Executive summary

As the first year of the innovative life-cycle approach under the new UNICEF Bangladesh Country Programme, 2017 was an award-winning year.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) and Ministry of Information (MoI) to launch Bangladesh’s first national multimedia campaign on ending child marriage (ECM). The social media component included a call to action to prevent child marriages by reporting incidences to the national 109 helpline for violence prevention. It reached more than 25 million Bangladeshis. Two of the public service announcements (PSAs) received awards at the Accolade Global Film Competition. The enactment of the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017 was a major step forward. UNICEF had provided support to draft the Rules of the Act.

UNICEF Bangladesh’s sanitation marketing project received an award for the best public-private-partnership for improving communities at the Public-Private-Partnership Awards organized by Concordia, the U.S. Department of State Secretary’s Office of Global Partnerships and the Darden School of Business, University of Virginia. With an effort designed to reach 240,000 people, UNICEF advocated for the use of public-private-partnerships for the implementation of market-based approaches to sanitation in collaboration with the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), International Development Enterprises (iDE) and a private company.

UNICEF launched a national Newborn Health Campaign in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and other partners. The campaign aims to raise awareness on essential newborn care and proper care seeking, and to scale-up priority newborn interventions, particularly in hard-to-reach and inaccessible areas.

UNICEF’s support to the National Nutrition Services Programme (NNS) included efforts to strengthen district evidence-based planning in 39 districts for decentralized decision-making, multisectoral engagement with key ministries and capacity building with support of District Nutrition Support Officers (DNSOs). This helped transform district nutrition governance, delivery, and utilization of services. A national meeting convened in late 2017 ended with a call for action to #UniteforNutrition—an initiative to accelerate implementation of the NNS.

UNICEF Bangladesh, in partnership with the Government’s Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), and Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), generated new evidence on the equity of coverage of social services for children and women, through a close-to-real-time platform, which includes a first-time module on attitudes and knowledge toward child marriage.

The economy continued to expand at a rate of 7.1 per cent and was projected to remain above that rate. The Government made a commitment to increase the allocation of national resources for children. With the presentation of the budget report on child investments by the Ministry of
Finance (MoF), a national process was initiated to increase the proportion of investments for children from 14 to 20 per cent by 2020. That being said, Bangladesh still has one of the lowest tax revenue/GDP ratios in the world, at nearly 10 per cent.

UNICEF Bangladesh’s urban programme was extended to six City Corporations, backed by intra-urban data. UNICEF support made the cities’ development planning and programming child-focused, addressing inequities and service delivery gaps.

UNICEF Bangladesh’s Facebook page gained 1.5 million followers, a rapid increase from 25,000 in March 2017, taking it to third position in UNICEF globally.

Programmatic visits in 2017 showed that challenges in monitoring and reporting systems for effective planning and limited government capacity for scaling-up successful models remained. Enactment of the Education Act was pending at year-end as consensus has not been reached among key stakeholders. A technical committee was established to address these issues and draft the final Act. A campaign of high-profile violence against bloggers, atheists and secular intellectuals continues since 2014 in Bangladesh, resulting in increased government control.

Programme implementation slowed during the last quarter of 2017 with the activation of the Level 3 Corporate Emergency Procedure due to more than 646,000 Rohingya refugees fleeing into Bangladesh. With partners, UNICEF promptly initiated a response with a funding requirement of US$76.1 million to reach 1.2 million people, addressing immediate needs and saving hundreds of thousands of lives. UNICEF led the nutrition, WASH, and education sectors and the child protection sub-sector. Prior to the crisis, the seventh Field Office was established in Cox’s Bazar to prepare for a potential large scale humanitarian crisis.

The official hand-over of 0.85 acre of Government land to UNICEF to build its office was completed in November, culminating efforts that began in 2015. The design of the new office building was underway at year end.

**Humanitarian assistance**

As a member of the Disaster Emergency Response Group and the Humanitarian Coordination Task Team (HCTT), UNICEF supported the Government of Bangladesh’s response to the influx of Rohingya refugees and to three natural disasters in 2017.

