Executive Summary

The year 2014 was marked with important developments including a change of UNICEF Azerbaijan’s senior management with a new Representative and Deputy Representative; developing of the United Nations Azerbaijan Partnership Framework (UNAPF) formerly the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF); drafting the new country programme document (CPD) and the country office audit. Through team efforts that transition to a new management has been smooth.

The major political highlight of the year was the Government’s reassurance that the fall in oil price would not be reflect in budget cuts for social sectors. The new amendment to the law on NGOs, which now requires registration of all donor organizations with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), and that each grant should be endorsed by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) for its relevance, may potentially present challenges for UNICEF’s work with civil society. It also may have been a reason for some international and national NGOs ending operations in the country.

The major programmatic highlights of 2014 included the formal adoption of the international life birth definition (ILBD), which was a successful result of UNICEF Azerbaijan’s advocacy. UNICEF also supported the Government to develop clinical protocols for institutionalizing ILBD. A new Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was drafted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population (MoLSPP) with support from UNICEF, and received positive comments from the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disability in Geneva. The draft Law is being submitted to the Parliament for adoption.

UNICEF’s successful advocacy with the Ministry of Finance resulted in leveraging Government resources for sustainable financing of Pre-School Education Programme in three remote districts and increased teachers’ salaries. US$2.2 million was allocated from the Government budget to the MoLSPP for targeted social allowances for most vulnerable children, adolescents and their families. Another example of successful advocacy was the Ministry of Justice order to allocate three very experienced judges to the most serious crimes court to review juvenile cases.

In relation to innovations in 2014, UNICEF Azerbaijan introduced the saliva-based rapid HIV testing to the Government system, which allows quick and accessible HIV testing. Within the framework of Disaster Risk Reduction, the office conducted a Disaster Risk Analysis (DRA) in Gabala district, which is prone to natural disasters. The pilot methodology was endorsed and institutionalized by the Ministry of Emergency as an effective instrument for improvement of its disaster preparedness capacity. UNICEF facilitated the introduction of a deprivation analysis and multi-dimensional poverty assessment to the State Statistical Committee, which resulted in the Deprivation Module being endorsed by the Government. The first survey on Deprivations will be implemented in February 2015 in 6,000 households.

Shortfalls in the country programme implementation included delays in (i) the endorsement of the Inclusive Education policy, (ii) a joint launch of the nutrition survey, and (iii) the adoption of
the National Children Strategy which resulted in postponement of the development of the National Action Plan on Violence against Children.

UNICEF Azerbaijan continued partnering with the World Health Organization (WHO) to support the Government to procure vaccines for routine immunization of children through UNICEF Supply Division. This resulted in savings to Government of around US$2,000,000, which subsequently were used for a Measles/Rubella campaign among children aged 11-15 in Baku and selected districts to respond to a measles outbreak which occurred in 2013. Long lasting negotiations with the British Petroleum company are in the final stage, with US$1,300,000 anticipated to be made available to UNICEF to support the education system in the country. The joint Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Azersu (the state water company) water supply project allocated to UNICEF Azerbaijan US$128,000 for promoting of water, hygiene and sanitation in schools adjacent to the project location. The office negotiated and submitted a proposal to Azersun (holding) for US$64,000 for improvement of WASH facilities in those schools.

2015 is the final year of the country programme, and the office will seize the opportunity to accumulate more knowledge and evidence-based information to better align the next country programme with UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017. Among planned activities are an evaluation of the social protection services and a study on violence against children.

**Equity Case Study**

**Summer School Readiness Programme for Remote Areas**

**Background**
According to Azerbaijan official statistics (2014), preschool education is being provided through a network of 1,680 kindergartens and nurseries, of which approximately, 97.5 per cent of these are state run. The existing system of preschools addresses early childhood care, education and development needs of 107,699 children. This comprises only 13.3 per cent of the 1 - 5 year-old child population of the country (19.2 per cent of urban 1-5 year olds and 7.5 per cent of rural 1-5 year olds). The Vision 2020 Strategy promulgated by the President of Azerbaijan envisages 80 per cent coverage of children by preschool education by 2020.

Rural and very remote areas with a larger proportion of the population in poverty are of the biggest concern, as access to preschool education is low and may be suspended in winter. As a result, the vast majority of children are deprived of basic right to education and development, which will eventually leave the children of these communities with fewer chances of succeeding at school and attaining proper educational and social achievements. Community-based support services for parents and families including provision of information to guide parents on child growth and development is almost non-existent.

The situation of low preschool coverage is acknowledged by the Government as one of the biggest concerns requiring immediate action, with the construction of new kindergartens being the priority strategy being adopted. This type of day-care kindergarten is expensive to construct and run, due to the provision of food and sleeping facilities. The numbers of such facilities are usually inadequate to enable the enrolment of all children in the neighbourhood, often resulting in providing sub-standard and insufficient services. Most of the facilities are in urban areas.

In the summer of 2013, UNICEF, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and with the support from the MoF, started a new initiative with a 10-week Summer School Readiness
programme targeting 6-year old children from remote communities who had no or very limited access to preschool education. The specific objectives were to prepare these children for school and support their development as well as equip them with skills and attitudes, which would impact their own and their families' wellbeing in the years to come. The initiative demonstrated a cost-effective model of school readiness and providing access to pre-school education for all children of preschool age with particular emphasis on children living in the remote and disadvantaged areas of Azerbaijan.

Results
The Initiative was successfully implemented in 135 schools of Shabran, Yardimli and Gadabay districts. According to the Ministry of Education, 2,163 children (about 88 per cent of 6-year-old children in these districts) benefitted from the service provided in 2013. Some 1,978 children, (86 per cent) benefitted in 2014. None of these children had access to preschool education or any other early childhood development programme before the initiative.

The School Readiness initiative successfully raised awareness among parents about importance of early childhood education for their children and mobilized their active support. Given the very limited access to kindergartens in those selected rural communities and also increased awareness about the benefits of the school readiness education, parents appreciated the initiative as an excellent chance to provide their preschool age children with quality education and development opportunities. Parents confirmed the positive changes in their children as a result of this initiative.

To generate evidence and also to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the initiative, UNICEF conducted an impact assessment with the participation of 394 parents, 27 teachers and 389 children. According to the findings, 97 per cent of children improved their fine motor skills and practiced better personal hygiene. Almost 96 per cent of parents and teachers reported that children quickly adapted to school environment.

Results of interviews and tests with 389 children indicated that almost 50 per cent of the children demonstrated a good level of school readiness. Eighty per cent of the children scored excellent for their involuntary attention skills, an important skill during education as it helps children focus. Eighty five per cent of the children could memorize letters and read words easily.

UNICEF’s successful advocacy with the MoF resulted in formal endorsement for financing the programme in the three start-up districts from the government budget. The advocacy also led to approval of increased teachers’ salaries. The government financing and recognition of the importance of contribution of the pre-school teachers are important signs for the sustainability of the initiative in Azerbaijan.

The initiative is innovative in acting to close the equity gaps in those remote and under-resourced areas. Before the initiative those areas did not have access to such services, nor had the Government considered expanding the services to reach these remote populations.

Next steps
To scale up the initiative and achieve larger-scale results for children, it is planned to further advocate with the MoF and the MoE to expand the government financing to cover the regular nine month annual schooling period, as well as for the short-term school readiness classes throughout the country.
### Summary Notes and Acronyms

Acronyms used in the Annual Report:

- ADB Asian Development Bank
- ALC Azerbaijan Lawyers Confederation
- AMP Annual Management Plan
- BCP Business Continuity Plan
- BP British Petroleum
- CFS Child Friendly School
- CIS Commonwealth of Independent States
- C4D Communication for Development
- CMT Country Management Team
- CSR Corporate Social Responsibility
- CPD Country Programme Document
- CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child
- CRPD Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- DCT Direct Cash Transfer
- DRA Disaster Risk Analysis
- ECHO European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid department
- EDPEI Early Detection, Prevention and Early Intervention
- FACE Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditure
- GAVI Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
- GSSC Global Shared Service Centre
- HACT Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
- HIV/AIDS Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
- HR Human Resources
- HRD Human Resources Development
- ICT Information Communication Technology
- IDP Internally Displaced Persons
- ILBD International Life Birth Definition
- IMEP Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- IT Information Technology
- LTA Long-term Arrangement
- MARA Most at Risk Adolescent
- M&E Monitoring and Evaluation
- MoF Ministry of Finance
- MoH Ministry of Health
- MoLSPP Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population
- MoJ Ministry of Justice
- MORSS Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards
- MOSS Minimum Operating Security Standards
- NGO Non-Governmental Organization
- OR Other resources
- PAS Performance Assessment System
- PBR Programme budget review
- PSV Peer Support Volunteer
- RKLA Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda
- RMT Regional Management Team
- RO Regional Office
- UN United Nations
UNICEF strengthened the capacity of the main NGO partner for youth development in leading advocacy dialogue at the sub-national level, which resulted in the operationalization of a system of regular town hall meetings in 21 districts. The meetings engaged adolescents and youth in decision-making at a local level and made their voices heard in all matters that affect them. At the same time, young people were trained to gather the opinions of their peers to strengthen the demand side and inform youth programming in their districts. UNICEF also invested to capacitate the National AIDS Centre: consequently they developed and institutionalized the first training tool for medical and social workers to provide HIV testing and counselling to most-at-risk-adolescents (MARA).

