrator, the Committee shall report to the Regional Committee. Membership shall consist of representatives of the Ministries of Health, Education, Labour and Human Welfare, Local Government and Planning. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith Based-Organizations (FBOs), Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and Traditional Authorities in the area shall be represented on the Memhdar Kebabi Committee.

4.3 Roles and Responsibilities

4.3.1 Ministries, Departments and Agencies

The Government, through its relevant Ministries, Regional Administration, Departments, Institutions and Agencies, shall continue to support ECD Programmes at all levels. Stakeholder Ministries shall perform the functions as summarized below.

4.3.2 National ECD Policy Steering Committee

National ECD Policy Steering Committee shall have the responsibility for ensuring successful implementation of the ECD policy and its programmes. It will be supported by the National ECD Policy Technical Support Committee and an ECD Secretariat/Management Team. The committee shall meet quarterly. Sub-committees shall be formed as required. The specific role and responsibility of the National ECD Policy Steering Committee shall be to:

- a) Advise Government on ECD policy matters;
- b) Establish and supervise a National ECD Policy Technical Support Committee and the ECD Secretariat/Management Team;
- c) Provide guidelines for implementation of ECD Policy programmes;

- d) Advocate for and mobilize funding for ECD;
- e) Submit Annual Reports to relevant Statutory Bodies as may be required.

4.3.3 National ECD Policy Technical Support Committee

This Committee shall function to:

- a) Enhance common understanding on an integrated and holistic approach to ECD programmes;
- b) Ensure that the provisions of the policy are adhered to and decisions of the National ECD Policy Steering Committee are carried out;
- c) Ensure establishment of and support for ECD Policy Committees at National, Regional, Memhdar Kebabi and Community levels;
- d) Ensure establishment of interlinked Basic Requirements, Minimum Standards and Procedural Guidelines for all sectors;
- e) Develop an Implementation Plan, Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for all levels- National, Regional, Memhdar Kebabi and Community;
- f) Ensure that effective management tools are developed, particularly - Data base, Monitoring and Evaluation, Communication and Advocacy and Joint Programming;
- g) Ensure that effective arrangements are set up at all levels.
- h) Ensure co-ordination of efforts among Government Ministries and Development Partners, the private sector and others providing ECD services at National and Regional levels;
- i) Submit an Annual Report to relevant Statutory Bodies.

4.3.4 The ECD Policy Secretariat/ Management Team

The ECD Secretariat/Management Team shall report to the National ECD Policy Technical Support Committee. It shall be responsible for:

- a) Co-ordination of all stakeholder activities in ways that fulfil ECD Policy goals and objectives;
- b) Overall management and implementation functions;
- c) Financial management and accounting;

- d) Establishing, maintaining and utilizing a database to facilitate planning, development, provision and evaluation of ECD services;
- e) Development and implementation of an integrated Communication and Advocacy Strategy;
- f) Any other functions assigned by the National ECD Policy Steering and National ECD Policy Technical Support Committees.

4.3.5 All ECD Stakeholder Ministries shall:

- a) Raise awareness at all levels and increase access to centre-based and non centre-based arrangements for services;
- b) Budget for development and provision of services;
- c) Establish Basic Requirements, Minimum Standards and Procedural Guidelines for the establishment and management of services;
- d) Establish databases to facilitate planning, provision, assessment and evaluation of services;
- e) Develop the capacity of ECD leaders, providers and partners to ensure quality of services, facilitate expansion and increase access;
- f) Register and regulate establishment of services;
- g) Monitor, supervise and evaluate programme activities;
- h) Implement an inclusive approach at all levels of service development and delivery;
- i) Explore the use of conventional and non-conventional approaches to meet the demand for services;
- j) Contribute to the development and implementation of an integrated Parenting Enrichment and Resource Centre strategies to improve health and nutrition, psychosocial care and support services, and early stimulation and learning of children, especially of the age below 3 years;
- k) Promote environmental health and hygiene at all levels-home, community, formal and non-formal institutions;
- l) Raise awareness on HIV/AIDS and provide care and support services to affected families and children;
- m) Advocate for the development of safe and child friendly home environments;

- n) Collaborate with other stakeholder Ministries, National Union of Eritrea Women (NUEW), National Union of Eritrea Youth and Students (NUEYS) and other ECD Partners to develop and implement ECD services;
- o) Develop and utilize a multi-media Information Education Communication for behavioral change ;
- p) Conduct research studies to inform and improve policy and practice.