Following the landfall of Cyclone Mora over Bangladesh’s coastal eastern region on 30 May 2017, affecting a population of 335,000 people, including 105,500 Rohingyas, UNICEF reinforced its Rohingya Response in the sectors of WASH and child protection. A total of 37,500 people (including 19,500 women) were supported with improved WASH services to reduce the risk of life-threatening water and sanitation related diseases; 7,000 children received child protection support, including safe spaces and psychosocial counselling to cope with trauma; and 500 adults increased their awareness on child protection risks.

In June 2017, heavy monsoon rain triggered landslides in southeast Bangladesh affecting 77,484 people, including 30,738 children. With UNICEF support, 34,900 people (including 27,900 women) were reached with hygiene messages and 9,700 people gained access to basic sanitation. Two thousand women and adolescent girls gained access to private bathing cubicles and 2,000 people benefited from hygiene kits. A total of 660 children received recreational and psychosocial support through 10 child-friendly spaces (CFSs) and 4,400 children regained access to education in government primary schools through provision of education in
emergency (EiE) kits. Front line field workers received training on emergency, communication and community awareness on disaster preparedness.

In August, following flooding across 32 districts of Northern Bangladesh, through UNICEF Bangladesh support, 23,810 people (including 11,667 women) regained access to basic disaster resilient sanitation facilities and 72,143 people (35,350 women) had access to basic disaster resilient drinking water sources. More than 10,000 children received psychosocial counselling and recreation support through 100 child-friendly spaces (CFSs). More than 10,000 parents and community members, including members of school management committees, enhanced their knowledge on emergency preparedness and response, positive parenting during emergency and hygiene practices. UNICEF also provided EiE kits to more than 10,400 children and began building transitional learning centres in 21 government primary schools. Collaboration with DPHE was enhanced to strengthen district-level WASH Cluster Coordination for future responses.

The influx of Rohingya refugees from northern parts of Myanmar’s Rakhine state into Bangladesh re-started following attacks at Myanmar Border Guard Police posts on 25 August 2017. The total number of Rohingyas who have fled into Bangladesh, coupled with the affected population in host communities, has reached 1.2 million, including 720,000 children. UNICEF scaled up its humanitarian interventions in Cox’s Bazar district focusing on preventing outbreaks of communicable diseases, such as measles and cholera, and addressing other risks and vulnerabilities, including acute malnutrition of children under age five, and violence, abuse and exploitation. While UNICEF’s Rohingya response aimed to address immediate needs, efforts also focused on implementing long-term development-orientated solutions to strengthen systems and access to services and foster behaviour and social changes in practices harmful to women and children in the district. UNICEF continued to advocate with both the Governments of Bangladesh and the Government of Myanmar on the provision of certified education for the children.

As of 3 December 2017, through UNICEF support, 228,970 affected people (including 137,382 women) have gained access to safe drinking water and 343,450 people (178,594 women) have access to adequate sanitation facilities. A total of 354,968 children aged six months to 15 years have been vaccinated against measles and rubella, and 700,487 people have been vaccinated against cholera. More than 7,500 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition received appropriate treatment, and 47,842 pregnant and lactating women benefited from counselling on infant and young child feeding practices.

Through child protection interventions, 103,917 children received psychosocial support to cope with trauma. A total of 1,825 unaccompanied and separated children were identified and received services through standardized case management protocols. Referral linkages were established to address gender based violence (GBV). Following the Government’s approval of basic education for Rohingya children, UNICEF established 411 learning centres providing education to 46,870 children aged 4 to 14 years old. At least 200,000 people now have improved knowledge on life-saving behaviours and available services. Feedback centres with a network of 80 ‘Model Mother’ mobilizers for community outreach and dialogue were established.