UNICEF has been strengthening capacity of the Ministry of Education to introduce new ways of school management via support to the Ministry’s School Autonomy Initiative. Within this initiative, UNICEF in collaboration with leading private university in the area of management, provided training on contemporary school management to potential school principals. The university has developed an executive education module for one academic term within its management degree programme and will continue to offer the programme even after UNICEF’s contribution comes to an end.

To strengthen the Government data collection system and identify the most vulnerable and deprived categories of children, technical assistance was provided to the State Statistics Committee to introduce a deprivation analysis and multi-dimensional poverty assessment. The Deprivation Module has been endorsed by the Government and the first survey on Deprivations will be implemented in February 2015 in 6,000 households.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

As a result of UNICEF’s strong advocacy, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population (MLSPP) agreed to develop a new policy about the needs-based Social Care Services System for 2015-2016, which intends to identify and support the most vulnerable children. The policy will prevent institutionalization of about 500 children every year, support over 1,000 girls and boys with disabilities to remain and grow in their families. It will also offer various social care to more than 2,000 children in conflict with the law or in need of legal aid. Since October 2014, most cases of children in conflict with the law and children victims of crimes have been are being handled by specialized Juvenile Judges through a court in Baku, which is a major practice change.

In 2013, MLSPP, UNICEF and World Vision International conducted a Needs Assessment and
Mapping exercise, which has been used by the Ministry to determine the needs for social services in 2015 - 2016 to be funded by the Ministry. UNICEF’s effective advocacy resulted in approval of the first National Youth Strategy. The Strategy aims to address challenges faced by young people and families and promote social inclusion through better access to education and training, health, social services, housing, employment and information.

A joint UNICEF and National Paralympic Committee advocacy campaign for barrier-free Baku marked an important shift in the Government’s attitude towards meeting the needs of the persons with disabilities. A wide response was received from both the high level decision-makers and rights holders who confirmed their determination to contribute to making Baku a truly accessible city through signing the official Baku Declaration and forming a Baku Accessibility Sub-Group in the structure of the MLSPP.

UNICEF and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) successfully advocated for the Government to make an official decision to adopt the International Live Birth Definition as of 1 January 2015. UNICEF also supported the Government in development of clinical protocols for institutionalizing ILBD.

**Partnerships**

Through UNICEF Azerbaijan’s advocacy, 15 NGOs received US$2.2 million from MoLSPP to meet the social care needs of 1,600 children and adolescents. UNICEF’s also worked to strengthen the partnership between the Government and civil society by improving the quality of contracting of services through the introduction of monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms.

Fund matching and co-sharing of initiatives have been successfully undertaken in cooperation with the Ministry of Sports and Youth. The ministry has funded around 40 per cent of the cost of the entire Youth Advocates Project in 14 districts of the country.

The office has built a strong partnership with academia, including a joint project with the presidential academy for capacity building of middle and high level civil servants. A course on communication for development has been incorporated into the existing curricula and has been successfully taught to participants.

Long-standing negotiations with British Petroleum (BP) with respect to raising funds for the education system is in its final stage. This initiative aims to improve the quality of primary education and strengthening disaster preparedness and risk reduction in the education system.

Improvement of hygiene and sanitation in 27 rural schools and adjacent communities has been part of UNICEF Azerbaijan’s contribution to a partnership with Asersu (the state water company) and ABD. The latter two are co-financing the water supply to those rural villages and UNICEF has invested financial resources to work with communities on behaviour change communication to complement to the overall initiative. Through a partnership with Azersun (holding), UNICEF has also secured a funding commitment to improve the WASH infrastructure in those schools.

A constructive partnership has been reinforced with the Parliament (Milli Majlis) of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Amongst a number of round table discussions, one was dedicated to introduction of the Child Rights and Business Principles and strengthening of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within the private sector. Significant interest was generated, and will be followed up in 2015.
External Communication and Public Advocacy

UNICEF continued to be vocal in the national media throughout the year on important issues including disability, education, youth participation and overall child rights. The office continued to serve as a hub for child rights information for media, universities and individuals.

UNICEF Azerbaijan websites both in Azerbaijani and English continued to be a tool for knowledge sharing and external communication. Additionally, social media, specifically Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, have increasingly become an important tool for the UNICEF to reach out to various audiences. The UNICEF Azerbaijan Facebook page has over 31,000 followers, one of the highest levels in the region.

The 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was highlighted during a number of public events throughout the year, which culminated in a major celebration during a special session in the Parliament. These events were not just an occasion for celebration, but also for advocacy and reflection on the achievements and challenges. Other initiatives celebrating the 25th anniversary of the CRC in the country included such high-level events as the National Children's Forum and International Youth Meeting in Ganja, Azerbaijan, where the UNICEF global project IMAGINE was launched with young people from eight countries.

Advocacy and fundraising efforts were forged by expanding existing and building new partnerships, including alliances with private sector around children-related issues. UNICEF established relationship with new potential donors from the private sector, including BP, Nar Mobile, 28 Cinema, and Mila. Ongoing partnerships were maintained and further opportunities explored with long time partners such as, Procter & Gamble, Four Seasons, and Azersun. UNICEF continued its efforts to promote child-friendly CSR and the concepts of Child Rights and Business Principles by continuing its discussions with the Government, Parliament and private sector.

UNICEF Azerbaijan, with the support of the Regional Office for the Commonwealth of Independent State/Central and Eastern Europe (RO) and headquarters engaged in discussion with the European Games 2015 Organizing Committee. This partnership is expected to strengthen UNICEF’s visibility and brand awareness, as well as put child rights issues on the top of policy agenda.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

UNICEF facilitated knowledge exchange and sharing of lessons learned between the Ministry of Family and Social Policy of Turkey, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of People (MLSPP) of Azerbaijan, and the Ministries of Justice of Azerbaijan and Turkey. The countries have learned each other’s experience on targeting most vulnerable children through social cash assistance, social support services and specialized court proceedings for children in contact or conflict with the law. The countries have also exchanged experience on programmes available for women to address domestic violence. The South-South cooperation resulted in the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan using a modified Turkish model in setting up their own child-friendly court room in a Baku court, which is specialized and a first instance court. As a follow up from the exchange visit, the MLSPP has decided to review its social protection and social services schemes to better understand their impact on children.

South-South cooperation was also promoted through UNICEF’s cross-country Azerbaijani Youth Advocate Programme aimed at addressing limited youth participation in decision-making on
local level. It resulted in the establishment of a system of regular town-hall meetings with the local executive authorities in 21 districts, where young people have their voices heard and influence decisions on issues affecting them. Best practices and lessons learnt were shared with youth leaders from eight CIS countries, including the representatives of the Regional Youth Advisory Group, in the framework of international youth conference in Ganja and international workshop on volunteerism in Baku. South-South cooperation in this context empowered Azerbaijani young people as well as promoted their social inclusion and participation in community and social life.

In 2014 UNICEF has also established a platform for cooperation between the Ministry of Health and Ankara University on Early Detection, Prevention and Early Intervention (EDPEI) through experience exchange and support for capacity building. As a result, the Azerbaijani team developed a plan for piloting EDPEI in selected facilities of Baku. Trained health care professionals started implementation of the tool in December 2014 to detect developmental delays in children as early as possible.

### Identification Promotion of Innovation

ASAN (an Azeri word, which means ‘easy’) Public Services Agency has launched free child legal aid services in one of its centres in Baku, which handled the cases of over 50 children (60 per cent girls) together or through parents in less than two months. ASAN is an innovative one-stop public service agency for citizens, established in 2012 to fight petty corruption and bureaucracy in government services. It offers more than 30 public services (fee based) in six centres across the country, and is set to expand to the entire nation in the coming years. An agreement between UNICEF, the Azerbaijani Lawyers Confederation and ASAN led to modelling of a free child legal aid and consultation service, which is co-funded by UNICEF and ASAN, and will be expanded to all ASAN centres from 2015. A recent UNICEF study revealed that 43 per cent of the vulnerable population need legal aid or representation service, and ASAN offers a unique opportunity to meet this need in most remote areas, particularly since there is an ASAN Bus service, which provides mobile outreach services.