4.3.6 Ministry specific roles and responsibilities

4.3.6.1 Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare

The Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare shall:

- a) Promote observance and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the National child welfare laws, regulations and guidelines imbedded in the National Constitution, Civil and Criminal Code and to protect the welfare of orphans, children with disabilities and other vulnerabilities, including children affected by HIV/AIDS;
- b) Co-ordinate observance and implementation of regulations and guidelines for the protection and welfare of children;
- c) Review Laws and Regulations for child and family welfare as necessary;
- d) Promote care and support initiatives for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC);
- e) Promote in-country production of assistive devices such as wheel chairs, the white cane, teaching learning materials for children with special needs;
- f) Ensure equal opportunity to education, health, nutrition and psychosocial care and support services for OVC.

4.3.6.2 Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education shall:

- a) Ensure age appropriate curriculum and child friendly learning environments for children of the age below eight years benefiting from formal and non-formal early stimulation and learning settings;

- b) Promote a smooth transition for children from the different types of early stimulation and learning arrangements to formal schooling;
- c) Promote use of positive ways of teaching discipline to young children in school settings, family and community levels.

4.3.6.3 Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health shall promote health and nutrition of children and of their families. This Ministry shall undertake two interrelated roles, namely that of promoting child health and child and maternal nutrition as indicated below.

- a) Promote Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses by strengthening Health Workers' skills and Health system and services;
- b) Promote safe parenthood, voluntary counselling and testing for HIV/AIDS; and services to reduce mother- to- child HIV transmission and exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months;
- c) Promote nutrition and growth monitoring services;
- d) Advocate for and facilitate immunization services, early identification, treatment and management of disabilities;
- e) Enhance knowledge and skills on how to provide appropriate First Aid to young children;
- f) Promote environmental health, hygiene, sanitation, safe water and prevention of malaria and other vector borne diseases;
- g) Collaborate with stakeholder Ministries and partners and strengthen capacity of families and communities to improve nutritional status of children.

4.3.6.4 Ministry of Agriculture

The Ministry of Agriculture shall:

- a) Improve the status of nutrition at household level;
- b) Promote use of energy saving devices;
- c) Promote income-generating activities, food diversification and transfer of agriculture/development technology to rural communities.

4.3.6.5 Ministry of Fisheries

The Ministry of Fisheries shall:

- d) Improve nutrition at household level;
- e) Promote household income through inland fisheries.

4.3.6.6 Ministry of Local Government

The Ministry of Local Government shall:

- a) Ensure establishment and effective functioning of Regional ECD Committees in the best interest of children and their families;
- b) Be responsible for births and deaths registration.

4.3.6.7 Other Government Ministries, Institutions and Associations

Other Government Ministries, Institutions and Associations whose work impact on ECD shall be expected to:

- a) Incorporate ECD programme activities into their work in keeping with their areas of competence and comparative advantage;
- b) Participate in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of ECD programme activities.

4.3.6.8 Ministry of Information

The Ministry of Information shall:

- a) Provide support services to activities of the different ECD stakeholder Ministries and Partners;
- b) Implement a multi-media approach to raise awareness and provide information regarding ECD policy and programme activities.

4.4 At the Regional level

4.4.1 Regional Administration

Regional Administration shall:

- a) Initiate, plan and implement ECD programme activities and interventions;
- b) Allocate a percentage of their budgets to complement ECD programme activities in health and nutrition, early stimulation and learning, psychosocial care and support for vulnerable children;
- c) Supervise the Regional ECD Committees;
- d) Ensure formation and functioning of Memhdar Kebabi and Community ECD Committees;
- e) Promote programme activities that enable needy families to cope with the responsibility to ensure survival, care and development of their children;
- f) Increase partnerships to promote participation across sectors of civil society, including NGOs, Community Based Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, the media, private sector and other interest groups to provide opportunities for complementary action and leveraging of resources;
- g) Co-ordinate ECD partners and promote transparency and accountability, and eliminate duplication of effort;
- h) Promote ownership, accountability and sustainability of ECD by families and communities.