As per its mandate, UNICEF Bangladesh continued to lead the WASH and nutrition clusters as well as co-lead the education cluster with Save the Children and the child protection sub-cluster with Plan International. A sector approach was in place for the Rohingya Response and UNICEF led the nutrition sector and child protection sub-sector, co-led the WASH sector with Action Contre la Faim and co-led the education sector with Save the Children.
Equity in practice

Over the last decades, Bangladesh has achieved strong developmental progress and is now well positioned in the post-2015 era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Even so, the agenda for ensuring the full realization of the rights for all children and their mothers is still unfulfilled. Bangladesh is one of the most densely-populated countries in South Asia and the income, gender and socio-cultural inequalities that persist in the country have hampered overall progress. Since 2014, UNICEF Bangladesh’s efforts to address these inequalities have focused on strengthening engagement with the private sector; generating evidence to scale up successful models and cover service delivery gaps; and strengthening systems to address gender issues and poverty.

The private sector has a crucial role to play in enabling the full realization of the rights of children and their mothers in Bangladesh. Since 2015, UNICEF Bangladesh has been working in and around the Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector to ensure that the sector understands and addresses its impacts on children and women within workplaces and that access to and provision of social services is improved in the communities where workers and their families live. UNICEF also worked to influence establishment of a policy environment that enables long-term sustainable change at scale. This approach was implemented in 10 factories with a total workforce of 32,287 (19,456 women and 12,931 men). Agreements are now in place with six City Corporations to enhance service delivery in urban areas, where most RMG factories are located. In 2017 UNICEF introduced the Mothers@Work programme to improve breastfeeding among working mothers.

Under the Third Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP3) 2012-2017, in the absence of a clear implementation mechanism for Second Chance Education (SCE), UNICEF Bangladesh assisted the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) to provide basic education to children who have never been enrolled in primary school or dropped-out before completing the full cycle. The Ability Based Accelerated Learning (ABAL) Package was developed for out-of-school children 8-14 years of age. The package is aligned with the existing non-formal basic and formal primary education curriculum of the National Curriculum and Text Book Board. Through this approach, at the end of the primary-cycle, children can attend the formal primary completion exam to get a certificate that allows them to transit to the next level of education. Piloting of the ABAL package began in 2013 in selected rural areas. In 2017, the model was also implemented in urban slums and was selected by the Government as one of four key interventions to mainstream Second Chance Education at the national level in 2018.

The use of vulnerability risk assessments, pro-poor water point selection criteria and Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping for safe water supply provision in three arsenic prone upazilas increased the ability of the WASH sector to target the most vulnerable households. This resulted in reducing political influence on location of water points, which was previously identified as a national and sub-national challenge in arsenic mitigation. Similarly, equity analysis conducted for maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) programming, including immunization using the Equitable Impact Sensitive Tool (EQUIST), revealed that children from less educated mothers and living in remote areas benefit less from immunization services than children of well-educated and urban families. These findings influenced the focus of Gavi’s Third Health System Strengthening support on deprived communities and areas in Sylhet, Chittagong and the City Corporations.

UNICEF Bangladesh worked with the Government to address key gender issues preventing
women and girls from accessing services. For instance, UNICEF supported the MoHFW to model and scale-up the Women Friendly Hospital Initiative (WFHI) to provide quality maternal and newborn care for women, along with legal support for those affected by gender-based violence. The approach aims to enhance availability of quality services for women in a congenial environment that ensures dignity, respect and privacy, and builds women’s confidence to avail themselves of quality health services in the formal health system. Through the Initiative, violence against women has been recognized, diagnosed, treated and linked with legal-aid agencies. Since 2007, WFHI has been scaled-up to 26 hospitals, out of which 19 hospitals have been accredited. The current sector programme has operationalized the model for scaling-up through revenue funding.

A partnership with the General Economics Division (GED) was established to support the implementation of an approach to measure child poverty that captures the multidimensional and interrelated nature of deprivations.

