Executive Summary

In 2014 the Government and Parliament of Armenia adopted a number of legal acts critical for child rights realization with UNICEF playing an important advocacy and technical assistance role, including:

- Law on "Breastfeeding promotion and regulation of infant food marketing" – a high political commitment to address nutrition issue by comprehensive legal protection for breastfeeding and regulation of marketing practices of infant formulas. It was followed by 10 million Armenian Dram (US$21,000) state allocation for special nutrition interventions;
- The Amendments to the Law on General Education, directly stipulating long-awaited transformation of special schools for children with disabilities into Pedagogical Support Centres;
- The Law on Social Assistance to strengthen the mandate of case managers in child protection with new roles in adoption, guardianship and foster care;
- A decree on establishing the Territorial Development Fund to mitigate territorial inequalities in service provision and support community based services including those of social nature;
- A decree on establishing a gender equality national mechanism, signed by the Prime Minister following the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and “Beijing +20” recommendations.

In addition, the Government has embarked on a review of the legal framework and practice of domestic and inter-country adoption system, which will lead to the revision of child protection-related provisions in the Family Code; and approved a Policy Concept on Determining Disability based on the WHO International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health for Children and Youth.

A Child Needs survey conducted by the National Statistical Service (NSS) with UNICEF support was included in the Integrated Living Conditions Survey (ILCS) sample through a special module, as an attempt for further deliberation about a sustainable surveillance system providing data on inclusive education, foster care and breast feeding.

Poverty and extreme poverty among children remains a major challenge in the country. Whilst poverty rates have increased, the coverage of the family benefits remains at the same level.

The review of national statistical information and administrative data found that each ministry which deals with child-related issues has its own reporting and/or monitoring system. Despite the availability of a set of significant statistical databases, there is a concern that the overall level of fulfilment of children rights cannot be properly assessed by using these data due to limitations in quality and the lack of compatibility across different government agencies.

USAID and UNICEF signed a 2-year programme of about US$2 million and a 5-year programme of about US$3.5 million to assist the Government in promoting the nutrition agenda and child care reform in the country. UNICEF facilitated successful technical cooperation between the Governments of Armenia and Brazil to address nutrition challenges and promote
early childhood development in Armenia. An assessment of schools supported by UNICEF helped the Government to prioritize the schools located in most-at-risk areas for the School Seismic Safety Investment Plan currently being developed by Asian Development Bank. UNICEF supported activities of NGO networks for Child Protection and Environmental Education through institutional capacity building and joint resource mobilization.

### Humanitarian Assistance

According to the Government, since the start of the conflict in Syria, some 16,000 persons have sought protection in Armenia and of these 12,000 remain in the country. In 2014, the Government facilitated the admission of Syrian children to kindergarten, but the insufficient number of kindergartens limits the opportunity for displaced children to be enrolled in preschool education and care.

UNICEF continued to support school disaster preparedness and risk reduction in 11 communities prone to the different types of natural hazards, benefiting over 3,300 preschool- and school-aged children. This has supported awareness-raising and building a culture of safety and resilience among children.

UNICEF has also supported the Government to conduct a nationwide school safety assessment, particularly focusing on seismic risk. UNICEF and three ministries teamed up with a number of civil engineers and professionals to develop and implement a nationwide school safety methodology based on the analysis of prototypical school designs. The Government-endorsed methodology included an adjusted model of a three-tier process for seismic evaluation of existing buildings in regions of seismicity by the American Society of Civil Engineers. A detailed observation and instrumental assessment incorporated into the school safety assessment methodology identifies schools that are most at risk. Within this framework, a total of sixty most at-risk schools located in most at-risk areas have been assessed, and recommendations for retrofitting or reconstruction interventions were developed. The results and recommendations serve as a basis for the national programme of the school structural improvements that are being developed by the Asian Development Bank with the request from the Government.

In Armenia, social protection has become an increasingly important component of the response to poverty, vulnerability, marginalisation, and social exclusion at the individual, family, and community levels. Social protection systems play a key role in addressing the impact of disasters with focus on the most disadvantaged families and children. The spring frost covering all the country and follow up hail in Lori and Shirak regions damaged up to 100 per cent of the expected harvest in many communities and the Government faced the new challenge of addressing the social issues of the affected population. The cases clearly showed the need for sound social protection measures. UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Armenian Government to develop a policy enhancing the capacity of the social sector to respond the needs of the most vulnerable groups during emergencies.

The ceasefire violations and shooting across the Armenia-Azerbaijan borderline occurred throughout the year. In August, the violation was the most severe since the 1994 Ceasefire Agreement, which according to UNHCR forced about 100-200 civilians, 80 per cent of whom were women and children, including also some elderly and sick persons to leave their homes and seek temporary refuge in administrative centres and neighbouring villages. Cases of psychological issues of children in affected communities were reported in local media. Frequent monitoring of the situation of children in borderline areas are needed for decision making and possible interventions.
Equity Case Study

In 2014 the Armenia office invested in a study on children with disabilities. The aim of the study was to identify whether children with intellectual or physical disabilities were encountering the same level of discrimination and stigma. The study concluded that although there is tolerance towards the idea of integrating children with disabilities into society and placing them in regular schools, the degree of tolerance differs depending on the category of disability, intellectual or physical. It found that children with intellectual disabilities face higher levels of prejudice and negative attitudes than children with a physical disability.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

ADB - Asian Development Bank
AMD – Armenian Dram
C4D – Communication for Development
CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CMT – Country Management Team
DMCT - Disaster Management Country Team
DRR - Disaster Risk Reduction
DRR NP - Disaster Risk Reduction National Platform
EEN - Environmental Education Network
EU – European Union
GIZ – German Society for International Cooperation/Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HACT - Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HRDO – Human Rights Defender Office
ICF-CY – International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health for Children and Youth
ILCS - Integrated Living Conditions Survey
IMF – International Monetary Fund
MoES - Ministry of Education and Science
MoLSA – Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoH – Ministry of Health
MODA – Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis
MoTA – Ministry of Territorial Administration
MTAES - Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations
MTEF - Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MUD - Ministry of Urban Development
NGO – Non-governmental Organization
NSS - National Statistical Service
OCHA - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSCE - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PCM - Programme Coordination Meeting
TSP – Territorial Social Plans
RKLA – Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda
UN – United Nations
UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO - United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
WB - World Bank
WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature

**Capacity Development**

In partnership with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and local health authorities, UNICEF has promoted the idea of creating parental education system at community level. Based on the permanent contact of primary healthcare services with parents, the system combines parental education centres with strengthening community outreach system, thus increasing community demand for child health services. To ensure sustainability of parental education system, a set of operational standards were established and job descriptions of health providers were adjusted. As a result of UNICEF support provided to the MoH in public finance management, a separate budget line on nutrition with allocation of 10 million Armenian Drams (US$21,000) was approved for 2015, reflecting the priority given to nutrition issues in the country.