4.4.2 Regional ECD Policy Technical Support Committee

Regional ECD Policy Technical Support Committees shall report to the National ECD Policy Technical Support Committee, and shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) Advise the Regional Administration on ECD matters;
- b) Ensure planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Regional level ECD activities, while adhering to decisions and guidelines of the National ECD Policy Steering and Technical Support Committees;

- c) Ensure advocacy to create Regional awareness on ECD Policy strategies and activities;
- d) Ensure implementation of Basic Requirements, Minimum Standards and Procedural Guidelines for the development and management of appropriate child health and nutrition; support and care for orphans and vulnerable children; early stimulation and learning; and Parenting Enrichment Programme;
- e) Co-ordinate efforts among those providing ECD services (Government, NGOs, FBO, CBOs and private providers);
- f) Advocate for greater attention to the needs of children, especially those with disabilities;
- g) Establish, maintain and utilize a commensurate database to facilitate planning, development, provision and evaluation of ECD services.

4.4.3 Regional ECD Co-ordinator

A position of Regional ECD Co-ordinator shall be established. He/she will have the following responsibilities reporting to the Regional ECD Technical Support Committee:

- a) Co-ordinate planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Regional level ECD activities;
- b) Establish, maintain and utilize a database to facilitate planning, development, provision and evaluation of ECD services;
- c) Advise the Regional ECD Technical Support Committee on ECD matters;

4.4.4 Memhdar Kebabi ECD Committee

Memhdar Kebabi Committee shall:

- a) Guide communities to identify and prioritise ECD; and contribute to planning, developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of programme activities;
- b) Participate in identifying and developing venues for ECD activities;
- c) Mobilize parents, community members and partners to participate in the development and provision of ECD.

4.4.5 Families

In bearing the primary responsibility for the survival, care and development of their children, families, among other responsibilities, shall,:

- a) Provide care and support for pregnant and lactating women;
- b) Provide exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and gradually introduce nutritious meals to supplement breastfeeding after the sixth month;
- c) Provide and create home environments that offer affection to children, encourage their free expression and participation; stimulate exploration, creativity and early learning, with special attention to children with disabilities;
- d) Protect children from harmful cultural practices, discrimination, abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- e) Use prevention measures such as immunization, nutritious meals, safe and secure environments to minimise child illnesses;
- f) Promote health and nutrition and ensure timely and appropriate treatment when a child is ill;
- g) Ensure food security, personal and environmental hygiene and sanitation for child survival, growth and development;
- h) Contribute towards the cost of ECD programme activities in cash or in kind;
- i) Participate in community ECD programme activities;
- j) Ensure that children access and benefit from ECD provisions and services.

4.5 Non-Governmental Organizations, Faith Based Organizations and Community Based Organizations

These organizations shall be encouraged to:

- a) Advocate for ECD;
- b) Participate in planning, developing, implementing and evaluation of ECD programme activities;
- c) Establish and provide ECD services while adhering to Basic Requirements, Minimum Standards and Procedural Guidelines established by ECD stakeholder Ministries;

- d) Incorporate appropriate ECD activities into their programmes;
- e) Promote family unity and stability through counselling and other services;
- f) Mobilize and provide financial and technical support for the development of ECD activities in areas where they are working.

4.6 National and International Development Partners

Development Partners shall be encouraged to:

- a) Advocate for the integrated care and support for holistic growth and development of children;
- b) Mobilize resources and technical support for ECD programmes;
- c) Participate in planning, developing, establishing, implementing and evaluation of ECD programme activities.

4.7 Private Proprietors

Private ECD Service providers shall:

- a) Establish and provide ECD services such as kindergarten and health centres; centres for children with severe disabilities; manufacturing resource materials and equipment to facilitate the various ECD programme activities in line with set Basic Requirements, Standards and Guidelines;
- b) Participate in planning, developing and evaluation of ECD programme activities;
- c) Contribute towards funding of ECD programme activities.

5.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

5.1 A comprehensive ECD programme with complementary programming strategies

Guiding principle: A child's development is influenced and affected by the total environment, namely: the home, the community, social institutions, legal frameworks and cultural ethos. A comprehensive ECD programme therefore needs to function simultaneously at different levels, focusing correspondingly on the child, parents and

other caregivers, the community and national institutions, laws, regulations and policies. This emphasizes the fact that ECD programmes cannot be implemented in isolation and calls for development and implementation of complementary strategies in order to meet ECD goals and objectives. In this regard, ECD shall be part of a broader conceptual effort that addresses the needs of children.

