

**Supplementary Programme Note on the Theory of Change
UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017**

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1. Introduction

The Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 marks an important milestone for the organization. Bridging the last two years of the Millennium Development Goals, the Strategic Plan takes into account post-2015 discussions underway, with attention to health and education, poverty, equity, environment and resilience. The Plan incorporates key decisions from the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and key lessons from the End-of-Cycle review, focusing concretely on issues of equity with emphasis on UNICEF's universal mandate and the need for greater transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness.

This Programme Note complements the Strategic Plan by elaborating the Plan's theory of change in more detail, providing additional information and analysis of the various components. It is challenging to summarize a global theory of change for a highly decentralized organization such as UNICEF because so many of the expected results and related implementation strategies are context specific and nationally-led. Furthermore, the change processes that are needed to fulfill children's rights with greater equity are often non-linear, and are challenging to plan or predict with sufficient detail for the medium-term. Nevertheless, the theory of change outlined in the Strategic Plan and elaborated in this document is intended to be broad and flexible enough to provide strategic direction for the Organization as a whole, while simultaneously allowing translation through country programmes of cooperation under the leadership of national governments.

A thorough analysis of risks will be undertaken as part of each country programme development process. This will inform mitigation strategies and also enable each Country Office to proactively address context-specific risks that have the potential to constrain the achievement of outputs and outcomes.

2. Overview of the Theory of Change

UNICEF is uniquely positioned to support the realization of the rights of children, including the most disadvantaged and excluded children, given comparative advantages including an international, normative mandate based on the widely ratified Convention of the Rights of the Child; a proven capacity in multiple sectors; a dual development and humanitarian mandate; a large-scale field presence in programme countries; and a capacity to engage concurrently at multiple levels including global, regional, country and local levels on common issues and thereby realize synergies. UNICEF's network and convening and advocacy roles, and unique set of partnerships at all levels, allows for collaborative, innovative and real-time solutions to the challenges, obstacles and constraints to realizing rights for children and achieving equity. The theory of change outlined in the Plan builds on this comparative advantage.

The programme choices defined in the plan are based on a number of assumptions about development and social change and how it can be influenced positively for children.

One of the most important assumptions in this context is that evidenced-based laws, policies and implementation plans combined with doable and cost-effective technical solutions can make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged children. This "technical" assumption is

nurtured by the belief in the power of scientific arguments to act to improve the situation of children if they are provided with evidence and practical methods, tools and interventions. An appropriate balance – based on each context – will be struck between a technical approach and engaging in broad social and political dynamics of development to establish an enabling environment and promote human rights. Linked to this assumption is the conviction that innovation is an important ingredient of social and economic change. This is why the Strategic Plan introduces innovation as a new strategy to identify and scale-up technological, scientific and programmatic innovations with high benefits for marginalized children.

Another important assumption behind the strategic plan is that after nearly two decades of supporting States in translating the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international treaties into national laws and technically sound policies, what is most needed in the coming decade is improved capacity for implementation. Today, there are many examples of countries where Governments have been committed to address inequities and created an enabling environment through appropriate policies for children but where implementation is lacking because of institutional weaknesses. Therefore the Strategic Plan emphasizes costed and nationally resourced implementation plans and is supporting organizational capacity building so that well-functioning institutions can deliver in practice on the promise to improve the situation of the most disadvantaged children, and simultaneously respond to the various national, regional and global commitments including the relevant concluding observations of Treaty bodies.

A third and very important assumption underlying the Strategic Plan is that the expansion of services to marginalized children alone will not yield results if not accompanied by a serious effort to invest in the knowledge, skills and capacity of communities, including the capacities of children and adolescents themselves to act as agents of change. They must be empowered to participate in the planning of services and to hold service providers and policy makers accountable. Furthermore, it is important to address the different factors that impede children and families to make good use of social services, like lack of resources, stigma and discrimination and social norms and behaviours that are detrimental for the child. Therefore, the Strategic Plan places special emphasis on indicators in all sectors that reflect on the capacity of children, families and communities in this respect. This is also key to realizing the organization's focus on equity and building resilience of children, families and communities. This is an important reason to place a special emphasis on capacity building of counterparts in communication for development during the course of the next period of cooperation.

For UNICEF, equity means that all children deserve an equal opportunity to survive, develop, and reach their full potential. To the degree that any disadvantaged child does not have that opportunity, her or his rights are violated. An equity-based approach to UNICEF's programmes and policies seeks to understand and address the causes of inequity in order to protect the right of every child to survive and thrive. Consistent with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) principle on human rights based approach to cooperation, this will be done through all programmes of development cooperation. Programmes will specifically focus on advancing the realization of human rights, and human rights standards

and principles, including equality, non-discrimination, participation and accountability. UNICEF will advocate and support capacity building of duty-bearers to meet their obligations and rights-holders to claim their rights, with a focus on the disadvantaged and thus enhance their opportunities for survival, development and protection.

The entire plan is based on the premise that a more equitable world for children is only achievable by working in partnerships with a variety of organizations towards a common purpose. Hence, the Plan is based on the commitment of UNICEF to engage in national and global partnerships to inspire and mobilize others to work together towards the realization of equitable results for children.

Finally, UNICEF's Strategic Plan is developed based on the strong conviction that social change and sustainable results are achievable, if outputs and outcomes follow the logic of a sound and strong results-framework. Therefore, an informal working group composed of partners and members of the executive board with special expertise in results-based management (RBM) informed the development of the Plan from the start, providing important inputs for the design of the overall structure of the framework as well as detailed comments on the results matrices to ensure their quality.