UNICEF supported building the capacities of health staff, preschool teachers and social workers on early identification of childhood disabilities and developmental delays in Tavush region. Year-round training and mentoring was conducted for pre-school teachers in 70 other communities where new preschools were established or expanded. To enhance the quality of inclusive education and empower parents of children with disabilities, UNICEF supported trainings in all inclusive schools in Yerevan on special education needs assessment based on International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health for Children and Youth (ICF-CY).

In the social protection sector, case managers from 19 Integrated Social Services enhanced their preparedness and response capacities and were introduced to mechanisms for protecting families, children, including those with disabilities in emergencies. As part of the four Territorial Social Plans addressing the needs of the most vulnerable migrants’ families and children, 10 municipal social projects were initiated through multilateral Memoranda of Understanding between the Ministries of Territorial Administration and Social Affairs, UNICEF and the beneficiaries. Case managers developed 531 individual social projects utilizing the case management methodology and with community participation.

To address issues faced by migrants’ families, around 190 medical staff were trained and 2000 members from migrants’ families learnt about prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases through training, interactive theatre plays and TV programmes. Four regional knowledge hubs were established in the target regions linking local communities with the diaspora and migrants’ representatives through individual contact and a web-based platform.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

Through UNICEF continuous advocacy efforts and cooperation with Parliament, the national law on “Breastfeeding Promotion and Regulation of Infant Food Marketing” was approved. The law ensures comprehensive legal protection for breastfeeding as well as regulating the marketing practices of infant formulas and other baby foods in the country. UNICEF continued to support the Government in deployment of monitoring and re-enforcing mechanisms through developing relevant sub-legislative acts and regulations. UNICEF’s policy dialogue and advocacy around a Flour Fortification Initiative resulted in re-discussion and final approval of the national law by the Cabinet of the Prime Minister and
submission to the Parliament. The initiative is a major milestone in addressing micronutrient deficiencies faced by the country as an emerging public health issue.

The major policy dialogue in child protection has led to the Government’s commitment to reform the child care system in the country, by enlarging the type and numbers of alternative community social services and cutting the number of residential care services for children. The 2013-2016 Child Rights Protection National Strategy and the Action Plan was also amended to reflect the child care reform efforts.

As a result of UNICEF advocacy, the Government revoked the strategy on disability determination based on working capacity which was inadequate both from methodological and conceptual/human rights perspective. They agreed to revise strategy using the disability determination based on ICF and in line with UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

An Amendment to the Law on General Education was adopted in 2014 by the Parliament. The Law stipulates that the majority of the special schools will be transformed to Pedagogical-psychological centres to support inclusive schools. Allocations to inclusive education for 2015 increased by nearly 50 per cent.

A school safety assessment provided the general picture of the safety status of schools in Armenia and specific information about the situation in most-at-risk 60 schools. The assessment report provided recommendations which informed the Government of Armenia’s plan on school retrofitting and replacement including costings.

Continued advocacy from UNICEF resulted in the adoption of the Law on Social Assistance, which creates sufficient legal ground for transitioning towards a full-fledged integrated social services system.

**Partnerships**

To mobilize support for increased investment in a set of nutrition interventions in Armenia, UNICEF has built a strong partnership with USAID and signed a cooperation agreement for a two-year program that will help improve the health and nutrition of Armenian children 0-5 years of age.

In 2014, UNICEF implemented and promoted child care reform in the country under the framework of the US Government and Armenian Government bilateral assistance agreement. Within the scope of this umbrella programme, two types of partnerships were formed with lead ministries and with leading child protection NGOs who are implementing partners of UNICEF.

UNICEF partnered with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) in an effort to improve the access of persons with disabilities to social services. The three agencies have received funding from UN Partnership on the rights of Persons with Disabilities to support the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) on the revision of disability determination based on the ICF.

UNICEF extended established partnerships to strengthen the functioning of multi-layer national coordination mechanisms for promotion of a comprehensive school safety, and the network on environmental education in Armenia to ensure safe and protective environment for children, including those with disabilities. These include partnerships with the Government (Ministry of
UNICEF continued close partnership relations with the World Bank in support of the reform of Integrated Social Services and extended the cooperation to other areas of social protection such as revision of social transfers. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) remains a key ally for UNICEF in social protection, strongly advocating for the increase, or at a minimum, maintaining the current social protection spending including social transfers for the poor. The cooperation with the European Union (EU) on the social consequences of labour migration was extended to broader advocacy to include social protection as an area for the EU 2014-2017 country programme. The social protection reform is considered as part of the broader public administration reform package to be supported by EU.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

UNICEF carried out a number of global communication initiatives in 2014, including the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC@25), IMAGINE, coordinated messaging on disability, social inclusion and breastfeeding that resulted in a significant increase in voice, reach and engagement via social and mass media. With the support of the UNICEF headquarters Innovation Unit, the office organized “Yerevan Activate Talks” (approximately 1500 views) and produced “Imagine Armenia” (over 52,000 views), both of which resulted in a high number of responses (over 9000 on Facebook) and media coverage (over 50 media articles).

In 2014, four topics were highlighted that resulted in engagement on behalf of children: the right to live in a family environment, breastfeeding and flour fortification, and social inclusion of children with disabilities.

UNICEF supported a number of advocacy events to promote the right of children to grow up in a family environment and encourage partnerships in this area, which resulted in increased media attention and reporting. Partnership and engagement were strengthened with the Child Protection Network, a wider community of CSO/NGOs, government, and donor organizations.

UNICEF launched a national campaign on social inclusion of children with disabilities in 2014. In six months, the campaign generated over 100 media articles (broadcast and online) about disability and social inclusion, fuelling increased coverage and highlighting success stories, creating public pressure and engagement to affect attitudes towards children with disabilities and their inclusion. Through the campaign, UNICEF forged alliances and deeper engagement with 15 leading local and international NGOs through 10 public events and coordinated messaging.

UNICEF pioneered engagement with the National Public Television of Armenia and with mother-activists to promote breastfeeding in the country, resulting in heightened media and public attention on the topic and promoting social engagement. UNICEF also partnered with the Ministry of Health to promote public and media understanding of the benefits of flour fortification and directly address negative attitudes and misconceptions. A roundtable discussion was
organized with 25 mass media representatives and three consumer protection NGOs, out of which a number of media articles were produced and programmes aired to promote awareness.