Another innovation by UNICEF Azerbaijan in 2014 was introducing the saliva based HIV rapid testing to the government system. The use of the test had not been allowed previously, and is an important innovation for the country since it allows quick and accessible HIV testing. UNICEF persistently advocated for introducing the innovative idea, and the first pilot session utilizing the saliva-based test was held in the framework of the European HIV Testing Week jointly with the National AIDS Centre, Ministry of Youth and Sports and NGO partners covering 423 young people from Baku. The event was widely announced by the mass media as a real innovation for the country that will allow to attract more young people to undergo HIV testing, including those most at risk.

### Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages

UNICEF Azerbaijan supported the Government to develop the first National Children Strategy 2015-2020, which was recommended by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2012 and established as a goal in the Azerbaijan 2020: Vision for the Future. A broad policy concept paper, the Strategy sets goals on various child protection issues in Azerbaijan to overcome many challenges faced by vulnerable and marginalized children and their families by 2020 through new multi-sectoral policies and programmes, capacity development, and cross-sectoral services.

Youth and adolescent development programming by nature is cross-sectoral. The National
Youth Strategy was developed through cross-sectoral inter-ministerial coordination. Close alliances built with the Ministries of Youth and Sport, Labour and Social Protection of Population, Education as well as with the non-governmental sector and academia enabled the achievement of a number of policy outcomes for most-at-risk adolescents and youth. This included the strengthening of capacity of a group of physical education teachers and Paralympic coaches to work as champions of non-violent principles and values in sports. In addition, medical and social workers’ capacity were strengthened to address HIV prevention among adolescents, which contributed to the inclusion of young people and adolescents in the social protection, education and health systems. A joint Government-Parliament-Civil Society-Academia-UN Baku Accessibility Declaration was signed; following which the Government started planning to make some facilities disability accessible for the Baku 2015 European Games. As a result, several western-educated social workers were hired by the Organizing Committee to help guide the process.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

Human Rights Based Approach in Programming has been mainstreamed in all programmatic interventions, which focused both on capacity of duty-bearers to realize rights of children, adolescents and women and capacity of rights holders to claim their rights. Recommendations of the UN CRC Concluding Observations 2012 and Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2013 were taken into account during the development of the new United Nations Azerbaijan Partnership Framework (UNAPF) 2016-2020 and UNICEF Country Programme (CP) 2016-2020. In its equity-focused rolling situation analysis, UNICEF Azerbaijan identified the structural causes of non-realization of child rights to be addressed in the new CP. Opinions of rights-holders, particularly, of young people through youth consultations and other mechanisms were taken into account in all stages of programming. The capacities of duty bearers to ensure the realisation of were built through interventions such as support for further harmonization of domestic legislation with the CRC, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other international human rights instruments, while capacities of rights holders to claim their rights were strengthened through communication for development (C4D) interventions.

However, independent CRC monitoring and coordination mechanisms still need to be established by the Government and a number of legal instruments (such as, Lanzarote Convention, legislation to ban corporal punishment) still need to be ratified and adopted.

**Gender Mainstreaming and Equality**

Gender equality considerations have been mainstreamed by UNICEF Azerbaijan into all programmatic interventions. The office continued to be an active member of the UN Theme Group on Gender. UNICEF has supported the Government in preparation of the National Review Report Beijing+20 and has provided inputs to the UNCT Confidential Report to the Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

UNICEF and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) signed Joint Programme to address child marriages in internally displaced persons (IDP) communities. The programme aimed at raising awareness of IDP and refugee communities on the negative social, health and other consequences of child marriages. From UNICEF side, the communication section was leading this effort focusing on C4D interventions. The Initiative lasted from June to December 2014 within the framework of 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence campaign. As a result of the initiative, 22 attempted cases of child marriages were prevented in three
Another initiative was supported which aimed at raising awareness of under 17 Girls’ Football League girl players on participation in sport and child rights with a specific focus on child marriages and violence against children. The initiative was managed by the UNICEF Youth and Adolescents Development section (two staff members) with a budget of US$6,000. The initiative was implemented from June to December 2014 under the UNICEF End Violence Global Campaign. It aimed at promoting girls participation in social life through sport. It resulted in 20 coaches being sensitized to specific issues around girls’ participation and involved 220 girls in sport competitions in different regions of Azerbaijan. A role model for girls’ participation has been developed and will be popularized across the country from 2015 with the Girls’ Football League and Government’s participation.

The UNICEF Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist served as the Gender focal point in 2014, spending on average up to 10 per cent of time specifically on direct gender-related work.

### Environmental Sustainability

Environmental safety and sustainability emerged as one of the most salient issues through youth consultations in the framework of the Azerbaijani Youth Advocate Programme. As a result, young leaders planned and implemented projects to address environmental issues such as pollution and waste management jointly with the local authorities in 12 rural districts. The local authorities made official commitments to sustain the projects through their administrative, organizational and financial support.

Within the framework of Disaster Risk Reduction, which is part of the UNICEF Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA) Result Area 9, UNICEF Azerbaijan conducted Disaster Risk Analysis at subnational level in Gabala district. The analysis was conducted based on the guidance tool developed by the UNICEF Regional Office with $60,000 in funding from the Global Resilience Set Aside Fund. The activity was managed by UNICEF Education Specialist and a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Consultant.

The activity was co-led by the Ministry of Emergency Situations and implemented by a multi-disciplinary working group comprised of representatives of local executive authority, statistics, environment, education, health and social protection in Gabala district. The district was selected due to its seismic prone location and significant vulnerability due to the high density of population and as a popular tourist site. Its population is 98,600 persons, of whom approximately 34 per cent are children under 18.

UNICEF Azerbaijan provided technical expertise and capacity development to a working group, which conducted analysis of multi-hazard risk, which includes an analysis of the particular risks faced by children and their families.

A final report with findings and recommendations was presented to the Ministry of Emergency Situations. The Disaster Risk Analysis methodology was endorsed by the Ministry as an effective complementary instrument for improvement of disaster preparedness capacity of the Ministry and its emergency units at sub-national level. The Ministry has decided to scale up the application of the methodology and has requested UNICEF to facilitate the process.
Effective Leadership

The office underwent changes in two senior management posts in 2014, with the new Representative starting in July and Deputy Representative commencing duties in November.

The office 2014 Annual Management Plan (AMP) was prepared with all staff participation and shared with the RO by February. To effectively support office governance, and to optimize staff participation and widen representation of different sections, the structure of statutory committees and Table of Authorities were reviewed and updated where necessary. Regular CMT meetings were convened to identify and discuss office needs related to security, well-being, learning and development. Management indicators and major changes in the country office’s quality assurance mechanism were a part of CMT discussions. The CMT also took the initiative to improve management performance, with a focus on overcoming difficulties related to the requirements for budget cuts due to the impact of the planned Global Shared Service Centre (GSSC) for UNICEF. The outcomes of the Regional Management Team meetings, Programme and Budget Review committee meetings (PBRs) and other management network meetings, as well as change management initiatives, were discussed in All Staff meetings to keep staff informed and equipped. The implications of the initiatives were regularly communicated in writing to all staff.

The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was updated regularly. Since there were no substantive changes in country’s political and economic situation in 2014, the update was limited with name changes only.

The office was audited in November 2014 and received the initial report in early December.

Financial Resources Management

As in previous years, in 2014 the office operated its financial resources in line with established guidelines and control mechanisms. A good level of performance was maintained and activities fulfilled in line with the organizations’ mandate and objectives, thereby ensuring the safeguarding of financial and other assets.

The budget was regularly monitored using the reports in the VISION system and Performance Management Dashboard for timely utilization.

Disbursement of cash assistance to partners and liquidation of advances had been implemented and recorded on a basis of Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditure (FACE) documentation. The office had no Direct Cash Transfer (DCT) with outstanding balance over nine months throughout the year.

In the beginning of the year a refresher meeting on the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) and its assurance activities were held with Implementing Partner’s to ensure the qualitative reporting of cash disbursements. The office had a regularly updated assurance plan, with programme monitoring visits and spot checks included.

The office continued to make effective use of its bank optimization and cash forecasting tools and performed very well in meeting closing bank balance targets and in restoring the percentage of closing balances for subsequent months. Deadlines on bank reconciliations and bank optimization targets were met. Monthly closures and Financial Reports were done in a timely manner and uploaded to SharePoint. The office did not experience any delays in submission of reports.
The UNICEF office premises are rented in a commercial building, which is a significant budget expense. Negotiations with the Government for free office space continued during the year.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

UNICEF Azerbaijan developed a Fundraising Strategy which was reflected in the AMP. There were significant fund-raising efforts initiated in 2013 which were followed up, including the BP contribution of US$1.3 million to support the education system in the country. The agreement is in its final stage and funds are expected to start to be released in early 2015.