Consistent with the UNDG RBM Handbook, the Plan focuses the organization to achieve results at three levels: impact, outcome and output.

Impact level result

At the impact level, which represents changes in the situation of children, outcomes converge to “realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged.” The Strategic Plan summarizes the shared, global commitments for children, to which UNICEF will contribute. All outcomes are mapped and linked to one impact level result, to enable UNICEF to be held accountable for its respective contribution to these results. The mission of UNICEF is to support the realization of the rights of every child, everywhere, in everything the organization does – in programmes, advocacy and operations. The equity strategy, focused on the most disadvantaged and excluded children and families, is how UNICEF translates this commitment to children's rights into action. At the same time, communities and families must be supported to increase their resilience so that achievements for children can be sustained even in times of volatility or shocks – whether caused by economic shift, climate change, natural disasters, disease or violent conflict. Humanitarian action will remain crucial given the anticipated increase in the scale, severity and frequency of disasters and the persistence of armed conflicts, with a considerable humanitarian impact especially in fragile settings.

Support will be provided to generate, analyze and disseminate data on children, disaggregated to the extent possible, to monitor progress in reducing inequities between children in each national context. Progress towards achieving the impact level result will be assessed through the seven outcome areas, which will summarize UNICEF's contribution to relevant global commitments, as outlined in the annex of the Plan. The global level analysis of progress

towards achieving the impact level result will enable the drawing of lessons learned and revisions as required. UNICEF will also promote the collection and use of a common set of indicators that are comparable across countries – thereby promoting the sharing of lessons learned and evidence of impact.

By outlining the expected measurable changes in the lives of children, impact level result will depend on the extent to which the responsibilities and obligations of duty-bearers at various levels have been met. Review processes with government and partners will facilitate the strengthening of joint accountability mechanisms and enable changes in emphasis as required.

The Seven Outcomes in the Strategic Plan 2014-17 that will contribute to the Impact level result are:

1. **Health:** Improved and equitable use of high-impact maternal, newborn and child health interventions from pregnancy to adolescence and promotion of healthy behaviours.
2. **HIV and AIDS:** Improved and equitable use of proven HIV prevention and treatment interventions by children, pregnant women and adolescents.
3. **Water, sanitation and hygiene:** Improved and equitable use of safe drinking water, sanitation and healthy environments, and improved hygiene practices.
4. **Nutrition:** Improved and equitable use of nutritional support and improved nutrition and care practices.
5. **Education:** Improved learning outcomes and equitable and inclusive education.
6. **Child protection:** Improved and equitable prevention of and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect of children.
7. **Social inclusion:** Improved policy environment and systems for disadvantaged and excluded children, guided by improved knowledge and data.

Outcome level results

In preparation for the Strategic Plan, the situation of children and lessons learned in each outcome area was reviewed, including a detailed analysis of the underlying and structural causes of inequities as well as the main barriers and bottlenecks inhibiting progress for the future. Each outcome is associated with one or more specific rights, as well as contributes to the realization of rights for children overall.

The Strategic Plan enables the organization to achieve seven outcomes that represent institutional and behavioural changes to which UNICEF contributes in collaboration with national partners, civil society, the private sector and communities. The outcome results of Health, HIV and AIDS, Education, Nutrition, Water and Sanitation, Child Protection and Social Inclusion focus on a broad range of issues that influence child well-being, addressing

the rights of the most disadvantaged and excluded children as well as the needs of their families and communities. Collectively, the seven outcome results contribute to the realization of rights for the most disadvantaged children.

The Plan emphasizes the importance of identifying and addressing the barriers and bottlenecks that result in inequities between children in each national context. A key lesson learned, particularly important in the context of refocusing on equity, has been the importance of comprehensively and concurrently addressing context-specific barriers and bottlenecks that cause inequities between children. This integrated approach necessitates building on and further expanding partnerships at all levels.

Special attention is given to promoting “horizontal” integration - multi-sectoral and integrated approaches between the outcome areas to address relevant barriers and bottlenecks concurrently. For example, efforts to improve access to quality sanitation will directly impact results in nutrition, health and education. Support within sectoral outcomes will be complemented with stronger attention to strengthening multi-sectoral social protection and social safety nets. A comprehensive approach would also include improving access to information, participation and institutional mechanisms to claim rights for disadvantaged families and their children.

In addition, emphasis will be placed on ‘vertical’ integration by concurrently addressing relevant barriers at the policy level, ‘supply’ and ‘demand’ barriers and bottlenecks, and also strengthening the link between humanitarian and development-related support. This includes a better linkage between integrated community-based approaches, system strengthening and advocated for policy changes. Each outcome also reflects the combined result of development and humanitarian interventions.

Explicit attention to reaching the most disadvantaged and excluded groups, including gender-related discrimination, in each outcome will also be central to an integrated approach. The Plan promotes social protection as a cross-cutting strategy to address economic and social barriers that impede results, particularly in education, health, nutrition and HIV.

Output level results

Each outcome is supported by outputs that address issues of supply of services and commodities; supporting demand from and empowerment of children and families, and supporting the creation of an enabling policy and legislative environment. All outcomes also have specific outputs relating to humanitarian action and development, human rights and gender equality and the related result from the Global and Regional Programme.

Outputs in each outcome area, while following a common conceptual structure, are necessarily distinct depending on UNICEF’s comparative advantage and the priority needs in each outcome area. The Outputs will be associated with UNICEF’s work and will include select qualitative and quantitative indicators that can be aggregated from country level to global level and reported in UNICEF performance reports.