**South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation**

UNICEF facilitated an inter-governmental partnership between Armenia and Brazil for humanitarian actions on malnutrition in Armenia, which over the past two years, has evolved into a trilateral technical cooperation programme. As part of mutual efforts of the two governments and UNICEF to take this partnership forward, a high-level delegation of the Government of Armenia visited Brazil in 2014 to learn from their successful policies, programmes and practices on early childhood development, child health care, nutritional strategies and interventions, planning models and management structures. The learning experience provided important insights for the Armenian delegation as to the mechanisms and models that have proven successful for an intersectoral approach towards nutrition. As an initial step, the Government of Armenia is developing a plan of action aimed at strengthening the integration of social services by using nutrition interventions as entry points for inter-sectoral collaboration. While the horizontal cooperation develops further, the Government of Brazil expressed commitment to provide continuous technical support to Armenia in implementing policies and sustainable programmes to address nutrition challenges and promote early childhood development.

During 2014, UNICEF Myanmar and UNICEF Armenia agreed to initiate a staff exchange programme aimed at strengthening knowledge and skills of Myanmar office in promoting local social planning in Chin region, through a specific mission of the Local Planning officer and remote support modality. UNICEF Armenia also assisted UNICEF Tajikistan in the facilitation of a social protection strategy development workshop; with further plans to host a mission of Tajik officials to Armenia to familiarize them with the experience in transitioning towards integrated social protection systems.

UNICEF Inter-country support missions were organized to exchange experience and strengthen specific programmes on Communication for Development (C4D), social protection, education and operations.

**Identification Promotion of Innovation**

UNICEF promoted the use of the innovative Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA), a methodology that provides a comprehensive approach to the multidimensional aspects of child poverty and deprivation and places children rather than families at the analytical centre, to the National Statistical Service (NSS) of Armenia. The NSS expressed interest to use this methodology in 2015 as part of the Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia report released on annual basis, as this tool provides a more comprehensive picture of child wellbeing and recognizes that a child’s experience of deprivation is multi-faceted and interrelated, and that, overlapping deprivations are more likely to occur, and with greater adverse effects, in more socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Ultimately, the findings of this analysis can inform decision makers when drafting child-focused policies in Armenia and serve as basis to use investments and plan interventions in a more targeted manner. The World Bank showed interest to coordinate with UNICEF Armenia efforts in this regard, as in 2014 their experts conducted a multidimensional analysis to overall poverty in Armenia. World Bank representatives are planning of organizing a roundtable discussion in 2015 to foster discussion of important dimensions of deprivations in Armenia including child deprivations.

**Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages**
Child care reform in Armenia covers at least three sectors: child protection, education and social protection. Throughout the year, UNICEF made efforts to bring the three lead ministries (Social Affairs, Education and Territorial Administration) together to discuss how child needs are best addressed in a comprehensive way based on their best interest. The start of inter-sectoral cooperation among these agencies has now been established. The strengthening of disaster preparedness of social protection systems, particularly the Integrated Social Services has been initiated and advocated at national and regional levels. Specifically, child case management will be linked to wider case management practices already supported by UNICEF for several years. The child protection component will be added to the capacity building modules of case management, with child being viewed as part of the family’s social assessment.

To accelerate a child-cantered community nutrition approach, UNICEF initiated cross-sectoral collaboration between the Ministries of Health, Social Affairs and Agriculture, local authorities and small farmers. The core component of this initiative is promoting production and utilization of locally produced food items through community-based nutrition programmes and establishment of local green markets to make essential food items more accessible and affordable for the most vulnerable households.

Horizontal cooperation between services at the regional level is essential to tackle complex issues such as out-of-school children. With UNICEF support and in cooperation with technical guidance from line Ministries and the inputs of stakeholders, the Lori regional municipality developed Protocols of Cooperation to monitor and refer out-of-school children which were signed by health, education, social services, the policy, local community authorities and NGOs. The mechanism identified over 250 children who were out of school (the majority of them 6-7 year old late-starters) in Vanadzor city and Gugark subregions. The lessons learned from this testing will be used to develop a nationwide strategy on monitoring and referring children who are out of school or at the risk of dropout.

**Service Delivery**

UNICEF also supported the application of the Territorial Social Planning methodology within the broader context of the Integrated Social Services reform through development of Territorial Social Plans (TSPs) in Lori, Tavush, Shirak and Gegharqunik regions. The TSPs aim at addressing the gap between the assessed social needs of different categories of the population especially those most vulnerable (e.g. children, women, elderly, disabled, migrants, etc.) and the local resources available. Focusing on the results rather than performance, they allow to detect, analyse and address those social issues of the population which go beyond sectoral - health, education, social protection - boundaries and to set up community based services.

Within its EU programme on migration, UNICEF supported 10 community social projects addressing the needs of the most vulnerable families, particularly migrants’ families and children. This is governed by a MoU between the MoTA, MoLSA, UNICEF and the beneficiaries, showcasing an integrated partnership between all these institutions in solving social issues at the local level. These projects, implemented by local communities and NGOs, range from provision of home-care services and counselling, training of women who want to enter the workforce, establishment of day care centres and construction of a greenhouse adapted to the needs of people with disabilities, and are an example of how the communities can address social issues in a comprehensive manner, using proper planning and project management tools.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**
UNICEF continued to demonstrate commitment to follow-up on the Concluding Observations of the Committee of the Rights of the Child on Armenia's the combined third and fourth periodic report, particularly on the need to establish system of justice for children as well as family environment and alternative care.

UNICEF is also committed to support the Government in implementing the child care reform in Armenia which will lead to ensuring child rights to family environment through establishing alternative family and community based services for vulnerable children and families.

In 2014, UNICEF supported the Human Rights Defender Office (HDRO) to research and make recommendations for addressing the observation made by the Committee (CRC/C/ARM/CO/3-4, art. 16 and 17) related to establishing an individual complaint mechanism for children. UNICEF has committed to support the HRDO in strengthening the independent monitoring of child care residential institutions, as well as strengthening its child protection capacities.

UNICEF programming on disabilities was based on UNCPRD and in 2014 worked with UNDP, OHCHR and MoLSI to revise the disability determination in Armenia in accordance with the Convention. UNICEF promoted the rights of children with disabilities to inclusive education, health and rehabilitation through early identification and intervention programme. In line with the Convention, UNICEF launched an awareness raising campaign to create favourable social norms for the inclusion of children with disabilities into community life.