**Strategic Plan 2018-2021**

The approach proposed under the Strategic Plan, with five goal areas and 27 results, is well aligned with the Government of Bangladesh-UNICEF Country Programme Document 2017-2020. Much like the Strategic Plan, the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Programme Document (CPD) addresses the particular vulnerabilities that arise in the different life phases of a child and is supported by an overarching component for inclusion and increasing awareness on child rights in a coherent and integrated manner, while at the same time maintaining clear accountability and section expertise. In line with the results of the Strategic Plan, the CPD prioritizes results around the nutritional status of children, newborn care, immunization, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), as well as educational outcomes and the elimination of violence and other harmful practices, such as child marriage.

**Opportunities**

Given the strong emphasis of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 on SDGs, UNICEF Bangladesh can utilize its framework to consolidate UNICEF’s position as a partner of choice for child-related SDGs in country, particularly in supporting stronger data, scalable interventions and policy dialogue. The Strategic Plan also provides an opportunity to address some of the crucial emerging issues in Bangladesh, particularly the rapid urban growth and the incremental vulnerabilities that climate change represents in the country. In 2015, Bangladesh had achieved lower middle-income status, as part of the goals set for Vision 2021. Bangladesh has set clear medium-term goals in the country’s 5-year plan, which currently runs from 2016 to 2020. UNICEF’s Strategic Plan can facilitate a medium-term discussion on the goals for children by aligning the institutional goals with the priorities set for children.

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh has established a high-level committee under the leadership of the Senior Advisor to track the progress toward the SDGs. This committee, which will provide leadership and approval on the framework for monitoring and evaluation of SDGs in the country, has nominated the General Economics Division (GED) to lead the process. The GED created an SDG cell in the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and UNICEF Bangladesh will partner with BBS to lead the technical support.

**Emerging areas of importance**

**Urbanization and children.** Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in South Asia. Employment opportunities, driven by the growing RMG sector, along with the forced migration of communities affected by disaster and climate change, have led to unplanned urban
growth. It is estimated that approximately 5.5 per cent of the population (9 million people) migrate within the country every year. Of that number, approximately 5 million migrate into urban areas. At year end, more than 50 million people lived in urban areas. Projections suggest that in 30 years, half the country’s population will reside in urban areas.

Under UNICEF Bangladesh’s Country Programme 2017-2020, the 11 City Corporations in Bangladesh are included as geographical priority target areas, along with 10 poorest districts, 6 high child marriage districts and 6 districts most affected by climate change.

With evidence from the UNICEF supported Child Well Being Survey 2016 of BBS, in 2017 urban programmes were initiated in five additional City Corporations. At year end, UNICEF was implementing programmes in six City Corporations covering more than 300,000 children. The programmes were designed to address inequities and model interventions based on a life-cycle approach for scaling-up using government funds. UNICEF also started working with partners to enhance urban equity through governance gap analysis for evidence generation and advocacy for enhancing policy and strengthening urban governance institutions.

In 2017 UNICEF supported interventions to engage with the garment sector for improved business practices as well as to implement a factory intervention package based on Child Rights and Business Principles that complements the community investment programme. Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to support the recently launched programme Mothers@Work to promote breast feeding and maternity rights at the workplace and to combat child labour in Bangladesh, focusing on the private sector.

**Climate change and children.** Efforts to address the impact of climate change on children were mainstreamed in UNICEF Bangladesh programmes and operations. In 2017, a policy review and institutional mapping of all stakeholders implementing climate change-related interventions in the country was supported as the first step toward identifying the gap in policies and capacity to deliver climate resilient social services. UNICEF supported the development of the Bangladesh Action Plan to operationalize the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) policy framework on Child-Centred Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation. The Plan aims to ensure effective engagement and leadership by state and non-state actors toward reducing children’s disaster and climate change-related risks and vulnerabilities. It also aims to ensure children’s participation and voice in Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation related plans and programmes.

As part of UNICEF’s high-level engagements with policy makers and political leaders, in collaboration with the All Party Parliamentary Forum, a seminar was convened for Members of Parliament on increased investments to address the impact of climate change on children.