By following a common structure, however, integration in the work between outcomes is promoted, and potential synergies can be realized. Outputs are supported by measurable indicators that will enable more effective programme implementation and timely course corrections in plans and strategies at all levels. The Plan also includes indicators to track and report progress on gender equality the reduction of inequity, as well as specific targets for humanitarian action aligned to internationally accepted standards and UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action. UNICEF will be increasing its attention to climate change, linking this effort to ongoing work to build resilience to shocks and stresses. UNICEF will also invest in conflict analysis and understand the root causes of fragility so that its programmes respond to those. As such, attention to resilience is also included across the seven outcomes, in humanitarian action as well as through risk informed development programming.

Specifically, the analysis of key determinants of child rights and of barriers and bottlenecks to achieve results for children led to the following six common dimensions of programming, which need to be tackled in order to achieve progress for children and adolescents in the coming years. Those dimensions were built into the architecture of the plan by following common structure of outputs within each outcome.

1. **Knowledge, behaviour change and participation** - *Enhanced support for children, families and communities to promote knowledge, behaviour change, demand for services and opportunities for participation* - The plan aims to strengthen social demand by reducing barriers and bottlenecks for the utilization of social services, by promoting social norms and social behaviours that are supportive for the survival, development and protection of children and by fostering monitoring as well as community and child participation to ensure that services are relevant for disadvantaged and excluded populations and duty bearers are held accountable to their commitments.
2. **Availability and access to services** - *Increased national capacity to ensure availability of and access to services and to strengthen systems* -An important aim of the plan is to expand social and protection services to the most disadvantaged and excluded women and children by scaling-up high-impact measures with a stronger focus on the reduction of neo-natal mortality; stunting; improved sanitation; quality of education; and addressing violence against children as well as on social protection. Supporting the adaptation of services to strengthen resilience in the context of shocks and stress will also be a priority. Furthermore, there is a need for well-coordinated multi-sectoral interventions, recognising the fact that the capabilities and vulnerabilities of the child are interconnected.
3. **National policies, laws and budgets** - *Strengthened political commitment and national capacity to legislate, plan and budget for children* - In order to foster an enabling environment for children, the strategic plan supports UNICEF's technical assistance and advocacy for legal reforms, evidence-based policies and child friendly budgets at national and subnational levels. The plan places a particular focus on costed, sector implementation plans, and enhanced social protection systems,

mechanisms of data collection, monitoring and accountability that are equity-focussed.

4. **Humanitarian response** - *Increased country capacity and delivery of services to protect and provide for children in humanitarian settings* - The plan encompasses the interventions UNICEF is committed to carry out in support of national efforts around preparedness for response, response and early recovery, to save lives and protect rights as defined in the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) and consistent with internationally accepted standards. Accordingly, specific humanitarian indicators are defined under all outcomes with a focus on life-saving interventions as well as on education, child protection, early childhood and humanitarian coordination. These actions will be carried out in a manner that reduces vulnerability and builds resilience systematically where possible. In the coming four years, UNICEF will also continue to build on recent improvements in systems that support humanitarian action, with the overall aim to achieve faster scaling-up of the response in major emergencies including early identification of priorities and strategies, rapid deployment of qualified staff and clear accountabilities for the response. It will integrate preparedness into development planning and implementation. In situations of civil unrest or armed conflict, UNICEF will support responses that are consistent with humanitarian principles.
5. **Gender equality and rights** - *Increased capacity of governments and partners, as duty-bearers, to identify and respond to specific challenges related to the protection and promotion of the rights of children and gender equality* -In order to translate the foundational principles of human rights and gender equality into programmable and measurable action, the strategic plan contains a number of outputs that increase the capacity of governments and partners to address human rights and gender through management information systems with disaggregated data, gender-sensitive community participation and specific policies and programmes addressing the rights of girls and women, ethnic minority children and children with disabilities.
6. **Global and regional results** - *Enhanced enabling environment at global and regional levels to realize child rights* -The achievement of outcomes and impact at country level can usually benefit from regional and global public goods and may even depend on supra-national action. For each outcome, UNICEF has identified priority regional and global outputs that will contribute to the desired change process. These include contributions to relevant global and regional human rights, legal and policy frameworks and processes; inter-country or cross-border programming; advancement of the relevant international evidence base through research, innovation, and strengthening of guidance and tools; and data analysis and reporting.

3. Programme Guidance on each Outcome

Drawing on the findings of its End of Cycle Review (2012), UNICEF has identified specific strategic directions within each of its proposed outcome areas, building on UNICEF's comparative advantage to achieve results. The strategies outlined below should be read in

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conjunction with the outputs, outcomes and indicators outlined in Annex 1 of the Strategic Plan (E/ICEF/2013/21/Add.1).

The general elements of UNICEF's Theory of Change were translated in different ways into the outcomes and outputs of the Strategic Plan, taking into account the global priorities and technical specificities of each technical sector.

Outcome 1: Health

Improved and equitable use of high-impact maternal, newborn and child health interventions from pregnancy to adolescence and promotion of healthy behaviours.

As the main causes of under-five mortality are being more effectively addressed improving the likelihood of survival, UNICEF is refocusing efforts to build on this positive momentum by addressing the growing disparities within and between countries. UNICEF will also begin to increase its attention to health outcomes for older children, including adolescents.

To do so UNICEF will be 1) providing support for an equitable delivery of interventions, 2) increasing access to life saving and preventive interventions, especially by the most disadvantaged, 3) improving care giver knowledge of high impact interventions, 4) strengthening health systems, 5) improving the quality and use of data for making decisions, and 6) ensuring better integration of health services with other services and interventions being provided to mothers and children.