As part of Disaster Management Country Team (DMCT), UNICEF contributed to the Inter-Agency Contingency Plan development and endorsement. Following the DMCT recommendations, UNICEF took measures to ensure that a protection framework exists for response to emergency situations, and given the line responsibility for coordinating child protection issues.

**Gender Mainstreaming and Equality**

Pre-natal sex selection remains a key issue in gender equality affairs. As a result, the sex-at-birth ratio in Armenia has become skewed, with 114 boys born for every 100 girls in 2012, compared to the normal biological ratio of 102-106 boys to 100 girls. In 2014, UNICEF in partnership with Zurich University, initiated an in-depth analysis through vignette surveys to better understand and adequately address the issue of prenatal sex-selection.

In 2014, UNICEF supported reform of integrated social services which led to the adoption of the new Law on Social Assistance which assigns case managers a distinctive role in addressing the needs of children and their families, as well as issues such as gender-based violence.

Following the CEDAW and “Beijing +20” recommendations, in November 2014, the Prime Minister signed a decree on establishing a gender equality national mechanism.

UNICEF is also part of the Disaster Risk Reduction National Platform’s Gender Thematic Group to identify and advocate for gender specific issues during emergencies.

**Environmental Sustainability**

UNICEF has affirmed that environmental protection and sustainability should be part of any set of goals emerging post-2015 agenda as critical for child rights realization. UNICEF's approach in Armenia to environmental sustainability and implementation of waste and energy reduction...
aims at bringing about shifts to the mainstreaming of waste and energy reduction into national education policies, strategies and plans. A central component of UNICEF's strategy is the creation of child-friendly, healthier and safer educational establishments through the introduction and extension of waste and energy reduction implementation.

UNICEF initiated the establishment of an Environmental Education Network (EEN) in Armenia, as a platform for NGO's, relevant government agencies, international and bilateral organizations, teachers and environmental leaders to promote the environmental culture and sustainability. The EEN network was formally launched in October 2014, and has 19 members, four supporting organizations and two government focal points. The Network is carrying out an analysis of environmental education to inform the Government, civil society and school stakeholders about the gaps and recommended changes in the national legislation and education curriculum. UNICEF initiated a study to examine the environmental and climate change related factors affecting the safety and health of children and youth, especially those representing the most vulnerable groups, and making programmatic recommendations addressing the challenges facing children.

**Effective Leadership**

The Country Management Team (CMT) and Programme Coordination Meeting (PCM) continued to be used as a basic platform for monitoring office management and performance as well as programme implementation to improve efficiency and effectiveness throughout the reporting period.

During the year, 12 CMT meetings were held where all aspects of programme (feedback from programme meetings) and operations management as well as staff issues were addressed, and defined management and performance indicators were systematically reviewed. Decisions made were communicated to all staff. PCMs were held on a monthly basis and served as a forum to share programme developments in various sectors, monitor progress of rolling workplan implementation and budget expenditure as well as grant expiration, and timely submission of quality donor reports. As the year of 2014 was decisive in consideration of the development of a new country programme and management plan. The CMT and PCM were used for important discussions on the development of the new country programme and management plan. In addition, an office retreat was organized in December 2014 to discuss the new country programme. During the year, monitoring forms for programme and operations management indicators were revised in light of audit recommendations.

Weekly Monday morning meetings with all staff were continued for information sharing on priority activities of every staff to ensure better coordination, highlight important initiatives and events and discussions of emerging issues and challenges.

All nine audit recommendations were properly addressed and closed by the end of the year.

The UNICEF Business Continuity Plan and the Early Warning Early Action system were updated in time with engagement of all responsible staff, Additional efforts and enforcement mechanisms are required to ensure compliance with planned preparedness activities and proper reflection in respective work plans in 2015.

Enterprise Risk Management profile was updated in 2014 and the main risks identified for achieving expected results related to governance and accountability; safety and security in light of the uncertain economic environment; high exposure to natural disasters and the frozen
conflict situation. Mitigation measures include risk-informed planning; disaster-risk reduction as a mainstreamed programme component; maintenance of close relationships and partnerships with all levels of governance; establishment of permanent multi-sectoral commissions; diversification and leveraging of funding sources and the close monitoring of the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT).

A number of briefings were conducted for staff to introduce new guidelines and operational procedures discussed and endorsed by CMT. The Office placed a special emphasis on HACT implementation: financial management assessments of Implementing Partners (IPs) were conducted before presenting cases to the Programme Cooperation Agreement Review Committee; site visits were organized to conduct programmatic and financial spot checks.

**Financial Resources Management**

UNICEF Armenia management regularly monitored available balances and commitments of all funds during the year. Regular Resources, the Institutional Budget, and expiring Other Resources were fully spent by 31 December 2014. Budget control is to be strengthened in 2015 as per the annual budget being prepared in the beginning of the year, and implementation monitoring system to be established to overcome high volume expenditure in the two months of the year.

Internal controls were strengthened in the office. Bank reconciliations were performed in a timely manner. The panel of bank signatories was updated in December 2014, so that staff involved in payments are not included in the list of bank signatories. A procedure for improvement of monthly cash flow was established with the aim to have a low month-end bank balances without jeopardizing the programme implementation.

Financial management assessments and spot checks of IPs were made by Operations Manager. At the end of year there was no outstanding DCT over 6 months.

As per the Common Agreement on Banking Services between UN Armenia agencies and HSBC Bank Armenia CJSC, the bank has applied special rates for bank charges, currency conversion, and interest, bringing to about US$13,000 savings for UNICEF Armenia. US dollar out-of-country payments have been processed via the New York Cashiers Unit, bringing to cost savings of about US$1,000 per year on bank charges.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

The UNICEF Armenia fundraising strategy was developed in January 2014, and followed up during the year. Fundraising is built on long term vision and trust relationship with major international partners and international financial institutions. UNICEF’s comparative advantage is understood as being a reliable partner and a strong independent voice for children’s rights in Armenia. UNICEF convenes partners around a child rights related agenda and provides international expertise and is, as a consequence entrusted with funds. During the reporting period the office managed to mobilize resources for increased investment in nutrition interventions and for implementation of child care reform in the country through building up a strong partnership with USAID and signing of two cooperation agreements.

The office also successfully collaborated with the Swiss National Committee for UNICEF, which resulted with the receipt of funds for nutrition programming. Within the framework of a UN joint initiative UNICEF has mobilized a partnership with UN agencies and received funding from UNPRPD to support MoLSI on the revision of disability determination based on ICF.
All funding grants were entirely utilized before expiry without any extension request. Funds utilization was monitored on regular basis during CMTs and PCMs using the Manager’s Dashboard and Management reports. Donor reports were submitted by the due date. The only exception was a donor report to the Swiss National Committee for UNICEF which was delayed due to system and coordination issues.