As part of UNICEF’s strategy to create a critical mass of knowledgeable youth in Bangladesh who can promote climate change-related issues and act as change agents to promote appropriate mitigation and adaptation, UNICEF supported the first Youth Conference on Climate Change in Bangladesh. More than 500 adolescents and youth from Barisal Division enhanced their knowledge on climate change and engaged with key elected representatives and officials regarding its impact on children.

**The second decade.** It is estimated that more than 32 million adolescents live in Bangladesh, comprising 21 per cent of the population. The Country Programme 2017-2020 identifies a stand alone Outcome Area for adolescent girls and boys, to enhance their access to quality basic
social services and promote participation and empowerment as active agents of change. UNICEF Bangladesh, through this Outcome on Adolescents, focuses on ending child marriage; improving adolescent nutrition, linking it also to the challenge of teenage pregnancies; gender-responsive adolescent health service promotion; girls’ secondary education, through evidence generation on approaches and models around what works to keep girls in school, including focus on skills-based education; and innovations to promote adolescent participation and empowerment, while promoting positive gender socialization and empowerment of girls.

New approaches to programming for adolescent girls and boys were explored in 2017, particularly around social innovations using digital platforms and social media. An MoU was signed with the MoI to launch U-Report in Bangladesh.

### Summary notes and acronyms

**Acronyms**

ABAL – Ability Based Accelerated Learning  
ABL – Activity-Based Learning  
BBS – Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics  
BCAS – Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies  
BIDS – Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies  
BSC – Business Support Centre  
COHA – Cash on Hand Account  
C4D – Communication for Development  
CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women  
CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child  
CMT – Country Management Team  
DPHE – Department of Public Health Engineering  
DCT – Direct Cash Transfer  
DGHS – Directorate General of Health Services  
DPE – Directorate of Primary Education  
DSHE – Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education  
DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction  
ECD – Early Childhood Development  
EiE – Education in Emergency  
ECM – Ending Child Marriage  
EFA – Environmental Footprint Assessment  
EQUIST – Equitable Impact Sensitive Tool  
EPI – Expanded Programme on Immunization  
EvMT – Evaluation Management Team  
FO – Field Office  
iDE – International Development Enterprises  
GBV – Gender Based Violence  
GED – General Economic Division  
GIS – Geographical Information System  
HACT – Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers  
HMIS – Health Management Information System  
HPNSP – Health Population and Nutrition Sector Programme  
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus  
HCTT – Humanitarian Coordination Task Team  
ICT4P – ICT for Programmes
The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Programme emphasizes integrated life-cycle approaches. Two inter-sectoral capacity strengthening initiatives for 2017 are highlighted below.

The local governance for children (LGC) programme was revamped under the leadership of the Cabinet Division to integrate planning and monitoring for children in sub-national governance. A communication for development (C4D) programme component was initiated in 15 districts to strengthen community participation in local governance through social mapping, disaster risk assessment, bottleneck analysis and micro-planning for children. This component will also strengthen inter-sectoral coordination of community engagement strategies for social and behaviour change across 15 prioritised household-level practices.

A study was completed by Ohio University to assess the capacity of 37 national and sub-national universities in C4D curriculum, research and service-learning. Findings will inform a capacity strengthening strategy for Bangladeshi academic institutions to support design of evidence-based communication and community engagement strategies for behaviour change and demand creation for services in development and humanitarian programmes.

For the Rohingya crisis response, UNICEF established a network of 1,000 incentivized, trained and supervised Rohingya volunteers to reach, engage and empower 300,000 people on life-saving behaviours. More than 2,000 imams and community leaders were also oriented to promote immunization campaigns, health and hygiene practices, disaster preparedness and social cohesion.

UNICEF continued to support line ministries for improved service delivery, evidence-based planning and de-centralised approaches. Key examples included strengthening of local health systems through training of service providers, community groups and Union Parishads; mainstreaming of adolescent clubs within MoWCA’s revenue budget; and nutrition-based competency training of frontline counsellors. UNICEF also supported extensive awareness and sensitisation of children, adolescents, families and vulnerable groups (e.g. adolescent sex workers) in life skills, reproductive health and latrine construction, hygiene, safe water handling and open defecation.

**Evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy**

UNICEF Bangladesh, in partnership with IMED, BBS, and BIDS, generated new evidence on equity of coverage of social services for children and women, through a close-to-real-time platform, which includes a first-time module on attitudes and knowledge towards child marriage. Consequently, IMED initiated a process to pilot four ‘District Results Units’. In partnership with the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) and IMED, a policy review and dialogue was facilitated on the policy context for addressing the impacts of climate change on children.

UNICEF Bangladesh supported national partners to develop a national policy for faecal sludge management that will improve the quality of sanitation services. Technical assistance was provided to finalize the National Strategy for Adolescent Health, aimed at sensitizing policymakers to bring adolescent sexual and reproductive health to the forefront and for its inclusion in the operational plan of the WASH sector. UNICEF Bangladesh facilitated the institutionalization of management and coordination structures for adolescent health programming and guided the design of an inclusive multi-sectoral programme with engagement of relevant sectors and resource mobilization.

The Conference on Data for Decision-Making in Health brought together global and regional
experts to showcase and share evidence, best practices and innovations in strengthening the Health Management Information System (HMIS), ensuring access to information, data visualization and data use for effective planning, management and accountability.

The national advocacy meeting on #UniteforNutrition was the culmination of a year-long effort to strengthen the implementation of the National Plan of Action on Nutrition, which was approved by the Prime Minister. The Plan included creation of 64 DNSO positions and allocation of budget, and the agreement to develop a framework for information management and data use for decision-making across key ministries. Continued advocacy resulted in incorporation of Special Care Newborn Units (SCANUs) in the Health Population and Nutrition Sector Programme (HPNSP) for gradual scale-up.

**Partnerships**

Several partnerships were renewed in 2017 and others were initiated to strengthen integrated approaches.

A high-level partnership with the Cabinet Division was launched to enhance coordination between field administration and sectoral ministries on child rights through local government. MoUs were signed with four City Corporations; eight Tea Garden Owners/Associations; and garment manufacturers for addressing issues of the urban poor and worker communities. New partnerships were established with Islamic Foundation Bangladesh (IFB), Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) to mobilize and engage religious leaders and with the University Grants Commission to strengthen curriculum and research in C4D.

UNICEF Bangladesh signed an MoU with the Bangladesh Supreme Court to monitor the implementation of the Children’s Act 2013. UNICEF established a partnership with Schochuna Foundation to focus on children with disabilities.

UNICEF’s partnerships with MoHFW, civil society organizations (such as CARE, PHD and WAVE), as well as academic institutions (Dhaka University, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, John Hopkins University and University of Oslo) contributed to improving accountability and evidence for equitable and quality maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health service delivery. Technical assistance was provided to the World Bank and partners for strengthening disbursement-linked indicators and SDG health indicators. UNICEF partnered with OKUP to work on HIV prevention, including of mother-to-child transmission among migrant populations; and with Khulna Medical College Hospital to address the high concentration of people living with HIV in the division.

During the 2017 Concordia Summit in New York, a partnership between UNICEF, DPHE, SDC, iDE and Rangpur Foundry Limited on sanitation marketing received an award for the best public-private-partnership to improve communities.

A new partnership with the King Abdullah Foundation, channelled through the Islamic Development Bank will facilitate longer-term education support to the Rohingya children.

**External communication and public advocacy**

In 2017, UNICEF Bangladesh’s Facebook page reached 1.5 million followers, putting it in third place among UNICEF pages globally. The ‘Meena Game’ was downloaded by half a million users. As a result of the MoU with the Government’s Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Division to generate mass awareness on ‘Online Safety’ for children,
Facebook’s Regional Office in India agreed to partner with UNICEF Bangladesh to implement a year-long advocacy campaign in 2018 targeting 500 policymakers and 25 million children both offline and online.