The Government shall adopt a variety of complementary ECD programming strategies in order to expand coverage, ensure quality of programme activities, and achieve ownership, accountability and sustainability of ECD by families and communities. Use of local resources, indigenous knowledge, skills and experiences shall be maximized to facilitate cost effective delivery, and community ownership of ECD. The strategies include the following.

5.1.1 Integrated approach for holistic development

Guiding principle: Investing in children is an investment in the future. A child's early years are critically important for they provide a foundation for all later life. Early intervention can alter the lifetime trajectories of vulnerable children. Ensuring the rights of every child to survival, growth and development should therefore start from the initial stage of their lives, using the approach that will promote the synergy between nutrition, health, physical and cognitive development and provision of services for holistic development of children.

5.1.2 An integrated ECD communication strategy

Guiding Principle: Raising awareness, enhancing and increasing knowledge to promote positive attitudes, specific behaviours and practices is the first step towards the achievement of the National ECD policy goals and objectives. An integrated strategy that includes all the ECD components shall be developed using a multi-media approach. The strategy shall target actors, whose behaviour directly influences child growth and development, protection and welfare.

5.1.3 Equal opportunity to ECD services

Guiding principle: Every child including the vulnerable has the inherent right to life and to develop to one's full potential. To meet this obligation, conventional and non-conventional ECD approaches shall be developed and used to supplement and complement formal and centre based provisions. The actual form that programme activities and interventions take will vary depending on local and regional needs and resources.

5.1.4 Mainstreaming children with learning difficulties and providing for those who need particular assistance

Guiding principle: Children with disabilities have a right to education and schools have a responsibility to educate all children; and by participating in regular school settings that are able to provide for special needs, with teachers and caregivers who know how to adapt teaching techniques and activities, children with special needs will have a much better chance of becoming competent and independent adults.

The Ministries of Education, Labour and Human Welfare shall ensure that schools provide for the special learning needs. This shall be guided by the principle of inclusive education as in the Salamanca Declaration. Overall, this is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society.

5.1.5 Building on existing strengths at family and community levels

Guiding principle: Knowledge of both the traditional child rearing practices and the "scientifically validated" childcare approaches is essential in developing and implementing ECD programmes. ECD stakeholder Ministries shall explore, establish and build on existing strengths to enhance knowledge, skills and attitudes of parents, families and communities as one of the means to promote the quality of care for children. Existing strengths shall be used as entry points to introduce and or enhance the "scientifically validated" childcare and support services.

5.1.6 Communal approach towards meeting the rights of the child

Guiding principle: Taking care of the best interest of the child as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child must not be seen as a threat to the family but as a challenge for society. While the immediate family remains the primary-caregiver, each community member is equally responsible for children in the community. The Government and its partners have a big role to play towards improving the quality of life of families, children and communities.

5.1.7 Developing the capacity of communities for broader participation

Guiding Principle: Capacity development is critical and paramount in ensuring ownership, accountability and sustainability of ECD by parents, families and communities. Communities may not participate meaningfully and maximally in their own development without the necessary capacities. Hence developing the capacity of families and communities shall be prioritised.

5.1.8 Enhancing girls' enrolment and retention in school

Guiding principle: Childhood Development is a critical component of programming for girls' education. ECD programmes can make a difference in laying a solid foundation for learning in promoting gender equity by providing a good start to girls as well as boys and by promoting positive gender socialization and early learning. This can help parents broaden their aspirations for girls and better perceive the capabilities of their girl child, increase girl child's motivation and self expectation, thus increasing the probability for girls' enrollment and retention in school.

5.1.9 Partnership and cost sharing approach

Guiding principle: Increasing partnerships and working with ECD stakeholders across sectors provides opportunities for complementary action and leveraging of resources. The implementation of a comprehensive ECD programme requires adequate resources and these can be generated through developing partnership and working with ECD stakeholders across sectors. Partners could include International

and National NGOs, Community Based Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, the media, and the private sector.