Evaluation

During the reporting period UNICEF and the MoLSI commissioned the Evaluation of Family Support Services and Stakeholders Contribution to Related Services/Systems (aligned with the UNICEF Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda 8/RKLA), designed in compliance with UNICEF quality assurance standards. The goal of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of the state statutory services and child protection systems targeted by the evaluation in responding to social and child protection needs of vulnerable families with children as well as to assess UNICEF’s support to those services and systems since 2010. The independent evaluator representing a consortium of Vistaa Plus local consulting company and Mathematica Policy Research, Princeton based research organization was hired to conduct the formative evaluation.

UNICEF Armenia also provided input to multi-country evaluations, particularly to Increasing Access and Equity in Early Childhood Education (RKLA 3) and of the Impact of Juvenile Justice System Reforms of Children in Conflict with the Law (RKLA 2) and shared evaluation findings with key stakeholders. For a more in-depth assessment of child poverty, UNICEF Armenia supported the NSS to conduct a survey through a special module on “Child Needs” (RKLA 1, 4, 8).

During 2014, the status of the Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan implementation was highly satisfactory with 85 per cent of completed activities, including those related to M&E capacity development, UNICEF internal monitoring systems, partners’ major data collection activities, country programme monitoring systems, evaluations, surveys, studies. The remaining planned activities were shifted to 2015.

In 2014, the Monitoring and Evaluation post in UNICEF Armenia was upgraded with the goal to enhance competence in internal and external M&E activities and support UNICEF efforts in the development of national capacities for child rights systems monitoring with special attention to the interest and participation of government and civil society stakeholders.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

The UNICEF Armenia office is located in the UN House, which is provided by the Government of Armenia to the UN. Cost savings have been achieved by using common services in the building, including building management and security services.

In 2014 the following common UN Long-Term Arrangements (LTAs) were used: banking services, postal/courier services, maintenance and cleaning of air conditioners in the building, maintenance of all security systems in the building, translation, interpretation, editing services. Usage of common UN LTAs has brought economies of scale, with the advantage of gaining better discounts from the vendors. The LTAs have further contributed to increased effectiveness and efficiency in use of financial and human resources.

UNICEF finalized an agreement with UNDP and WFP to use their internet channels as a
backup, commencing in January 2015. This will result in an annual cost saving of about US$2,000.

Additional funds were saved through the use of local Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and GSM Gateway for calls. Free warehouse space provided by the Ministry of Emergency Situations allows a cost-saving of around US$2,700 annually.

**Supply Management**

The value of supplies and services received by UNICEF Armenia in 2014 was $1,025,752, which is consists of programme and operational supplies, services and construction/renovation as follows:

- Programme supplies - $241,272
- Operational supplies - $66,833
- Services - $695,536
- Construction/renovation - $22,111

UNICEF continued supporting the Government of Armenia and other partners with Procurement Services. The total value of supplies arranged via regular Procurement Services in 2014 was $1,949,815, of which $679,896 was channelled via the Global Alliance for Vaccines Initiative, GAVI.

The value of inventory in the UNICEF’s controlled warehouse as at 31 December 2014 was $122,192. This mainly consists of 15 feeders for flour fortification, which will be distributed to milling companies after approval of the Law on Flour Fortification. The value of the inventory issued in 2014 from the warehouse was $114,422. The total value of supplies managed in UNICEF’s controlled warehouse throughout the year was $236,614. UNICEF does not have supplies prepositioned for emergencies.

As part of the optimization and effective use of resources, several common UN LTAs were signed in 2014, such as postal/courier services, translation, interpretation, editing services, maintenance of air conditioners, maintenance of security systems.

**Security for Staff and Premises**

Overall security of UN staff and premises is ensured by the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) Armenia. The UNICEF Armenia Office is located in UN Building. In 2014 the fire detection system was upgraded in the UN Building. UNICEF is a member of the SMT and actively participated in UN Armenia security meetings on a regular basis. In 2014, UNICEF ensured the provision of security briefings by UNDSS to all new staff members, as well as visitors on mission upon their arrival at the duty station. The office continues to be MOSS compliant. UN House fire evacuation drill was organised in February 2014. Monthly radio checks were conducted by UNDSS. The updates on the emergency preparedness were posted on the Early Warning Early Action system in June 2014. The Business Continuity Plan was also updated in June 2014 reflecting updated risk assessment, staffing list, critical response team. As part of the Business Continuity and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) preparedness, office satellite phones were used/tested during 2014.

Two UNICEF drivers participated in face-to-face Defensive Driving Training for UN Drivers organized by UNDSS in 2014. Warden/Deputy Wardens training was organized by UNDSS in January 2014. There is a need for First Aid Training for the staff who joined UNICEF during the last two years.
UNICEF started the procurement process of three new satellite phones to replace outdated ones. There is a need for the procurement of HF equipment for field vehicles.

**Human Resources**

Sixteen recruitment processes were initiated by UNICEF Armenia in 2014 with nine selection processes completed and the remaining expected to be finalized in early 2015. Five fixed-term posts were established in late 2014, following a Programme and Budget Review Committee submission which focused on positions linked to urgent programme needs that are a prerequisite for comprehensive programme implementation and serve as a bridge to the new country programme submission. The positions are in line with the priority RKLA agenda.

UNICEF Armenia office benefited from volunteers and interns as per office needs during 2014.

The timelines of the individual workplan development and Performance Evaluation Reports/Performance Appraisal System (PER/PAS) were monitored by the CMT.

The annual training and learning plan was prepared with significant support of the UNICEF Armenia Human Resources Development Committee (HRDC) and approved based on the office’s priorities. It was assured that training plans were relevant to staff members’ assignments, and within the foreseen budget. New staff members undertook the mandatory online course “HIV/AIDS in the workplace” and were trained on VISION by Super Users. Staff participated in regional face-to-face trainings as well as networks through virtual media, Webinars/WebEx’s. One national Project Officer participated in two development assignments in Myanmar and Tajikistan. The Information Technology (IT) Assistant acted as the officer-in-charge (OIC) for the Operations Manager for more than four months in 2014. The office invited eight UNICEF staff members from other country offices for short-term assignments for: OIC assignments (two) for the vacant Deputy Representative; peer support in Operations (three), Communication, Child Protection sections; replacement of Administration/Human Resources Assistant during annual leave and a busy period.