Strategic interventions will focus on supply, demand and enabling environment to ensure the equitable delivery of high impact health interventions. In particular, the mode of delivery of interventions, e.g. facility-based, community-based, campaigns, will be adapted to the country and local context to better target integrated interventions to those most in need. Existing programmes will be scaled up to broaden their reach to include as a priority the disadvantaged and unreached.

Building on the leveraging power of UNICEF's presence in most countries, UNICEF will continue to use the strength of the equity refocus and the historic opportunity provided by the initiative 'A Promise Renewed' and other global partnerships (including for example, the Roll back Malaria, the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Pneumonia and Diarrhoea) to enhance the supply of, and access to, life-saving and preventive health services for all children and women.

A key area of expansion to improve neonatal, infant, child and maternal health will be to scale-up interventions that enhance the knowledge of caregivers about the benefits of key services, support behaviour change and safe practices, and empower communities as partners.

Provided with adequate information, caregivers hold critical decision-making roles that can ensure children receive life-saving vaccines and that mothers seek and receive preventative

and curative care during and after pregnancy. This will require community level interventions with strong links to the health system.

Through its leadership role within global partnership frameworks including the H4+ and the UN Commission on Life Saving Commodities, UNICEF will continue to influence the global health agenda and coordinate the global response. UNICEF will also continue to work with national governments and local partners to guarantee the availability of, and access to, interventions, essential evidence-based interventions, commodities and skilled personnel to provide the continuum of care for newborns, infants, children and their mothers that families demand. The efficacy of health systems is often underpinned by an enabling environment, particularly strong national policies and legislation, which will continue as an area of focus.

In humanitarian situations, UNICEF also plays a vital role in strengthening the capacity of countries and partners to reduce excess mortality from disasters from all types of hazards by supporting rapid and predictable evidence-based priority health interventions. UNICEF complements state capacity to provide health services through community-driven and community-based initiatives to increase outreach and access while continuing to advocate for government commitment and capacity development. UNICEF works with partners to provide vaccination against measles and other communicable disease to affected children, along with de-worming, vitamin A supplements, and prevent malaria through treated bednets and environmental education. Within the health cluster, UNICEF is a key actor in supporting coordination of the health sector's humanitarian response.

UNICEF will work with government partners, academic institutions, civil society and practitioners to collect and analyze data that inform and strengthen the administration of budgets, laws and policies that identify and respond to key human rights and gender dimensions of maternal and neonatal and child health. This includes strengthening health management information systems and improving district level data collection and use to better target policies and interventions, with a particular aim of reducing inequities.

The Plan also advocates for stronger integration across sectors to strengthen equity and resilience, including those related to health, nutrition, water and sanitation and HIV and AIDS. UNICEF will work with countries to identify synergies, for example enhancing the capacity of local health workers to strengthen achievements across all related sectors.

UNICEF at the country level will work with other UN agencies including WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS, WFP to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined based on comparative advantage of each institution for ensuring synergies in supporting national actors and institutions to reach the most disadvantaged children and communities.

Outcome 2: HIV and AIDS

<p><i>Improved and equitable use of proven HIV prevention and treatment interventions, by children, pregnant women and adolescents.</i></p>
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Recognizing the strong international commitments that are propelling the world to “get to zero” - zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths, UNICEF will support national partners to bolster continuing political commitment, enact policies, budgets and legislation that enable and sustain progress, and focus efforts on achieving results for the most disadvantaged and excluded communities. UNICEF will continue its strong commitment to HIV and AIDS programming across both decades of a child’s life, both building on the positive momentum in prevention of mother to child transmission and renewing and improving prevention and treatment approaches for adolescents.

To achieve the goal of elimination of new HIV infections among children and keep mothers and children living with HIV alive and well, UNICEF will support to better integrate HIV services with other health and social services aimed at increasing child survival, growth and development.

As a co-leader of the Interagency Task Teams on the Prevention and Treatment of HIV in Pregnant Women, Mothers and their Children and on HIV in Young People, and as part of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNICEF has a significant leadership role to maximize coherence, coordination and impact of the broader United Nations response to HIV and AIDS.

To address HIV prevention, treatment, care and support among children in the second decade of life – the adolescent years - UNICEF will work with partners to help countries scale-up high impact HIV interventions that prevent transmission, illness and death. Emphasis will be placed on working across sectors for results that contribute to healthy behaviours and address root causes of vulnerability, including efforts towards gender equality, protection of the rights of excluded adolescent populations that are highly affected by HIV, and comprehensive sexuality education. To promote more effective programming, UNICEF will focus on improving data collection and analysis on HIV among adolescents.

In programming across both decades of a child’s life, emphasis will be placed on promoting innovative technologies and approaches that empower children to be active participants in shaping HIV programming. The Plan will also strengthen child and social protection to ensure access to essential service delivery systems, maximize the benefit of HIV treatment and other high impact interventions, and mitigate the social and economic impact of AIDS on children and their families.

In humanitarian situations, UNICEF works with partners so that children, young people and women access prevention, care and treatment, and existing services are continued. It does so through specific HIV and AIDS programmes, as well as by working across sectors.

Outcome 3: Water, sanitation and hygiene

Improved and equitable use of safe drinking water, sanitation and healthy environments, and improved hygiene practices .

UNICEF's programming on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) contributes to its overall mandate to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. Interventions on WASH help the poorest and most disadvantaged people achieve this basic right, but also makes significant contributions to reducing preventable child deaths, reducing under-nutrition, helping girls and boys to achieve their right to education, to reduce the burden on women and girls of fetching water and to protect women and girls from violence and abuse associated with open defaecation.