A further opportunity which UNICEF pursued was US$128,000 for the state water company Azersu, which in collaboration with ADB is funding water supply infrastructure project in three districts of rural Azerbaijan. UNICEF Azerbaijan received funds to contribute to the promotion to hygiene and sanitation behavioural changes in schools and communities in the same districts overall covering 27 schools with adjacent communities. To further contribute to the project, the office negotiated US$64,000 from Azersu holding to improve WASH facilities in the 27 schools.

Grant utilization close to 95 per cent of OR was achieved during the year, and donor reports submitted on time. An observed shortfall was in the quality of donor report, especially the financial utilization section.

The office has recruited a consultant to develop UNICEF Azerbaijan promotional materials to be used for advocacy and fundraising with different donor organization on the ground and abroad. The quality of those materials requires improvement, therefore, the office plans to review them and finalize in early 2015.

UNICEF successfully pursued an opportunity to become a charity partner for the European Games in Baku in 2015. This engagement should pave the way from significant promotion of UNICEF brand, strong advocacy for children and for fundraising.

**Evaluation**

UNICEF Azerbaijan has an up-to-date Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP), which guides planning and implementation of research, studies and evaluations and contributes to partners’ M&E capacity development. The IMEP was updated regularly and its implementation closely monitored by the Country Management Team, as part of the AMP. The office actively contributed to strengthening in-country M&E capacity.

An Evaluation Management Committee was established in the office to ensure the overall quality of evaluation processes, endorse evaluation reports, and oversee development and implementation of the management responses to evaluations. Evaluations commissioned by the office are intended to provide impartial, fair and independent analysis of the results achieved, lessons learned as well as recommendations for future action.

The most recent evaluation was commissioned in 2013 in the Education programme: a formative evaluation of the Active Learning Teaching Policy and Practice in Azerbaijan. The Management Response to the Evaluation was developed immediately after the Evaluation Report was finalized. To follow up on the evaluation’s recommendations, in 2014 UNICEF provided international expertise to the Ministry of Education with a detailed proposal on actions required for teaching reforms in the country. Based on UNICEF’s recommendations, the Ministry of Education prepared the first set of standards and competencies for teacher certification and
their professional development and conducted initial skill assessment of teachers in Baku in May 2014. This is an interim step within the MoE’s broader goal to establish new teacher quality improvement system that will link their wages to their performance.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

UNICEF Azerbaijan has undergone transaction-based efficiency analysis to streamline the time spent on SAP/VISION which was later used as a basis for a staffing Full-Time Equivalence analysis. The results were used for staff time allocations and time management, as well as for understanding the staff involvement in business processes.

It was agreed to identify the opportunities to maximize staff productivity with the help of good planning cross sectorally.

UNDP and UNICEF in Azerbaijan established joint Long-Term Arrangements (LTAs) to reduce costs on supplies and consumables. Most of supplies were procured locally, supporting local markets and enabling procurement of quality supplies at competitive prices.

The office continuously looked into cost savings in all possible areas. Strategic planning and qualified assessment of information and communication technology (ICT) resources ensured their long-term usage and prospective savings; optimization of mobile tariffs, use of free facilities, virtual modes of meetings, interviews and teleconferences all reduced communications costs; and common services in procurement, human resources (HR) and travel continued. Staff members were encouraged to use VOIP or Skype for international calls with reimbursement of Skype credits.

Most official meetings were organized in meeting rooms which were offered free of charge by the business centre in which the office is located. This significantly reduced expenses and time spent on event organization.

Supply Management

UNICEF Azerbaijan’s supply component was small compared to previous years, totalling US$ 347,179. Printing of reports and project materials were the main procurement undertaken by the office. Local printing houses were used for printing of reports and training materials, as well as visibility items using joint LTAs of UNDP and other UN agencies. The main sources of procurement were local markets which have been improving in timeliness and quality.

The office assisted partners, namely MOH and, GAVI to use Procurement Services in 2014. Vaccines and cold chain equipment with a total value of US$4,030,047 were procured (cold chain devices - US$18,600, vaccines - US$4,011,447)

UNICEF Azerbaijan signed LTAs with an Information Technology (IT) maintenance service, and for design, and also shared UN joint LTAs for transportation, translation, hotels and conferencing facility services to reduce the need for additional solicitation procedures.

The office procured IT supply items mainly from Supply Division and from global LTA suppliers, as per the organisation’s supply rules and procedures.

There was no loss in local and offshore procurement in 2014. The office does not have a warehouse.
Security for Staff and Premises

The UNICEF Azerbaijan office is located in a secured building, which is a business centre with controlled access to building. The Office has a security focal point, a warden and a deputy warden who have contact details of staff, as well as their address for easy access in case of emergencies. Wardens serve as back-ups to support the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS).

The UNICEF office premises is compliant with the UN’s Minimum Operating Security Standards, which was confirmed by 2014 audit report. UNDSS pays regular visits to check the compliance of international staff member’s residences compliance with the UN’s Minimum Operating Residential Security Standards. The office BCP and Disaster Risk Reduction plans were being updated regularly.

Human Resources

Recruitment of two senior management posts were completed in 2014, with the new Representative commencing duties in July and the Deputy Representative in November. The office underwent the recruitment process for a Health Specialist post, however after the recommended candidate did not accept the offer, it was agreed to postpone the process until the new Country Programme.

The Performance Appraisal System (PAS) for 2013 for all staff was completed. The Performance Evaluation Reports for 2014 were discussed during the year and agreed with the respective supervisors. Mid-year progress review discussions between staff and supervisors were conducted to assess performance and to monitor the progress of the individual work plan outputs. Staff worked with their supervisors, and took into consideration the competencies related to their job profile when submitting their development plan. Staff periodically reviewed their development needs and access learning, training and development resources appropriate to their prioritized needs.

The Local Human Resource Development Committee was convened to develop the Office Learning and Training Plan which was implemented by over 50 per cent.

The Peer Support Volunteers (PSV) system has been functioning in the office since 2003. A second PSV (male) was trained and is able to provide support to staff. A “work-life balance” approach was promoted by the office, and options such as flexi-time were used by staff on an as-need basis.

Staff well-being and security, as well as earning and development issues were discussed at general staff meetings and the CMT. The office held a retreat to discuss plans for the year which strengthened team spirit and improved work relations.

Several staff members were seconded to the other offices to provide temporary support: Communications Assistant to support temporary staff gap in Turkey.

The UNICEF Operations Manager supported UNFPA recruitment processes during the year.

A request was approved by the Regional Director to use RR funds for one Other Resources (OR) funded post (Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist) as the office did not have adequate OR funding.
Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

A number of ICT changes were implemented in UNICEF Azerbaijan office, in line with the global/Regional ICT Strategy.

The major change for the office was the "Office 365" project, which included the office email system's migration from Lotus to Outlook, introduction of Lync and One Drive which had a big impact on business. After these transitions, the system backup efficiency and mail system availability was increased. Also with the introduction of OneDrive, the access to the major information resources in the case of emergency was made available. The migration of all servers to the virtual environment also increased the recovery speed of the system.

As these changes decreased the ICT Assistant's workload, in line with the regional priorities for efficiency and effectiveness, it was agreed to reduce the post to half time in order to release funds for GSSC project from June 2015. With this measure the office avoided to outsource the ICT assistance and also was able to make some cost savings.

Programme Components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 By the end of 2015, more children benefit from responsive and child-friendly services, with reduced disparities in outcomes

Analytical Statement of Progress:

According to this Program Component Result's (PCR) theory of change, disparities in health, educational and social protection outcomes will be reduced if respective services become more women- and child-friendly so more women and children get access to them.

Some progress has been achieved in reducing infant mortality rate from 32 (2008 baseline) to 30 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2013. Percentage of pregnant women receiving antenatal care stayed almost unchanged during 2008 – 2012 at a level of 90 according to official statistics.

Although data on the progress on other indicators under PCR 1 are not available however, there has been significant progress made for example an official decision was made by the Government to transit to International Live Birth Definition (ILBD) as of 1 January 2015 and also developed the clinical protocols for institutionalizing ILBD with UNICEF’s assistance. UNICEF also assisted to introduce of new ways of school management to support Government’s school autonomy initiative this includes development and institutionalization an executive education module for school Principals.