Six roundtable discussions between relevant stakeholders were organized on newborn care, early childhood development (ECD), the Rohingya crisis and ECM. On average, each event reached 7.5 million people through various channels, including newspapers and social media. As a result of the MoUs signed with five private satellite channels, in 2017 UNICEF was able to reach, free of cost, 18 per cent of the population through PSAs during prime time viewing hours (four on ECM and one on newborn care).

In March, UNICEF supported three members of the Bangladesh Parliament, including the Speaker of the House, to attend the two-day Meeting of Parliamentarians from the countries of South Asia in Kathmandu, Nepal, to prioritize and safeguard children’s rights in the larger framework of the SDGs. Following the 136th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly held in Dhaka in April, parliamentarians of 10 countries, including Bangladesh, visited the UNICEF-supported Early Childhood Development Programme and Adolescent Clubs in Dhaka.

UNICEF’s response to the Rohingya crisis included communication and advocacy materials for social media pages, providing interviews and facilitating visits of national and international media, bilateral donor missions, National Committees for UNICEF, and National Goodwill Ambassadors. Seventy per cent the Communication team was deployed to Cox’s Bazar to enhance UNICEF Bangladesh’s advocacy and fundraising efforts for effective implementation of the humanitarian interventions.

South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation

In 2017, UNICEF Bangladesh engaged in several South-South cooperation initiatives for knowledge exchange, sharing of good practices and lessons learned, as well as programming.

With UNICEF support, a delegation from the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) participated in a visit to the Indian Institute, Rishi Valley to exchange knowledge on the Activity-Based Learning (ABL) teaching and learning methodology. As part of the education response to the Rohingya crisis, education professionals from Myanmar provided support to ensure appropriate context and cultural aspects, including language issues, in framing curriculum and learning competencies for Rohingya children.

In 2017, UNICEF Bangladesh also supported the participation of senior government officials from the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) and DPHE at the International Learning Exchange on WASH in Schools in Myanmar. Participants shared best practices for effective delivery and scaling up of WASH in Schools interventions.

UNICEF supported the participation of 12 government officials from various departments and ministries in an inter-country exchange visit to Malaysia to receive training on topics related to programme evaluation, integrated result based management, and performance management. The team brought back specific ideas to be replicated in Bangladesh, including establishment of a District Monitoring and Results Unit, online project monitoring system, and integration of the results-based management approach.
In 2017, UNICEF also organized a cross-learning visit through UNICEF Nepal and the Government of Nepal, for a delegation from Bangladesh’s MoI to assess and understand the management and sustainability of community radio stations in the country.

**Identification and promotion of innovation**

UNICEF supported the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) on HMIS, introducing an open-source digital registry platform to improve services provided by frontline health workers. The platform runs on health workers’ tablets and shifts the paper-based registration, reporting and tracking of reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH) continuum of care to a mobile-based application powered by RapidPro. Linked with the District Health Information Software 2 (DHIS2), the application enables health workers to effectively and efficiently keep records, send out automated reminders to beneficiaries, and track compliance to improve vaccination rates and coverage of antenatal care services.

A real-time monitoring (RTM) platform on nutrition service delivery was institutionalized throughout Bangladesh with support from UNICEF. Using a mobile application on tablets or smart phones, DNSOs and frontline supervisors entered observations on quality of nutrition services at health facilities, which are linked to an online dashboard. The real-time data visualization and performance analysis helps strengthen routine monitoring and enable timely responses. This system was implemented in 500 facilities in 43 districts in 2017 and will be expanded to all 64 districts in 2018.

UNICEF Bangladesh is one of three countries on the REACH project, a global research programme to improve water security for the poor led by Oxford University. In collaboration with DPHE, UNICEF is using automated data loggers on hand pumps to monitor water consumption and reliability in Bangladesh, the first experimental water point data transmitter within Asia.