While access to water has increased over the past decade, the importance of ensuring the safety and quality of water remains as vital as ever. Likewise, good and consistent use of hygiene practices and sanitation facilities are critical linchpins in combating a number of deprivations that adversely impact children and their families. Yet, sanitation remains one of the most off-track MDG targets.

The overall vision of UNICEF's WASH programming is to achieve a world in which no one practises open defaecation, and everyone has safe drinking water, improved sanitation and hygiene at home. All schools have equitable and sustainable access to water, sanitation, and hygiene.

UNICEF's programming on water, sanitation and hygiene will focus on a number of overarching elements that are necessary conditions for achieving results: improving the enabling environment and political commitment for the delivery of results at scale; achieving behaviour change and improving the demand for WASH services and outcomes; and building national capacity to ensure the delivery of sustainable services to the poorest and marginalised women and children. Programme priorities include increasing sustainable access to safe drinking water; eliminating open defaecation and improving access to adequate sanitation; increasing hand-washing and good hygiene practices; providing drinking water, sanitation (separate toilets for girls and boys) and hand-washing facilities in schools; and increasing preparedness to respond to humanitarian situations.

The Plan capitalizes on UNICEF's presence before, during and after emergencies to broaden the number of children and families with access to quality drinking water during humanitarian crises. The Plan focuses on sustaining results and outcomes in water and sanitation and hygiene; quality and quantity of drinking water; and the elimination of open defaecation. WASH interventions in humanitarian situations further support other sectors that would otherwise face significant challenges in service delivery, including health and nutrition facilities and protective spaces, including schools. Specifically UNICEF will support access to clean water and sanitation, accompanied by hygiene education. Building on its internal knowledge, long-term relationships with counterparts/government and wide partner base, UNICEF is also the designated global WASH cluster lead agency and in most cases leads at the country level also. Additionally, the Plan will introduce new areas of work related to climate change and disasters and its impact on risk management and national strategies, including for water, sanitation and hygiene plans. These are key contributions to resilience building.

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UNICEF will play a leadership role in convening decision-makers to achieve transformational change. UNICEF will continue to support the Sanitation and Water for All partnership as a means to drive accountability for results on the ground. UNICEF will work with the World Health Organization to monitor global progress against the MDG targets.

Outcome 4: Nutrition

Improved and equitable use of nutritional support and improved nutrition and care practices.

New to the Strategic Plan is a separate outcome area focused exclusively on nutrition. While many countries have met or are close to meeting the MDG target on underweight, a concerted effort must now be made to reduce stunting where progress has been slow and the burden remains high. UNICEF seeks to better understand the factors that underlie the disparities in nutritional status, and to work with partners to design and introduce new approaches that ensure nutrition services reach the children and mothers who need them, focusing on UNICEF's comparative advantage in addressing capacity gaps in the nutrition sector.

In recognition of the key role nutrition plays in early childhood development, and subsequently in the long-term health and education of individuals and communities, a more comprehensive approach to nutrition will be pursued, inclusive of a strong focus on stunting. Core programming functions will continue, including: the delivery of vitamin supplements, iodized salt and micro-nutrient supplementation; the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding and support of community based management of malnutrition systems. Special focus will be on strengthening support to families to apply good nutrition and care practices, and to seek comprehensive nutrition services. By focusing on early childhood, the programme will address the growing capacities of the children during critical windows of development. These windows allow for the impact of adequate nutrition on areas of brain development and function that occur in the first 1,000 days.

The Plan will also continue to address the unfinished business of the scale up and integration of the management of severe acute malnutrition (SAM). A major limitation so far has been the low effective coverage of essential interventions and of preventive programmes on SAM.

UNICEF will expand efforts to support governments to deliver essential supplies and services, scale up essential interventions, and develop multi-sectoral plans and budgets that include clear targets on reducing under-nutrition, particularly for the most vulnerable groups. Support will also be provided to increase country capacity to ensure the protection of nutritional status of children in humanitarian situations. Through the delivery of humanitarian programmes as well as coordination of the global nutrition cluster, UNICEF supports governments and partners in the delivery of integrated packages of essential nutrition services, as well as the development and/or management of efficient information systems, including data analysis, to support the development of evidence-based and context-specific

policies and strategies in emergencies. Community-based interventions, such as the management of acute malnutrition, are known to reach more children, enabling them to receive earlier treatment and prevent their situation from deteriorating. They are also critical for early detection and building the resilience of children, families and communities.

Global commitments related to child survival and decreases in stunting will be met through dynamic partnerships, including public-private, multilateral engagement and South-South and triangular cooperation. Disaggregated data and strengthening of information systems at national, regional and global levels to include good quality nutrition data will be promoted to track progress on key human rights and report on reaching the most vulnerable and to reach communities.

Outcome 5: Education

Improved learning outcomes and equitable and inclusive education.

Being poor, being a girl, living in a rural area, having an uneducated mother, having a disability, or belonging to a particular group, caste or ethnicity substantially reduces the chance of going to school or staying in school. UNICEF will focus on equity and learning in education, from early childhood education to lower secondary education (including non-formal and second chance education). A special focus will be on strengthening support to ensure that disadvantaged and excluded children are empowered and able to begin school and attend school regularly.

Whilst the case for investing in education is strong, evidence suggests that investing early, keeping girls in school for longer, and focusing on learning outcomes (as opposed to years in school) have particularly strong dividends for the health, wealth and stability of societies. Helping children to realize their right to education also increases the likelihood that future generations will go to school.