Introduction of legal aid services to children in conflict and contact with the law as well as piloting introduction of juvenile judges and prosecutors were major steps to make responsive and child friendly service. Further progress towards social services reform and development of family-based care was made. Youth Houses were revamped and supported to ensure meaningful participation of young people and adolescents in decision making at the local level.
**OUTPUT 1** By the end of 2015, the Ministry of Education ensures the nationwide application of child friendly school (CFS) standards, particularly by schools serving vulnerable and marginalised children.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF provided substantial technical assistance and capacity development to support national level reforms in teacher development and school management areas. Progress on reforms in inclusive education of children with disabilities was achieved via successful advocacy for approval of the state-funded strategy, which was submitted for the President’s approval. This contributes to Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda - area 3 - Children’s right to education: Early learning and school readiness.

New ways of school management were introduced through support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) school autonomy initiative. Within this initiative, the leading private university in the area of management developed and institutionalised an executive education module for school Principals.

UNICEF contributed to teaching reforms in the Country. Based on the UNICEF’s recommendations, Ministry of Education prepared a first set of standards and competencies for teacher certification and their professional development. This is an interim result of the MoE’s wider goal to establish a new teacher quality improvement system that will link their wages to performance.

UNICEF's summer school readiness programme continued in three remote districts with 100 per cent Government funding. This contributes to Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda - area 3, which is Children’s right to education: Early learning and school readiness.

Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) continued working in 1,500 schools of the country, involving parents to the administration of education-training process and organizing public control over education by enhancing parent-teacher cooperation.

On Disaster Risk Reduction, UNICEF Azerbaijan conducted Disaster Risk Analysis at subnational level in one selected district. As a result, a multi-disciplinary working group conducted an analysis of multi-hazard risk faced by children and their families. Within this activity the capacity of the local stakeholders was developed in terms of assessing hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities so they can independently conduct Disaster Risk Analysis. This contributes to Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda - area 9, which is Disaster Risk Reduction.

DRA methodology was acknowledged as effective complementary instrument for improvement of disaster preparedness capacity of the Ministry of Emergency and its units at sub-national level. As a follow-up UNICEF was requested to facilitate the scaling up of the methodology through the Ministry to national level.

UNICEF started WASH in Schools programme being funded by Asian Development Bank and “Azersu” national water company in 27 town schools of three districts. Baseline data on water, sanitation and hygiene education in schools established. The information will contribute to address gaps in ensuring schools have international WASH standards, through support for capacity development and a social mobilization campaign ‘Clean Hands – Healthy Hands’ in schools and communities. An agreement was reached with the Ministry of Education to develop a national hygiene education policy, standards and protocols on the basis of the evidence.
generated from the model applied in three districts. This will enable MoE to set up WASH in Schools Programme at national level.

OUTPUT 2 By the end of 2015 national and local authorities provide child care services and associated mechanisms that meet international standards; 2. Ensuring and strengthening social protection of orphans and children deprived of parental care, as well as street children.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF in cooperation with the State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs drafted the National Children Strategy 2015-2020 in line with Azerbaijan 2020: Vision to the Future. The Strategy sets the main vision on how the child rights protection system should look like in 2020.

UNICEF leveraged US$2.2 million of government funds to be used to NGO family-based social care services to vulnerable children across the country. Day care services for children at risk of institutionalization, community-based rehabilitation services for children with disabilities, psycho-social and legal aid services for children leaving penitentiary institutions, are just a few examples of such NGO programmes.

UNICEF provided support to the Government in assessing impact of existing social protection mechanisms on the most vulnerable children. As a result, different scenarios to increase effectiveness and efficiency of cash transfers and social care services will be developed and offered to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population (MLSPP).

UNICEF supported the MLSPP to draft a new Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which received positive comments from the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. UNICEF advocated for the adoption of the draft law at various high level meetings with the Parliament and Government.

OUTPUT 3 Follow-up on the training of trainers activity conducted for the master trainers on adults-learning methodology to train future resource people on J4C.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In partnership with the Azerbaijan Lawyers Confederation (ALC), UNICEF contributed to improvement of the legislative framework to enable major Juvenile Justice System reforms and access to justice for children in Azerbaijan. The Legal Review of the national legislation on access to justice for children was implemented and legislative gaps identified. The review is the most up-to-date analysis of the existing legal framework, and provides the basis to advocate for further legal reforms to advance justice for children in Azerbaijan.

In addition, UNICEF and ALC launched a free child legal aid service in one of the ASAN service centres, with in-kind contributions from ASAN and financing from UNICEF/EU. The services covered more than 45 children and families in the two months of operation. UNICEF together with Reliable Future NGO and the MLSPP set up two Legal Aid and Diversion programmes in Ganja and Lankaran to meet the needs of children in conflict and contact with the law in the west and south-east regions of the Country. The services will become fully operational in January 2015.

UNICEF high-level advocacy resulted in the MoJ assigning three judges to specialize on juvenile cases in Baku Grave Crimes Court (two female and one male judges). UNICEF also supported the MoJ to set up a pilot child-friendly room in the same court building, where audio-
video devices will help to minimize the impact on children victims of crimes and children in conflict with the law. All these contributes to Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda – area 2, - Justice for Children: Enabling justice systems to respect and protect child rights.

**OUTPUT 4 In System Strengthening for Mother and Child Health and Nutrition in 2012-2013**

UNICEF will focus on advocacy and technical assistance to the Government in promotion of quality improvement of neonatal care services through introduction and implementation of supportive supervision approach of on-going service delivery practices. Infant and Young Child Feeding with focus on revitalization of Exclusive Breast-feeding; promotion of optimal complementary feeding and improving parenting skills for child nutrition and care will be further supported. Advocacy for adoption of low-cost high-impact interventions for anaemia prevention and control including flour fortification as well as Early Detection and Prevention of Childhood Disability, continuation of monitoring of Iodine Deficiency/Universal Salt Iodation Law implementation and technical assistance to the Government in transition to International Live Birth Definition (ILBD) will remain among UNICEF priorities.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

The State Programme to improve Mother and Child Health Care developed by the Ministry of Health (MoH) with support from UNICEF and other partners was approved for implementation by the President of Azerbaijan in June 2014.

According to the State Programme the country officially endorsed transition to the International Live Birth Definition (ILBD) effective from 1 January 2015. UNICEF supported the review of reporting documents and clinical protocols to bring them in line with ILBD requirements. All clinical protocols were endorsed by the Ministry of Health. Support to MOH will continue to monitor the situation with transition to ILBD and make sure that health care professionals have capacity to render high quality obstetric and neonatal care.

In the course of determinant analysis, lack of Early Detection Prevention and Early Intervention (EDPEI) policies/standards were identified as a key bottleneck for reduction of incidence and severity of some disabilities. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health in development of the National Action Plan on EDPEI and advocated for its approval. The Action Plan envisages development of a National policy and standards of EDPEI, pilot implementation of early screening and early interventions for childhood disabilities and developmental delays in delivery and primary care institutions of Baku.

In 2014, UNICEF facilitated cooperation between the MoH and Ankara University on EDPEI. As a result of training and experience exchange, MoH team developed a plan for piloting EDPEI in selected facilities of Baku. Also, trained health care professionals started implementation of the Monitoring Child Development tool from December 2014.

The MoH was further supported by UNICEF in the introduction of the PCV-10 vaccine. In line with a Communication Strategy for introduction of PCV-10 vaccine developed in 2013 with technical support from UNICEF, communication campaigns reached 150 health care providers and 1,000 parents in Baku, Ganja and Guba. As a result, health care professionals implementing vaccination felt more confident to address concerns of parents related to vaccination of children.

UNICEF provided procurement services to the MoH in purchasing vaccines under the
State Programme on Immunization of Children and for the first time the country used only WHO prequalified vaccines for vaccination of children.

OUTPUT 5 By end of 2015, partnership with parliamentarians, media and private sector underpin an enabling environment for the fulfilment of children’s rights.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In order to meet the social care needs of children and adolescents UNICEF leveraged resources through working with the MLSPP on funding NGO programmes. As a result of the Government funding, 15 NGOs provided different types of services such as day care services, rehabilitation services, mobile services for children with disabilities, and shelter services for children living on the street to 1,600 children during 2014.

UNICEF leveraged financial support (40 per cent of funds) and organizational contributions from the Ministry of Youth and Sports to support youth participation in decision-making.

Advocacy and fundraising efforts were forged by expanding existing and building new partnerships, including alliances with private sector around children-related issues. UNICEF established relationship with new potential donors from the private sector Nar Mobile and 28 Cinema, and initiated partnership with BP, and Mila companies, as well as maintained ongoing partnerships and explored further opportunities with long time partners such as, Procter & Gamble, Four Seasons, and Azersun. The office continued its efforts to promote child-friendly CSR and the concepts of Business Principles and Child Rights by continuing its discussions with the Government, Parliament and private sector.