5.1.10 Capacity development

Guiding principle: The professionalization of ECD through well-structured training yields high returns. Training at all levels shall be provided to enhance performance.

5.1.11 A multi sectoral approach to HIV/AIDS

Guiding principle: Giving a high profile to HIV/AIDS promotes awareness and prevention of the spread of HIV and increases care and support services for the affected. As articulated in the National HIV/AIDS policy document, a multi sectoral approach to HIV/AIDS shall be strengthened.

5.1.12 Monitoring and evaluation

Guiding principle: Monitoring and evaluation of programmes for their effectiveness, and efficiency furnishes critical information for making policy decisions and to improve practice. A strategic implementation plan and a monitoring and evaluation framework shall be developed. These shall periodically specify targets and success indicators. A documentation culture and participatory quality assurance initiatives shall be encouraged to allow stakeholders to learn from one another and strengthen collaboration.

5.2.13 Quality assurance through provision of Basic Requirements, Minimum Standards and Procedural Guidelines

Guiding principle: High quality ECD programme activities and interventions are those that are appropriate to the child's stage of development and address real needs of target beneficiaries and service providers, while respecting individual differences.

Guidelines on Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards for establishing and managing health and nutrition; care and support services for orphans and vulnerable children; early stimulation and learning services shall be developed. Standards shall

take into consideration the socio- economic status of families, communities, Regions and the country at large, and shall be complementary and consistent across all sectors.

6.0 FINANCING

6.1 Government

The Government shall ensure equity for all children through cost sharing mechanisms among key stakeholders: the Government, the Private Sector, International and National Development Partners, local communities and families. The Government shall require the Ministry of Finance to allocate funds to ECD Secretariat/Management Team and ECD stakeholder Ministries to facilitate implementation of the ECD policy programme. Government shall:

- a) Raise funds to implement the ECD Policy;
- b) Create an enabling environment for private sector and development partners' participation;
- c) Consider other ways and generate resources for the implementation of the ECD policy.

6.2 National level

The financial requirements at this level shall include the following:

- a) Support to ECD Secretariat/Management Unit, National and Regional level ECD Policy programmes by the different ECD stakeholder Ministries;
- b) Support to the National level Committees, ECD Secretariat/Management Unit and staff;
- c) Development of Basic Requirements, Minimum Standards, and Procedural Guidelines for the establishment and management of ECD services;
- d) Development of curriculum and curriculum resources for health and nutrition; early stimulation and learning; psychosocial care and support services;
- e) Development of major physical resources and building capacity of National and Regional ECD stakeholders, health and nutrition workers, kindergarten teachers, community caregivers and social workers;

- f) Expansion and improvement of training institutions that facilitate human resource development for ECD;
- g) Advocacy and awareness raising;
- h) Co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of ECD programmes;
- i) Research to inform and improve policy and practice.

6.3 Regional Level

Regional Administration shall raise money to complement funding ECD programme activities in their respective Regions. Funds allocation shall be needed to support:

- a) Regional ECD Committees and staff;
- b) Training of ECD providers, parents and ECD partners;
- c) Expansion and innovative approaches;
- d) Awareness raising and advocacy;
- e) Recurrent expenditure and maintenance;
- f) Co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation.

6.4 Community and family level

The community and family shall contribute to funding ECD to the extent of their capacity in cash or in kind towards:

- a) Provision and maintenance of venues for ECD activities;
- b) Sustainable tokens for ECD volunteer service providers such as Growth Monitoring Promoters, Traditional Birth Attendants and Community Caregivers;
- c) Availing time for ECD activities;
- d) Provision of basic necessities, care and support services for children.

6.5 Private sector

The private sector shall contribute in different ways, including:

- a) Investing in and providing ECD services that meet Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards;
- b) Providing ECD programmes for the children of their employees;

- c) Donating in cash and kind to ECD initiatives;
- d) Supporting a community ECD programme.

6.6 Bilateral/Multilateral Organizations, Foundations and Philanthropic Organizations

These organizations shall be encouraged to contribute and participate through supporting:

- a) Capacity development initiatives;
- b) Effective monitoring;
- c) Exchange programmes with other countries;
- d) Development of infrastructure in rural and urban poor areas;
- e) Establishment of database and research;
- f) Programmes for children with special needs;