Because learning begins at birth, by focusing on early learning outcomes, UNICEF supported programmes will put in place a strong start for children in primary school and the potential for them to stay in school. In particular for the girl child, attention to learning opportunities early in life will ensure a greater probability that she will stay in school and succeed.

UNICEF will work closely in partnership with others active in the field of education, at global and country level, for example, the Global Partnership for Education, the UN Girls' Education Initiative (which UNICEF hosts), UNESCO and the Secretary General's Global Education First Initiative to strengthen national capacity and political commitment to legislate, plan and budget for improved access to inclusive education.

Under the Plan, UNICEF work will include standard setting, policy development, direct delivery of supplies and services, and working with communities to improve accountability for education.

Delivery of education services in humanitarian situations provides physical, psychosocial and cognitive protection which can be life-saving and life sustaining in humanitarian situations. This will be combined with increased advocacy for emergency education funding, as well as coordination of response as co-lead of the education cluster with Save the Children so that education is systematically included in inter-agency and particularly national emergency preparedness and response planning, policies and budgets.

UNICEF will also seek to strengthen understanding and best practice in education and peace-building as well as to support countries in assessing and managing all risks (e.g. climate, disaster, conflict). UNICEF support at country level will underscore the importance of strengthening systems to provide multiple and alternative pathways to accessing and completing education for disadvantaged and marginalized children – with a focus on measureable learning outcomes.

Improved monitoring of learning outcomes will be central to UNICEF’s support combined with innovative programmes and partnerships with the potential to rapidly improve education outcomes for the most marginalized children, such as multi-lingual education, right age enrolment, pedagogy and technology. The Plan will also support the improvement of data and monitoring systems, the generation of knowledge and data on education disparity, and the introduction of innovative analytical tools - such as the Simulations for Equity in Education model - to reinforce government capacity to monitor and improve access to and quality of education for all.

Outcome 6: Child protection

Improved and equitable prevention of and response to violence, abuse and exploitation of children.

UNICEF is the only United Nations agency with a mandate that covers the full breadth of child protection. It is uniquely placed to leverage this global leadership role to ensure child protection issues receive the attention, investment, and actions needed for sustainable change. The Child Protection Sector is also at a crucial point where it is increasingly able to put key issues relating to child protection on the legal, policy and finance agendas of partner governments.

Preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse is essential to ensuring children’s rights to survival, development and well-being. In recent years, child protection has risen even higher on the UNICEF agenda and that of the international community. There is broad recognition that these are universal issues and, despite the growing number of countries reaching middle-income status, technical support and resource requirements for child protection are not diminishing.

Given that most of the world’s poor now live in middle-income countries, this has profound implications for the sector. Further, with the increasing numbers of children crossing national

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boundaries, protection concerns are also becoming a cross-border issue, including between high-income and UNICEF programme countries. In addition, macro-level developments, including climate change, migration, urbanization, fuel and financial crises, demographic shifts within and across countries and regions, the rapid rise in information and communications technologies, and the changing nature of warfare and violence, have increased the cohorts of children in need of protection and the number of caregivers who require support.

The Strategic Plan capitalizes on the gains made thus far, while taking into account recent developments and learning within and beyond the sector. It continues to emphasize strengthening of child protection systems and supporting social change for improved protection of all children from violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect, in line with the 2008 Child Protection Strategy. However, programming approaches will more concertedly take into account the interplay between child protection systems and social norms and the varying typologies of child protection systems across country contexts. Efforts will also focus on preventing violence, exploitation and abuse, including through strengthening the protective capacities of families and communities. Recognizing that child protection issues span across care, justice and civil registration domains, the Plan will build on gains made from inter-sectoral approaches and greater emphasis will be placed on the role of allied systems, such as health and education in preventing and responding to child protection concerns.

Evidence has shown that the root causes of violence, including gender discrimination and harmful social norms, can be addressed through a human rights-based approach that is grounded in local realities, is culturally and gender-sensitive, supports children of all ages, and engages a wide range of stakeholders. This approach will be more consistently applied to address various forms of violence, exploitation and abuse, and will be integrated with system strengthening efforts. Special attention will be given to strengthening national capacity and political commitment to develop budgets, laws and policies that improve the equitable prevention and response to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. This includes strengthening Child Protection systems to increase resilience to shocks and stress including conflict and disasters.

Keeping children and families safe is one of UNICEF's core aims during emergencies and in their aftermath. Emergency preparedness and response efforts will contribute to the strengthening of child protection systems, and vice versa. UNICEF will maintain its leadership role of the child protection and gender-based violence areas of responsibility within the protection cluster. In these positions, UNICEF is instrumental in promoting coordination via a common strategic platform, building related capacities, and raising the profile within the humanitarian and donor community of child protection concerns, including for adolescents and gender based violence (GBV) against children and women. In countries affected by armed conflict, UNICEF plays a key role in the monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children and ensures linkages between this and programmes that prevent violations and/or provide assistance to victims, including the release and reintegration of children associated with armed groups and armed forces.

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Moving forward, greater investment will be made in improving monitoring, evaluation and research to better inform policy and programming. This will be done in partnership with other development agencies, government bodies, foundations, United Nations agencies and academics. Evidence has shown that although there are no “quick fixes” for child protection issues, concrete progress can be achieved with the involvement of a diverse range of partners at all levels, and evidence-based actions that reinforce both prevention and response.

Outcome 7: Social inclusion

***Improved policy environment and systems for disadvantaged and excluded children,
guided by improved knowledge and data.***

Promoting greater equity will guide all aspects of UNICEF’s policy and advocacy work with governments, policy-makers, civil society and international organizations. All outcomes in the Strategic Plan focus on addressing barriers and bottlenecks for the disadvantaged and excluded children. To complement and enable the positive changes in the other, predominantly sectoral outcomes, this outcome area will focus on both the reduction of multi-dimensional poverty affecting children and the closely linked issue of promoting an enabling policy environment for social inclusion, including in humanitarian contexts.