As a result of partnership with WHO, the Government of Azerbaijan started procurement of vaccines for routine immunization of children through UNICEF Supply Division in 2014. Using UNICEF procurement services the country has saved some US$2,000,000 which was used for Measles Rubella campaign among children aged 11-15 in Baku and selected districts where cases of measles outbreak took place in 2013.

OUTCOME 2 By the end of 2015 Azerbaijan advances the fulfilment of key outstanding observations of the Committee on the Right of the Child

Analytical Statement of Progress:

The theory of change for this programme component is as follows. Significant advancement in realisation of child rights in Azerbaijan will be possible if key outstanding recommendations of the UN CRC Concluding Observations (UN CRC CO) are implemented. During 2014 the following progress in implementation of the UN CRC CO has been achieved.

The best interests of the child were further mainstreamed in the judicial proceedings by introducing juvenile judges and juvenile prosecutors in selected courts in Baku as well as accessible legal services for children and their representatives available through ASAN centres. These changes are expected to broaden access to justice for children, improve quality of legal services as well as enhance quality of judicial proceeding making them more child-friendly for children in conflict and contact with the law. These achievements contribute to the Regional Knowledge and Leadership - area 2: which is Justice for Children: Enabling justice systems to respect and protect child rights.

Access of adolescents to HIV testing and counselling has improved and 220 more girls
benefitted from sports in 2014 through adolescents’ health and development promotion initiatives. Also, young people and adolescents actively participated in decision making on local level through town hall meetings and Youth Advocate Groups’ activities covering 21 districts of Azerbaijan. These activities contribute the Regional Knowledge and Leadership - area 10, which is Adolescents: Second Decade, Second Chance.

Despite this progress, a number of the UN CRC CO Recommendations still need to be implemented: collection of disaggregated data on the situation of children, women and families’ needs to be improved; impact of policies and budget allocations on children needs to be consistently analysed; investments for children still need to increase; quality social services for children and families need to be introduced on a broader scale; and norms of domestic legislation need to be harmonised with the UN CRC and other key international human rights instruments.

OUTPUT 1 By the end of 2015, the country increasingly provides an infrastructure for coordination, situation monitoring and responding to violations to children's rights.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
A Youth Advisory Board has been established by UNICEF to advise the UN and UNICEF on issues of concern to them and ensure mainstreaming of the best interests of the child in all areas of programming. The Advisory Board was involved in UNAPF 2016-2020 development and the CPD 2016-2020.

UNICEF supported organising the third National Children Forum, with participation of 350 children and adolescents from across the country. The Forum created a platform for children and adolescents to discuss the issues that are important to them, directly ask their questions from members of the Parliament and Government and prepare a final Statement to the President, highlighting major challenges and making a call for action. This was a cross-sectoral activity, which involved many high-ranking officials. It was also part of the Government’s policy to implement the provisions of the CRC and the State Committee as the agency responsible for coordination of the implementation of the CRC was the key organizer.

OUTPUT 2 The country increasingly provides an infrastructure for coordination, situation monitoring and responding to violations to children's rights

Analytical Statement of Progress:
At the system level, the capacity development programme for the National Preventive Group of the Ombudsman was initiated to support the independent monitoring of child rights violations in all closed institutions, including child care institutions, police detention centres and hospitals. UNICEF also worked with the Ombudsman to find out more information relating to violence against children in educational facilities in selected districts.

Technical assistance was provided to the State Statistics Committee in introduction of deprivation analysis to strengthen poverty measurement.

All number of studies and surveys planned for the year were completed. The Social Services Needs Assessment and Mapping as well as a study on the Impact of Fuel Price Increase on Household and Child Poverty and Wellbeing were completed.
To strengthen internal data and knowledge management, the on-line trip reporting system was upgraded and an Advocacy and Policy Advice database developed. Baseline data on the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 indicators were collected and entered into the database.

OUTPUT 3 By end of 2015, the Government and CSOs addresses gaps in the institutional capacity to promote positive and measurable social and behavioural outcomes especially among vulnerable groups in targeted areas.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Progress has been achieved in institutionalisation of communication for development with government partners. National guidelines, standards and protocols on strategic communication for behaviour and social change via consultations and discussions with focal points in the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Sport and State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs were finalised. Legal review of the national guidelines, standards and protocols was undertaken on their compliance with the legislation of Azerbaijan and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for its approval.

As a result of capacity development programme with the Public Administration Academy, strategic communication for behaviour and social change courses were institutionalised and delivered to the civil servants at central level and the 3rd grade students. Both courses demonstrated that strategic communication for behaviour and social change is relevant to the local context and needs of duty bearers to better communicate with claim holders.

UNICEF and UNHCR implemented a joint project to stop cases of child marriages in IDP communities in three districts of the country. UNICEF contributed to setting up community based social advocacy mechanism to increase awareness and knowledge on the negative consequences of child marriages. 3 community social advocacy groups developed response plan and prevented 22 attempted child marriages in the communities.

OUTPUT 4 By end of 2015, the Government ensures enabling environment for adolescents and young people, including those vulnerable and marginalized for exercising their right to participate in decision-making processes on issues affecting their lives.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
2014 saw the biggest number of adolescents and youth referred to HIV Testing and Counselling (HTC) services by the two UNICEF implementing partners. Of the total 3,516 referred in 2014, 705 were sex workers and 1,577 were Injecting Drug Users (IDUs), children on the streets, or adolescents and youth belonging to other marginalized groups. Of them, 2,282 got tested of those 719 were females 1,563 were males.

Piloting of HIV saliva-based rapid testing in Azerbaijan coordinated by UNICEF through the National AIDS Centre attracted more youth to HIV testing and counselling. Youth and adolescents across Azerbaijan, including the most remote districts, received easy-to-get access to an innovative source of HIV and AIDS information through a newly designed HIV-related web-site tested by the end users. It provides them with broad opportunities to increase their knowledge on HIV and AIDS as well as learn about HTC service in the Country.

An advocacy campaign to support a review of the HIV and AIDS legislation which was launched in early 2013 by UNICEF Azerbaijan and the "National Assembly of Youth Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan" (NAYORA) was successfully completed. A special Parliamentary session took place in December 2014 to highlight the
recommendations of the joint UNICEF-NAYORA team to remove the legislative barriers through introducing Most at Risk Adolescents (MARA) and youth at risk into the National AIDS Strategy. A commitment was made by the National Parliament to create a special Working Group to follow up on the decisions taken at the special session.

UNICEF continued efforts to provide technical support to the Government with addressing the bottlenecks hindering realization of adolescents and young people’s right to participate in decision making, which resulted in development of the National Youth Strategy, finalization of the Statute of Youth Houses and establishment of the first UN Youth Advisory Council in Azerbaijan. In parallel, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the National Paralympic Committee for the establishment of the first Children’s Paralympic Committee in the world. Consequently, a disability stigma reduction, End Violence and Baku City Accessibility campaigns were launched jointly with the key government stakeholders. With UNICEF’s advocacy, the Government commenced planning for how to make some facilities disability accessible for the Baku 2015 European Games, and to assist to guide the process several western-educated social workers were hired by the Organizing. These efforts contribute the Regional Knowledge and Leadership - area 10, which is Adolescents: Second Decade, Second Chance.

UNICEF expanded the participation of young people in decision-making to 14 additional districts, thus reaching 21 across the country. This was possible due to effective implementation of the Azerbaijani Youth Advocate Programme. This flagship initiative resulted in one youth consultation followed by a town-hall meeting with the local authorities conducted in each of the 14 districts. For the country, where the main bottleneck for youth development is their limited participation in decision-making, this has proven to be a unique experience whereby the ideas of youth advocates were welcomed by the decision makers.

OUTCOME 3 Effective & efficient programme management and operations support

Analytical Statement of Progress:

2012 was challenging year with implementation of IPSAS and VISION. UNICEF Azerbaijan office had successfully overcome the difficulties and as a major achievement of the year under this PCR, it must be mentioned that the main goal was succeeded; programme was successfully supported throughout the year. The detailed activities under each IR were described in respective sections.

OUTPUT 1 Effective and efficient management and stewardship of financial resources, including administration, finance, office security and equipment, maintenance and vehicles.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF Azerbaijan is past the mid-term of the country programme 2011-2015. All the changes reflected in the 2013 Mid-Term Review (MTR) were implemented. The office made its contributions to upcoming GSSC project during the PBR process in April 2014.

The Annual Management Plan was prepared through a participatory process and shared with the regional office. The revised Committees and relevant terms of reference continued to be used. All statutory Committees meet regularly and function well. The CMT took the initiative to improve management performance, with a focus on overcoming initial difficulties arising from
the new ERP system of SAP-Vision. The office and RO dashboard reports were discussed at CMT and staff meetings regularly.