The office applied UNICEF Human Resources policies on learning days and flexi-time. Four staff members benefited from flexi-hour work arrangements: two staff members during breastfeeding period and two other staff members due to personal commitments. Learning days were used by two staff members.

Office management also encouraged staff high participation in the 2014 Staff Survey and shared information on “UN Cares” with staff.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

In 2014 the office IT and telecommunications infrastructure was strengthened. Under the leadership of UNICEF headquarters the following projects were implemented on time:
- Office 365;
- Migration Office 2010 to Office 2013;
- Lync 2013 to gradually replace CISCO supplement Skype and WebEx;
- SharePoint 2013;
- Migration from Lotus Notes to Microsoft Outlook;
- Riverbed Steelhead Mobile Client Deployment.

All staff have access to One Drive. During the year the remote access to office resources were tested several times. Almost all key users have mobile phones configured to use Outlook.
messaging system.

During the year the IT Assistant supported ongoing projects (Local Planning, Health and Nutrition, Monitoring and Evaluation, Communication, DRR) by procurement and installation of IT equipment, as well as providing training on usage of the equipment in the field.

In 2014 the office procured the following IT and office equipment: two UPSs for servers, laptops for new staff members (current and expected in early 2015), network printers, projector, and satellite phones.

Programme Components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 The Government at national and local level systematically identifies and addresses the needs of vulnerable children based on data produced by national and regional networks.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
This Outcome aims to increase the capacity of the Armenian social protection system to reach the most vulnerable and marginalised groups of the population, and to enable it to effectively respond to their needs. The outputs promote systemic changes for vulnerable people such as the progressive improvement of knowledge generation mechanisms, establishing protocols of cooperation among services and a common database, the promotion of case management and local social planning, in response to specific needs identified.

Child poverty reduction is one of the key priorities for the Government with the reported increase of child poverty by 1.1 percentage points from 2012 (36.2 per cent) to 2013 (37.3 per cent). During the same period, extreme child poverty rate remained at 3.3 per cent, while the overall poverty rate in the country decreased by 0.4 percentage points (32.4 per cent in 2012 vs. 32.0 per cent in 2013), and extreme poverty reduced by 0.1 percentage points (2.8 per cent in 2012 vs. 2.7 per cent in 2013).

Based on ILCS 2013, girls are more poor than boys by 3.5 percentage points (39.2 per cent girls and 35.7 per cent boys, ILCS 2013), although extreme poverty is higher among boys (3.3 per cent boys vs. 3.2 per cent girls). As regards urban-rural distribution, the extreme poverty rate among children living in urban communities constituted 3.8 per cent as compared to that of 2.4 per cent among children living in rural communities (against 3.9 per cent urban and 2.4 per cent rural – 2012 data), and the total poverty rate for the same categories constituted 38.2 per cent and 36.0 per cent, respectively (against 37.3 per cent and 34.2 per cent, respectively – 2012 data).

For a more in-depth assessment of child poverty, the NSS with UNICEF support conducted a survey through a special module on “Children’s Needs” (RKLA 1, 4, 8) among all households included in the ILCS sample. The findings of the survey which covered exclusive breastfeeding, inclusive education, fostering of children (both healthy children and those with mental and physical disabilities), their placement in orphanages or special education institutions, and enrolment of children with disabilities in regular schools was published in the Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia 2014 report.
In 2014 UNICEF focussed on the principles of transformative social protection through the reform of Integrated Social Services and substantially contributed to the RKLA 8 on Social Protection in CEE/CIS. UNICEF supported pillars of the Integrated Social Service reform that have been reflected in the Law on Social Assistance endorsed by Parliament in December 2014. The continuous advocacy and technical assistance of UNICEF resulted in development of the system strengthening institutional cooperation among all social services (health, education, social protection and care) and providing effective support to vulnerable families; and increased attention to inequities affecting the population. Special attention - reflected in revised indicators - will be given to outreach to extremely poor families, and to the reduction of poverty for children with disabilities, which remain the most vulnerable group in Armenia (with a poverty rate of 43.9 per cent).

**OUTPUT 1** By end 2015, national and regional authorities use reliable data, social policy and budget analysis to allocate resources to vulnerable children.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
A series of discussions on the establishment of Child Rights Monitoring System were initiated with NSS management as a new platform for future collaboration. The objective is to identify all the gaps and discrepancies in the administrative data under child rights and commission the collection of missing data for the NSS; check compatibility of child rights data across different government agencies and develop a common indicator system; and to facilitate coordination between responsible statistical departments under line ministries that collect, process and report on child-specific, equity-focused and gender-disaggregated data.

The regional offices of the NSS are equipped with ArmenaInfo database, however the utilization of this system by decision makers for monitoring of regional and community level socio-economic and Millennium Development Goal indicators is still pending. There is a need for re-strategizing and providing both conceptual and technical solutions to better link the community database with respective set of indicators to ArmenaInfo, in order to give policy makers an opportunity to use administrative data through this platform.

The TransMonEE country database that covers a vast range of information on social and economic issues relevant to the situation and wellbeing of children, adolescents and women (overall 180 indicators) in Armenia was updated to better inform decision making and policy development. A country analytical report on child care was developed by the NSS covering child protection mechanisms, dynamics of child enrolment in special general education schools (2,817 children in 2009 vs. 2,247 children in 2013) and other key indicators, including the number of children in residential care (3170 children in 2013) and foster families (19 children in 2013) by age, gender, region, as well as the overview of family and children related legislation.

The NSS conducted a survey through a special module on “Child Needs” (RKLA 1, 4, 8) among all households included in the ILCS sample with UNICEF support. Based on survey findings the share of children below five exclusively breast-fed up until reaching the age of six was 36 per cent. In non-poor and poor households, exclusive breast-feeding was practiced by 35 per cent and 36 per cent of mothers respectively, and in extremely poor households this indicator was higher at 45 per cent. Awareness about social services among household members aged 18 and above is high (81 per cent non-poor, 82 per cent poor and 68 per cent extremely poor). However, awareness about social workers (case managers), who can be contacted for help with family problems, is two times lower (39 per cent non-poor, 36 per cent poor, and 32 per cent extremely poor). Approximately every sixth respondent (17 per cent) considered it acceptable
that a socially vulnerable family, based on their social or economic situation, places the child in a special educational institution or orphanage. Similar opinions were expressed by 16 per cent of respondents regarding children with physical disabilities, and twice as many responses (35 per cent) given in favour of placing children with mental disabilities in a special educational institution or orphanage.