The first building block in promoting social inclusion and reducing multidimensional poverty is to identify those children who are most marginalized and disadvantaged, which is why UNICEF emphasizes the collection of relevant data and evidence on children and the development of capacity to enable evidence-based planning and programming. Countries will be supported to strengthen national and decentralized planning and monitoring systems that produce and use disaggregated data to address barriers and bottlenecks for the most disadvantaged children. On-going management information systems will be supported to provide disaggregated data (by sex, geography (including urban, rural and urban slums), disabilities and other as appropriate) that allow identification of barriers and bottlenecks that inhibit realization of the rights of disadvantaged children. Processes will also be supported to promote the meaningful participation of children and adolescents in processes that relate to them, in particular social protection systems but also in conflict and risk analysis.

A central focus of this outcome is to support capacity building and promote greater emphasis on enforceable legislation and policies to combat multi-dimensional child poverty. These efforts will include supporting governments to develop child-friendly budgets, and undertake policy review or reform processes that explicitly address stigma and discrimination and robust monitoring and evaluation. Efforts will also focus on strengthening national and sub-national systems, such as the capacity for risk informed planning, so that communities are able to prioritize interventions that address the drivers of vulnerability and help build resilience to a range of external shocks, as well as improve humanitarian response.

UNICEF will work with partners to bolster social protection systems that address not only income poverty and economic shocks, but also social vulnerability, including particular attention to the inter-relationship between exclusion and poverty. The Plan will promote child sensitive social protection systems that mitigate the effects of poverty on families, strengthen families in their child care role, and enhance access to basic services for the poorest and most marginalized. Recent efforts to provide social protection through national systems contribute to increased access to services, mitigate the impacts of predictable shocks and build resilience at the community level. They are important bridging tools between humanitarian response and risk-informed development programming.

4. Linking humanitarian action and development programming

UNICEF Country Offices will build resilience and reduce vulnerability by supporting the capacities of local systems and structures to address these systematically. The linkages between humanitarian and development interventions will happen in many ways, articulated through risk informed country programmes of cooperation and adapted to the country context. This may involve leveraging the influx of funding for humanitarian response to trigger more structural and systemic changes to address existing gaps in the situation of children.

For example, in Ethiopia, response to drought served as the entry point to build a national system for the community management of malnutrition, pneumonia and malaria that proved effective in reducing vulnerability to the consequences of food insecurity over time. In Haiti, UNICEF developed a three-pronged approach to emergency response in education which included setting-up emergency temporary schools, school rehabilitation /construction, and support defining a national strategy for universal access to education. In many Tsunami-affected countries in Asia, humanitarian action was the entry point to establish child protection norms and systems.

UNICEF will also use investments through regular country programmes to strengthen national capacities for response to future emergencies. Some recent examples of this have included work done in Uganda to strengthen the Prime Minister's Office disaster response capacity, as well as the work done in Niger between periods of cyclical drought to build nutritional surveillance systems. In many instances, this will require working with local contractors to help stimulate the recovery of the local economy as was the case in Indonesia, Madagascar and the Maldives post-disaster reconstruction. In all cases, UNICEF will ensure that development programmes are not halted or supplanted by humanitarian response, but rather that integration occurs in response to national priorities and needs.

5. Promoting girl's and women's empowerment and gender equality

As noted above, attention to girls' and women's empowerment and gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the Plan. A separate, more detailed Gender Strategy and Action Plan is under preparation.

6. The Global and Regional Programme

The GRP outputs in each of the seven Outcomes is aimed at improved enabling environment for children at the global and regional level, thus contributing to realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged. This would include greater availability and use of data, knowledge and evidence on children; enhanced capacity and commitment of all relevant duty-bearers to accelerate progress and foster rights-based and equitable results for children; and stronger and more effective partnerships at these two levels.

The Global and Regional Programme (GRP) contributes to results for children by leveraging UNICEF's comparative advantage at these levels. UNICEF's strategic engagement with global and regional development policy and practice and recognized technical capacity will be leveraged for results. The normative mandate of UNICEF, founded on the Convention of the Rights of the Child, will be the basis for engagement with duty-bearers at the global and regional level to identify and collectively overcome barriers to the realization of rights of every child. The global and regional commitments to children, often with measurable targets, will be leveraged to promote greater accountability for results at these levels. The GRP also provides a vehicle for UNICEF to support multi-country and cross-border initiatives, which will complement the country-specific results outlined in each country programme of cooperation.

Each outcome in the Strategic Plan includes an output and related indicators which reflects the contribution of the GRP to the outcome.

The implementation strategies outlined in the strategic plan will be tailored as follows in order to realize the results of the GRP:

- Capacity development. Support will be provided to strengthen the capacity of governments, development organizations and civil society partners to enhance global and regional governance systems. Providing high caliber expertise in technical sectors related to children will be a key contribution of the organization. Support will be provided by the programme to promote further analysis and dissemination of high-quality and internationally comparable data, disaggregated to the extent possible to enhance the equity-focused design. Building knowledge and understanding and to support development approaches and cost-effective programming practices that drive forward the realization of children's rights with equity in all its dimensions, including gender, disability, location and ethnic or indigenous minority status, will central to this strategy. In humanitarian action, this entails working with national partners and international agencies to jointly apply a systemic approach for strengthening of capabilities of individuals, organizations and societies – on national, district and

community level – toward tangible humanitarian outcomes for children. A tenet of resilience, capacity development not only makes humanitarian response more effective but contributes to disaster risk reduction, peace-building and recovery.