The CMT’s agenda included review of programme and operational goals and priorities, office performance indicators, management of resources and guidance on PBR decisions, staff learning and development, staff welfare, safety and security, and other programme and operational issues.

OUTPUT 2 Effective and efficient management and stewardship of financial resources, including administration, finance, office security and equipment, maintenance and vehicles.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The disbursement of cash assistance to partners and liquidation of advances has been implemented and recorded on a basis of FACE documenting. At the beginning of the year the office conducted a HACT refreshment training to its current partners. All Implementing Partners receiving cash assistance were checked financially by spot checks or micro assessments depending on the amount received. The office has one DCT with outstanding balance over 9 months from the period when it acted as action office for other country offices for one project. Due to the funding expiry restrictions it cannot be liquidated although the partner’s report and documentation were cleared in time. This error is being sorted out by UNICEF headquarters. In 2014, bank reconciliations for every month were carried out in a timely manner with no delays.

Recruitment to vacant positions was conducted throughout the year based on the needs and requirements of the programme and operations. The recruitment process was based on UNICEF Competency Framework which includes core values, core competencies and functional competencies.

There were no recruitments in 2014 locally.
International recruitments: Office has a new Representative since July 2014. The previous representative was transferred from Baku in Jun 2014. The recruitment of the Deputy Representative is ongoing. Office recommendations were made and sent to RO for further decisions.

UNICEF office is still rented in commercial building and this significantly affects the office budget. The negotiations with government in 2014 for free office space is still ongoing.

OUTPUT 3 Effective and efficient management of Human Capacity, including human resource management, staff development and learning, staff well-being, staff related security costs.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
PAS for 2012 for all staff completed. PAS for 2013 were discussed during the year and agreed with the respective supervisors. Mid-year progress review discussions between staff and supervisors have been conducted to assess performance and to monitor the progress of the individual workplan outputs. Staff worked with their supervisor, and took into consideration the competencies related to their job profile and developed the development plan. Staff reviews their development needs and access learning, training and development resources appropriate to their prioritized needs.
OUTPUT 4 Human Resources

Analytical Statement of Progress:
On-track

OUTCOME 4 By the end of 2015, Ministry of Health establishes a functioning system of early
detection, prevention and intervention to address disabilities of children aged 0-3.

Analytical Statement of Progress:

A State Programme for 2014-2020 on improving Mother and Child Health Care developed by
MOH with technical assistance from partners, including UNICEF was approved for
implementation by the President of Azerbaijan Republic in June, 2014. One of the important
parts of the State Programme is transition to International Live Birth Definition which stimulates
higher quality of neonatal care, and also facilitates international comparability of child mortality
data. In line with transition to ILBD, UNICEF provided technical assistance in
developing/updating clinical practice guidelines recently and will continue its technical support
for full implementation of ILBD. The State Programme defines 2014 and 2015 as a period for
preparation to the transition which considers review and update of legislative basis and
reporting forms, training of health care providers on ILBD.

As a result of Determinant Analysis, lack of Early Detection Prevention and Early Interventions
policies/standards has been identified as a key bottleneck for support to reduction of incidence
and severity of some disabilities. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health in development of
National Action Plan on EDPEI and advocated for its approval. The Action Plan envisages
development of a National policy and standards of EDPEI, pilot implementation of early
screening and early interventions for childhood disabilities and developmental delays in delivery
and primary care institutions of the capital Baku. In 2015 UNICEF ensured participation of a
team consisting of health officials and health care providers in training on "Paediatric
Development" organized by UNICEF Regional Office in Ankara for representatives of five
countries of the region. It triggered cooperation between the Ministry of Health and Ankara
University on EDEPI. Along with experience exchange the Azerbaijani team developed a plan
for piloting EDEPI in selected facilities after IGMCD training for health care providers. Next
round of the training on IGMCD for health care providers in Baku will be supported by UNICEF.

The findings of the National Nutrition Survey of Children and Women of Azerbaijan discussed
with MOH and the report of the survey will be printed in coming week. The National level
advocacy Round Table is planned with the decision makers from the relevant ministries and
parliament members to reach a consensus on introduction of the national food fortification
program.

MOH was further supported by UNICEF in introduction of PCV-10 vaccine. In line with a
Communication Strategy for introduction of PCV-10 vaccine developed in 2013 with technical
support from UNICEF, communication campaigns reaching out 150 health care providers and
1,000 parents in Baku, Ganja and Guba were held. As a result, health care professionals
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**OUTPUT 1**

By the end of 2015, MoH develops and adopts normative framework for Early Detection, Prevention and Early Intervention (EDPEI) and necessary standards for transition to the ILBD and develops healthcare providers’ capacity to implement them.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

A new State Programme on Improving Mother and Child Health targeted 2016 as a year of transition to ILBD, while 2014 and 2015 were defined as a preparatory period for transition. UNICEF initiated discussion on possible support to facilitate preparations.

UNICEF continued its advocacy with MOH on approval of the National Action Plan on EDEP which is still under consideration. Approval of the State programme on Improving Mother and Child Health which sets the implementation of EDEP programme in Azerbaijan as a priority.
opened a window of opportunity for development of norms and standards on EDEP and UNICEF is in good position to support MOH in this.

Simultaneously with ongoing advocacy on approval of the National Action Plan and development of normative documents and standards on EDEP, UNICEF organized participation of a team consisting of health officials and health care providers in training/experience exchange in Ankara led by experts in paediatric development. The team from Azerbaijan had an opportunity to familiarize with EDEP practices of various countries in the world, share experience with the teams from participating countries, and observe practical sessions and consultations led by experts from department of Paediatric Development of Ankara University. Guidance and coaching for implementation of EDEP is planned to be conducted by experts from Ankara University. The experts will also support establishment of a Resource Centre to guide and support EDEP implementation locally.

OUTCOME 5 By the end of 2015, adolescents and young people will have knowledge and access to high quality confidential HIV testing and counselling services.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Efforts have been further increased to tackle one of the main bottlenecks revealed through the MORES analyses and related to “Young people having problems with accessing free youth-oriented services”. Recognizing that access to and quality of services is directly linked to the availability of up-to-date legislative framework as well as sufficient capacity at the end of supply providers and increased demand for HIV services among the rights-holders, UNICEF continued advocating for removal of barriers at the policy level and increasing knowledge and skills at the level of service providers and MARA.

As a result, , 2014, being the third year of the regional multi-country EU-UNICEF project, has already seen an increased number of adolescents and youth referred to HIV Testing and Counselling (HTC) services by the two UNICEF implementing partners. Of the total 1,742 referred in the six months of the year, 642 are sex workers and 1,092 are IDUs, street children or adolescents and youth belonging to other marginalized groups. The result has become possible thanks to an improved capacity of both the governmental (the National AIDS Centre) and non-governmental organisations to render youth-friendly services using modern approaches. Youth and adolescents across Azerbaijan, including the most remote districts, have also received an easy-to-get access to an innovative source of HIV/AIDS information through a newly designed HIV-related web-site tested by the end users. It provides them with broad opportunities to increase their knowledge on HIV/AIDS as well as learn about HTC service in their country.

OUTPUT 1 By the end of 2015, necessary HIV/AIDS-related legislative framework is developed and implemented to remove service access barriers.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
An advocacy campaign to support a review of the HIV/AIDS legislation launched in early 2013 by UNICEF Azerbaijan and the "National Assembly of Youth Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan" (NAYORA) was successfully completed. As a result, the main project stakeholders from the Government and the National Parliament (NP) were sensitized on the current situation in the country as well as on the international context related to HTC relevant policy and legislative barriers to HTC for MARA. The commitment was taken by the NP to schedule a special session in the fall to highlight the recommendations of the joint UNICEF-NAYORA team to remove the legislative barriers through introducing MARA and youth at risk into the National AIDS Strategy.
OUTCOME 6 By the end of 2015, the Ministry of Education will establish a framework for Child Friendly Education System including Child Friendly Schools and effective education management on national and subnational level.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Together with the Ministry of Education, five main entry points were identified for introduction of Child Friendly Education into education system. These are: Teacher Development; School Management; Inclusive Education of Children with Disabilities; Parent Engagement; and School Readiness. These areas are part of Azerbaijan Education Development Strategy. Accordingly the rolling workplan for 2014 and 2015 included activities to address these five priorities as a main priority area and some progress on this direction has been achieved. The MOE has continued to mainstream DRR into in-service teacher training and formal school curriculum. In 2014 the plan was to further strengthen the mainstreaming process however activities could not start due to delay in funding from ECHO.