A multi-country evaluation on Increasing Access and Equity in Early Childhood Education in CEE/CIS (RKLA 3) was finalized. Key recommendations were to develop a long-term vision and equity focused strategy for early learning and school readiness in the region, to amend the theory of change, to review the possible risks to quality arising from rapidly increasing access, and to strengthen ability to navigate decentralization and to support sustainable capacity development at national and subnational levels.

A major milestone towards the establishment of Integrated Social Services, in support of RLKA 8, was achieved by the approval by Parliament of the Law on Social Assistance, which includes the UNICEF-supported pillars of the reform: case management, local social planning and institutional cooperation. The Law provides sufficient ground for UNICEF to continue supporting reform of the Integrated Social Services, which are primarily aimed at responding to the issues of vulnerable children and their families through transformative social work. A critical achievement of the Law is that a newly established professional - case manager- has gained a distinct function in the child protection system, which will increase the accountability of the system.

Following the CEDAW and “Beijing +20” recommendations, in November 2014, the Prime minister signed a decree on establishing a gender equality national mechanism.

OUTPUT 2 By end 2015, Government provides institutional resources for the implementation of Territorial Social Plans (TSP) methodology nationwide.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
This Outcomes supports the RKLA 8 and aims at advocating for predictable and sufficient funding of Territorial Social Planning (TSP) which will serve as a major funding envelope to finance child-focused social services. UNICEF commissioned a policy paper outlining possible solutions including, but not limited to, the Territorial Development Fund (TDF) and incorporation of the TSP within the Medium Term Expenditure Framework processes. Based on the recommendations of the policy paper, the detailed scenarios for financing of social planning are being developed and will be presented to the Government in the first quarter of 2015. Simultaneously, in December 2014 the Government accepted the decree on the establishment of the TDF through transforming the WB-supported Social Assistance Fund. The TDF will serve as a primary source to mitigate territorial inequalities in service provision including child-focused social services. As a result, the access of children, especially those from small communities, to quality social services (health, education, social and child protection) will be significantly improved. This programme was enlarged through funds mobilized through the EU to fund 10 local projects being implemented as part of social plans in four regions.

The data systems for social planning were progressively enhanced through strengthening administrative databases (Community Database) which contain over 760 first level datum including disaggregated data for children, families and social infrastructure. In 2014, UNICEF initiated a process for the development of the data quality assurance system. The on-line roll out of the database is expected in the first quarter of 2015.
In order to streamline and expand the process of capacity development of local stakeholders, an e-course on Territorial Social Planning was prepared.

OUTCOME 2 The social sector system reduces disparities in access to quality social services for girls and boys

Analytical Statement of Progress:
This Outcome aims to reduce geographical, wealth and social group equity gaps in education, health and nutrition, education and child protection sectors. In 2014, UNICEF Armenia focused its cross-sectoral programmes to:

- Increase access and quality of neonatal, nutrition and rehabilitation services in the health sector (RKLA 6 and 7);
- Increase access and quality of preschools and inclusive schools in the education sector;
- Promotion of safety of educational facilities for children against natural hazards through DRR measures;
- Transformation of residential child care institutions, establishment of alternative family and community based services in the child protection sector (RKLA 1).

The issue of institutional cooperation among social sector services with the aim of creating a continuum of services is gaining special attention.

The continuous advocacy and technical assistance of UNICEF resulted in 2014 in the commitment of the Government to start the country-wide process of transformation of residential care institutions in two t regions and in Yerevan; expanding child-friendly and inclusive teaching in several regions; implementation of “the First 1,000 Most Critical Days” multicomponent strategy and approval of the law on "Breastfeeding promotion and regulation of infant food marketing"; strengthening trilateral technical cooperation between UNICEF and the Governments of Armenia and Brazil; and establishment of a national coordination mechanism for nationwide school safety assessment and identification of the “most at risk” schools.

OUTPUT 1 By end 2015, the Government provides a fully functional continuum of services in at least 2 marzes.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The issue of institutional cooperation among social sector services remains critical. UNICEF set up a group of professionals to address systemic impediments of institutional cooperation at the national level through the development of policy alternatives. Some of the recommendations have already been reflected in the draft law on social assistance. A concept paper on institutional cooperation was finalized in June 2014. After validation with local stakeholders the concept will be transformed into a legally binding document format (Government decree) and will be submitted to the Government for approval. The process will be combined with the capacity development of professionals at local level.

The agreement among Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Territorial Administration on the transformation of residential child care institutions, the set-up of a continuum of alternative care services for children, and child care system reform is reaching conclusion. Written comments and support letters at Ministerial level to cooperate with UNICEF and other partners on the transformation of residential institutions for the upcoming five years
were received. The implications of the reform on Integrated Social Services for the child protection system will also be considered.

As the result of continued advocacy, UNICEF now acts as the main coordinating body between government structures and NGOs for the implementation of activities directly resulting in downsizing, transformation or closure of residential care and special educational institutions. The transformation of two residential special schools is in progress with UNICEF’s technical support, with all family and child assessments completed, mainstream schools for each child selected and teachers trained on inclusive education. UNICEF is working towards supporting the establishment of a resource centre to assist the inclusive education in the region which will be followed by the closure of both special schools.

UNICEF actively supported several large scale advocacy events, primarily directed towards promotion of de-institutionalization and the establishment of alternative community and family-based services. These were supported through collaboration with different government agencies, international organizations, local NGOs and donors. UNICEF also promoted access to justice issues, specifically through establishing dialogue with the Council of Europe, advocating with the EU for targeted assistance as well as cooperating with the Human Rights Defender’s Office to develop complaint mechanisms for children related to violation of their rights.

OUTPUT 2 By end 2015, the Government increasingly provides resources for the setup of community based child protection services

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Progress was made in advocating for childcare reform in the country. UNICEF and USAID signed a 5-year agreement on promoting child care reform in the country to promote child right to family environment (RKLA 1) in partnership with Government and international and local NGOs. Within the scope this agreement, UNICEF assisted the Government in conducting a rapid assessment of residential child care institutions under the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues and drafting a roadmap for their transformation.

UNICEF lobbied for and provided input into the revision of the National Strategy for Child Right Protection 2013-2016 initiated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues to address the key policy directions related to reforming the child care system in the country. The policy and related activities aimed at contributing to family strengthening, de-institutionalization and expansion of alternative community and family-based care for vulnerable children. The amendments to the strategy were approved by the Government in December 2014.

The number of children in a pre- or- post sentencing facilities is one of the lowest in the CEE/CIS region, with only 14 children in 2014. UNICEF continued to advocate for the expansion of the Government’s focus to cover policies with regard to children in contact with all justice processes to ensure their access to justice. (RKLA 2)

The Government has embarked on a review of the legal framework and practice of Armenia’s domestic and inter-country adoption system with support of UNICEF, which will also lead to the revision of child protection-related provisions in the Family Code (RKLA 1).