- Evidence generation and evidence-based policy dialogue and advocacy. Putting children at the centre of relevant global and regional structures, systems and policies will be a priority for the GRP. This will be based on sharing of insights and evidence and data-driven advocacy to influence partners at global level that contribute to the promotion of equity. Evidence generated between countries and across regions, linked to the Strategic Plan's seven outcome areas, will be used to influence global policy. Policy dialogue and advocacy will include increased focus on promoting public awareness and support for child rights at the highest level associated with regional and global processes and dialogue. Communication will strategically position and profile UNICEF knowledge leadership on children's issues and will continue to manage, monitor, promote and protect the UNICEF brand. Increasing the availability of credible, reliable and useful global evaluation evidence through joint evaluations will help to generate evidence and share knowledge at the global and regional level. UNICEF will support the development of research based tools for equity analysis, and research carried out in partnership with other UNICEF units and academic institutions, particularly in programme countries. In humanitarian action and programming to strengthen resilience to shocks, UNICEF will continue to advocate for child rights and for interventions that aim to achieve results for children. UNICEF is stepping up its investments in knowledge management for humanitarian action, in order to ensure that lessons are captured and rapidly applied for systemic and organizational improvements, and that best practices are replicated, and recurrent bottlenecks overcome.
- Partnerships. Strategic partnerships will be expanded at the global and regional level, with particular emphasis on catalyzing and supporting social movements that call for the fulfillment of child rights. Leveraging developments in technology and social media will be central to this strategy in order to mobilize critical mass of people, organizations, the private sector and governments to transform societies for children. Global programme partnerships such as Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed and Scaling Up Nutrition will continue to be a cornerstone of UNICEF programmatic engagement, advocacy and leveraging of funds. Drawing on lessons including from the humanitarian crises in the Horn and Sahel, partnership will be central strategy to strengthening the resilience of communities and systems to stresses and shocks. UNICEF's partnerships in humanitarian action seek to catalyze, mobilize and advocate; respond and deliver aid; coordinate, set norms and standards; increase reach and coverage; promote monitoring and reporting; and improve intellectual exchange and knowledge.
- South-South and triangular cooperation. This will be a key implementation strategy for the GRP. Global and regional intergovernmental structures will be leveraged to promote the sharing of lessons learned and best practices, with particular emphasis on examples of knowledge being translated into action to overcome barriers and

bottlenecks for disadvantaged children. Information and communication technologies will be leveraged to enable cost-effective, efficient and broad-based interaction and to promote cooperation. Strengthening systems and tools to use and transfer tacit knowledge at these levels will be central to moving forward. UNICEF also aims to expand the scope of its existing humanitarian partnerships, brokering new initiatives with organizations in the global south.

- Identification and promotion of innovation. UNICEF will work with innovators at all levels as a means of addressing long-standing barriers and bottlenecks and accelerate the advancement of the rights of children, especially those who are most disadvantaged. UNICEF will help to identify the most promising innovations for application in different contexts, supporting partners to adopt, adapt and scale up the relevant approaches. This is especially critical in humanitarian situations, where innovation can enable a more effective anticipation of threats and empower UNICEF with cutting-edge standards, technology and tools to facilitate its work and enable improved humanitarian action.
- Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages. Integrated programming for children at different stages of the life cycle or that address inter-sectoral issues will be promoted at the global and regional level. Those lessons and models will be shared widely, as many UNICEF partners strive to increase synergies and coordination across government ministries and structures. Recent experience particularly in situations of high vulnerability and chronic crisis has highlighted the opportunities for integrated planning across all sectors, both for reducing risk and for effective humanitarian response, based on a comprehensive assessment of the needs of children and families.

At the **global level**, the Organization will promote collaborative approaches within and across technical programme fields in support of the organizational priorities. Support will be provided at the global level for UNICEF advocacy and sector-wide action; influence global technical and policy dialogue; scale up proven, equity-focused interventions; monitor and analyse programme performance and knowledge exchange; and leverage resources to achieve results for children. The organisation will promote the equity agenda and support efforts to refocus UNICEF-supported programmes, and promote partnerships and policies that focus on the most disadvantaged children in development and humanitarian contexts. It will work across sectors and with partners to identify innovative delivery modes for integrated packages of cost-effective, evidence-based interventions and to expedite the scale-up of equity-focused interventions. In order to effectively respond to humanitarian crises, support will be provided to strengthen early warning, emergency preparedness and response, peace-building, humanitarian policy and partnerships. There will be an increased focus on gender mainstreaming, knowledge management and capacity development while consistently supporting the security of staff and the safe delivery of programmes and business continuity management, including preparedness, management of risk, crisis response and business recovery.

At the **regional level**, offices will contribute to the delivery of results of this programme, consistent with their particular roles and accountabilities. UNICEF's seven Regional Offices contribute to the global and regional programme by further tailoring the above implementation strategies so that the work of the organization is applicable and effective in each regional context. This will include working intensively with regional partners on child-related issues. Support will be provided to enhance regionally-based monitoring and information systems on children and to promote the use of evidence to accelerate progress. Regional specific issues will be analyzed and partnerships and broad based alliances will be further strengthened to overcome specific barriers and bottlenecks in each context. This will include supporting operational research, evaluations and knowledge management systems across the programme sectors and outcomes relevant to the region. Clearly prioritized agenda of engagement will be developed with regional bodies and structures, will be developed, with particular attention to the equity focus.

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