OUTPUT 1 By the end of 2015, MOE increases access of children to pre-school education and fully applies CFS standards including access of children with disabilities to education.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Based on the recommendations of an international consultant on Teacher Certification, the Ministry of Education prepared a first set of standards and competencies for teachers and conducted initial skill assessment of teachers in Baku. Parent Teacher Associations continued to monitor application of CFS standards in 300 schools as well as improvement of hygiene and sanitation in CFS schools via effective engagement of parents into school activities. The summer school readiness programme continued in three remote districts with 100 per cent government funding. A draft State Programme on Inclusive Education of Children with Disabilities is going through the pre-approval process. It received positive feedback from all line ministries and currently is under review in the MoF.

OUTPUT 2 By the end of 2015, DRR is mainstreamed into the main education policies and service provision.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2014, the plan was to further strengthen the mainstreaming process of DRR into education system, however activities could not start due to a delay in funding from the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO).

However, with funding from Global Resilience Set-aside funds, a Disaster Risk Analysis has been started in Gabala district with good cross-sectoral collaboration on sub-national level. Multi departmental working group was established, trained and is collecting relevant data for the analysis.

OUTCOME 7 By the end of 2015, the Government establishes a functioning mechanism to identify, register, refer/report and intervene to prevent and protect children from violation of their rights.
**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

The recent studies, legislative reform initiatives, advocacy efforts and discussions with partners have resulted in a renewed bi-lateral dialogue on the need for a system that will meet the needs of vulnerable children and their families in a holistic approach.

**OUTPUT 1** By the end of 2015, a government Strategy for Children and relevant guidelines are adopted and implementation started to prevent institutionalization of vulnerable children and ensure protection of children at risk.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to ensure that community-based services continued to receive funding from the Government with limited impact from the major management change at the Ministry. The Social Services Needs Assessment and Mapping Study was shared with the Ministry to help them take evidence-based policy decisions in targeting the needs of vulnerable population. The progress was slow due to major staff changes.

UNICEF worked very closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to draft a new Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which received good comments from the UN CRPD Committee in Geneva. UNICEF will continue working with the Ministry to advocate for the adoption of the law by the national Parliament. The staff changes at the disability welfare department in the ministry made the progress slow.

A national consultant and an international consultant were recruited to work with the government partners to draft the National Children Strategy, which lays out the main structure of the child protection mechanisms in the country. The Strategy has been drafted, and is at the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs to be agreed among the line ministries. It will be sent to the President for approval once cleared off from line ministries. A separate Action Plan and Costing documents will then have to be prepared.

**OUTPUT 2** By the end of 2015, Government adopts and implements adequate legislation and policy to establish national juvenile justice system.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

UNICEF worked with the Azerbaijan Lawyers Confederation to change the legislative framework to enable greater reforms in Juvenile Justice and also established legal aid programme within the newly established ASAN service centres. A national consultant was hired to conduct comprehensive legal analysis to find out the gaps in the national legislative acts in terms of juvenile justice and access to justice for children. The Report will be discussed with the relevant ministries and government agencies to propose necessary changes in the national legislation acts to make them in full compliance with the international standards in access to justice for children.

**OUTCOME 8** By the end of 2015, key Government structures institutionalize a modern system allowing for increased young people’s participation and inclusion.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

UNICEF continuous efforts to provide technical support to the Government with addressing the bottlenecks hindering realization of adolescents and young people’s right to participate in decision making, resulted in development of the National Youth Strategy, finalization of the
Statute of Youth Houses and establishment of the first UN Youth Advisory Council in Azerbaijan. In parallel, MOU was signed with the National Paralympic Committee for the establishment of the first Children’s Paralympic Committee in the world. As a result, a disability stigma reduction and city accessibility campaigns were launched jointly with the key government stakeholders.

OUTPUT 1 By the end of 2015, a model for young people's participation and inclusion is developed in 21 districts to support the system change at the national level.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The innovative Azerbaijani Youth Advocate Programme to promote participation of young people in decision-making was expanded by UNICEF to 14 additional districts thus reaching 21 across the country. One youth consultation followed by a town-hall meeting with the local authorities was conducted in each of the 14 districts. The situation when groups of youth advocates were welcomed by the decision makers with their ideas is unique for the country where the main bottleneck for youth development is their traditionally limited participation in decision-making. The main objective of the model is to strengthen a demand side, shape opinion and provide critical knowledge and skills to youth in 21 districts so that they can participate in decision making on the issues affecting their lives.

OUTCOME 9 By the end of 2015, implementation of child rights is underpinned by effective partnerships, increased awareness of child rights, and new knowledge.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Since the beginning of the year, progress has been achieved in further strengthening evidence and knowledge base on children through completion of 63.3% of research activities planned for this year. Also, contribution to systems strengthening has been made through further capacity development of Ombudsman’s office and State Statistics Committee of Azerbaijan in monitoring child rights violations in institutions and child poverty respectively. Public awareness of child rights has been further strengthened through high-level events, ongoing work with media and new partnerships with corporate sector. C4D capacity development programme with Public Administration Academy demonstrated good results in terms of knowledge and skills gained by public officials. UN joint project to address the issue of child marriages has been successfully launched.

OUTPUT 1 By the end of 2015, new knowledge is generated and used to inform policy dialogue and strengthen State's child rights monitoring and social policy planning and implementation capacity.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
On the system level, the capacity development programme for the National Preventive Group of the Ombudsman has been initiated to support the independent monitoring of child rights violations in all closed institutions, including child care institutions, police detention centres and hospitals. UNICEF also has been working with the Ombudsman to find out violence against children in educational facilities in selected districts. Also, technical assistance was provided to the State Statistics Committee in introduction of deprivation analysis to strengthen poverty measurement (expert visit implemented, questionnaire developed and tested).
On the data and research side, 63.6% of studies and surveys planned for this year have been completed by now. Social Services Needs Assessment and Mapping as well as Study on the Impact of fuel price increase on household and child poverty and wellbeing have been completed. Finalisation of the National Nutrition Survey of Children and Women of Azerbaijan remains to be a challenge and is expected to be completed by the end of September 2014. To strengthen internal data and knowledge management, on-line trip reporting system has been upgraded and Advocacy and Policy Advice database has been developed. Baseline data on the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 indicators were collected and entered into the database.

**OUTPUT 2** By the end of 2015, the necessary environment is created for adoption of child friendly CSR legislation, partnerships formed and policy recommendations are developed and submitted to the Parliament

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The general public’s knowledge and understanding of children’s rights, the country’s commitments as well as results and challenges in achieving them were continuously enhanced through media, public events and high-level meetings. Regular contacts with counterparts and media representatives resulted in a number of opportunities for new partnerships focusing media and public attention on children.

UNICEF continued to be vocal in the national media throughout the year on such issues as disability, cooperation with the Government and other partners, education. The office commenced the development of a new country programme advocacy kit.

New advocacy partnerships were established on violence against children, with the movie theatre “28 Cinema” and AFFA, the Football Federation.

A number of high level events celebrating cooperation with the Government, as well as launching new partnerships, including BP and the Government, provided strong advocacy opportunities.

Work continued on resource mobilisation through partnerships, including those with BP, Azersun, Ata Holding, Azercell, FourSeasons, and NarMobile. Under the guidance of the UNICEF private fundraising and partnerships unit at headquarters, an international consultancy has been planned to identify existing laws, regulations and policies relating to business that have an impact on children’s rights.

**OUTPUT 3** By the end of 2015, the Government's and CSO's institutional capacity to plan and implement strategic communication for behaviour and social change is strengthened and social norms and practices on selected issues are addressed.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Progress was been achieved on institutionalization of communication for development with Government partners. National guidelines on strategic communication for behaviour and social change via consultations and discussions with focal points in the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Sport and State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs were finalized and submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers for approval.

A capacity development programme with the Public Administration Academy was completed with state civil servants and third year students at central level. For the period February - May, a
60-hour course was delivered to the students and their knowledge was assessed through a written exam. The results showed a good level of knowledge: of 28 students, 11 received the full marks (10 points) and the remainder either eight or nine points.

In July, UNICEF signed an agreement with ‘Azersu’ national water company to implement ADB funded WASH in Schools programme in 27 town schools of three districts. For the reporting period, all preparatory works, including gathering basic statistical data on water, sanitation and hygiene, drafting of a training manual on WASH in Schools and a C4D strategy, and inception report to ADB and ‘Azersu’ were completed.

In June, UNICEF and UNHCR started a joint project on child marriages in IDP communities in three districts. During the reporting period, UNICEF’s facilitators completed the course for community volunteers on child marriage, its negative consequences and development of a response plan to reduce the number of cases in their communities, and about to start establishment of community social advocacy groups to deliver the messages through community based events.

### Document Centre

#### Evaluation

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