OUTPUT 3 National policy agendas informed by regional and national disaster and education for sustainable development related evidence based knowledge and technical guidelines.
Analytical Statement of Progress:
The 2014-2015 Rolling Work Plan on Education is built around the equity agenda, targeting the most vulnerable groups in terms of access to quality education and safe learning environment. The programmatic response is built on the bottlenecks identified at the determinant analysis.

Social Norms:
In July 2014, UNICEF launched a nationwide campaign on social inclusion of children with disabilities, entitled “Together We Can.” Designed from the baseline survey on public attitudes towards children with disabilities, the campaign targeted youth, parents, community organizations and mass media. In its first six months, the campaign resulted in significant media/social media coverage on the topics of social inclusion, disability and inclusive education, providing visibility to the work carried out by community organizations, highlighting the abilities of children with disabilities and promoting inclusive values in the society. In its first month, the campaign forged alliances with 15 key local and international child rights and disability organizations who actively participated in a number of public events, which ensured exposure and communication among children with and without disability and their parents.

Policy and Legislation:
1. The Parliament approved the Amendments to the Law on General Education which stipulates the transformation of special schools to inclusive education support centres.
2. UNICEF supported a study on school safety which was adopted by the Government, and helped to prioritize the schools located in most-at-risk areas. The report provided a general picture of the safety status of all schools in Armenia and specific information about the situation in 60 most vulnerable schools. The recommendations of the study are being incorporated into the Government’s school safety investment plan.

Management and Coordination:
1. In Lori region, protocols of cooperation were signed between education, social protection and health services, police, local authorities, regional municipalities and NGOs defining the roles and responsibilities in monitoring out of school children and children at the risk of drop-out and referring them back to school. As a result of this cooperation close to 300 cases were identified and steps were undertaken to bring these children back to school.
2. In Tavush region, similar protocols were developed for early identification and intervention for childhood disabilities and delays outlining the cooperation of preschool, medical staff and social services.

Availability of adequately staffed services:
1. Capacity of teachers and directors in Goris and Sisian schools, as well as Yerevan inclusive schools to provide inclusive education was raised.
2. UNICEF supported the Syunik municipality to identify suitable models of preschool services for rural communities with a small number of children.

OUTPUT 4 By end 2015, the health system addresses disparities in access to quality mother, child and adolescent health and nutrition services.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The 2014-2015 Rolling Work Plan on Health and Nutrition is shaped to addresses disparities and gaps in access to quality mother, child and adolescent health and nutrition services and to contribute to 6th and 7th areas of the RLKA. In 2014, with UNICEF active advocacy, the Government’s high political commitment to address nutrition issue was demonstrated by
approval of a national law on “Breastfeeding promotion and regulation of infant food marketing” to ensure comprehensive legal protection for breastfeeding as well as regulating the marketing practices of infant formulas in the country. The allocation of 10 million Armenian Dram (US$21,000) from the state budget as a separate budget line on nutrition interventions is evidence of the priority given to nutrition issues in the country.

The successful cooperation established between UNICEF and the Governments of Armenia and Brazil over the last two years evolved into a strong trilateral technical cooperation programme with commitment from the Government of Brazil to provide continuous technical support in implementing policies and sustainable programmes to address nutrition challenges and promote early childhood development in Armenia.

To mobilize support for increased investment in a set of nutrition interventions in Armenia, UNICEF built up a strong partnership with USAID and signed a cooperation agreement for a two-year program that will help improve the health and nutrition of Armenian children 0-5 years of age. Together with the MoH and local health authorities, UNICEF effectively promoted the idea of creating sustainable parental education system at community level. To ensure effective parental counselling and outreach, UNICEF initiated the development of organizational standards on community-based parental education and started the review of all contacts between health providers and parents/caregivers. Together with establishment of parental centres, these will be instrumental for increasing community demand for quality child health services.

OUTCOME 3 Effective and efficient programme management and operations support to programme delivery

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Armenia was successful in the progressive realization of the Programme Management and Operations Support Strategy that resulted in:
- Maintenance of effective and results-ensuring governance system through a full functioning of office committees, strategic planning, analysis, monitoring and regular review; promoting of participatory decision-making; efficient realization of the risk management function, resulting in sufficient reduction of existing risks and timely identification of new ones, with designing of working mitigation strategies;
- Completion of assessment of the required capacity for the new country programme implementation having addressed the earlier existing HR gaps;
- Review of consultancies to assess the available resource base and plan the strategic required workforce;
- Promoting recognition of human resources as a key valuable asset for the organization, with a focus on staff development, regular performance review and identification of improvement areas and training courses needed;

Supervisor coaching; encouragement of maintaining the life-work balance using the flexible workplace opportunities and personal time management.

OUTPUT 1 Includes Representation, Operations Management, IT Management, Business Continuity and Risk Management, Programme Guidance and Management/Oversight, Communication

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Armenia was successful in the progressive realization of the Programme Management and Operations Support Strategy that resulted in:

- Maintenance of effective and results-ensuring governance system through a full functioning of office committees, strategic planning, analysis, monitoring and regular review; promoting of participatory decision-making; efficient realization of the risk management function, resulting in sufficient reduction of existing risks and timely identification of new ones, with designing of working mitigation strategies;
- Completion of shaping the qualified and potential CO team with regards to the required capacity for the new CP implementation having addressed the earlier existing HR gaps; including post establishment, review of CO consultancies to assess the available resource base and plan the strategic required workforce;
- Promoting recognition of human resources as a key valuable asset for the organization, with a focus on staff development, regular performance review and identification of improvement areas and training courses needed; supervisor coaching; encouragement of maintaining the life-work balance using the flexible workplace opportunities and working on own time management (retreat training was conducted to practice it).

**OUTPUT 2** Financial Management and Administrative Management

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The office closed all 2013 audit recommendations during 2014. Staff continued to get support on VISION and all areas whenever any changes were made (including administrative instructions, policies and procedures).

The office successfully continued the cash forecasting practice, on a monthly and quarterly basis, providing managers with an opportunity to additionally revise and adjust the payment plans.

**OUTPUT 3** Effective & Efficient Management of Human Capacities

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The Peer Support Volunteer function was actively performed in 2014.

The Local Training Committee diligently pursued Staff Learning, continued to play a role in ensuring development and implementation of the Local Training Plan implementation. Apart from the managerial skills enhancement and development, the office has also focused on developing competence identified during the performance discussions for each staff on individual basis.
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