To raise awareness on child rights in an interactive way, UNICEF launched the Meena game. This free, mobile-based game application consists of 14 episodes aimed at increasing knowledge and awareness on key child rights issues and has been downloaded more than 476,000 times.

**Support to integration and cross-sectoral linkages**

By design the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Programme emphasizes an integrated life-cycle approach and supports cross-sectoral linkages. In 2017, UNICEF established partnerships to support cross-sectoral integration and accelerate gains. In the public sector, a strategic partnership with IFB will be capitalized on to strengthen engagement with religious leaders and enhance support for commitments to children and women. The new partnership with the Ministry of Labour will help extend the work on ensuring that workplaces are protecting maternity rights and help women advance in the workplace.

Partnerships with 12 RMG industries were established as part of UNICEFs’ efforts to protect children’s rights in global supply chains. These partnerships offer opportunities for intersectoral collaboration, with joint planning and implementation in RMG factories that are predominantly staffed by young women. The ‘Barisal Youth Declaration’ issued at the first Youth Conference on Climate Change in Bangladesh underlines youth commitments and lists demands and recommendations to the Government and international community for equitable allocation and utilization of resources and enhanced capacity to address climate change challenges. A special caucus meeting is expected at the Parliament to share the declaration and garner further support for adolescent participation in climate change initiatives.
UNICEF Bangladesh contributed to the preparation of the Fourth Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP4), specifically in designing WASH in School models. UNICEF established inter-sectoral linkages for provision of improved WASH services in urban areas and health facilities. A National Strategy and Guidelines for WASH in Health-Care Facilities was being developed.

Other collaborative efforts included a partnership with University Grants Commission to strengthen curriculum and research in C4D. To support the Rohingya influx response, several new and innovative partnerships were established with BRAC for the creation of a network of 800 multi-purpose community mobilization volunteers from the Rohingya population.

**Service delivery**

Effective service provision is key to achieving equitable development and well-being of children. Understanding the efficacy of social services in terms of accessibility, usage and coverage is paramount to evidence-based decision-making. It is critical to know if services are reaching the people they should and if they are effective in meeting people’s needs. To this end, in 2017, UNICEF, in collaboration with IMED and BBS, supported a study to assess the barriers to equitable access for basic social services at national and divisional levels in Bangladesh. The study also sought to understand whether evidence generated is helpful for decision makers to identify, prioritize and remove barriers for utilization of basic services across different tiers of the Government. Results of the study were showcased in an online dashboard with disaggregated information at national and district level.

UNICEF Bangladesh conducted programme performance monitoring on a regular basis. In line with the harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) framework, several assurance activities, including programmatic visits, spot checks and financial audits were performed throughout 2017 by UNICEF staff, depending on the risk level of the implementing partner. Joint field missions were instrumental to strengthen collaboration between UNICEF, the Government and bilateral donors. For instance, during the months of April and May 2017, the Government, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and UNICEF conducted a joint field trip to Tangail and Khulna to assess progress in implementation of an MNCH programme and identify gaps and actions as appropriate. Regular project meetings with implementing partners and donors were also organized at Dhaka and field level to evaluate progress made and lessons learned.

**Human rights-based approach to cooperation**

The 2017-2020 Country Programme formulation was based on a sector-wide equity analysis. It focused on identifying interconnected deprivations within a life-cycle stage, assessing horizontal and vertical effects, developing theories of change, and targeting geographic areas agreed on with the Government. Based on this analysis, 13 prioritized issues were identified and strategies were developed around each.

In 2017, UNICEF organized consultations with the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights and the Parliament’s Deputy Speaker to follow up on the recommendations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). As a means of tracking child budgeting increases, the Parliamentary Caucus was mandated to receive information from ministries on the proportion of budget allocated and utilized for children during the Fiscal Year 2016-17 and the planned proportion for 2017-18.
UNICEF, UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported women’s rights organizations on the development of action plans to operationalize the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee’s recommendations. As Co-Chair of a Government-UN-donor consortium on Women Advancement and Gender Equality (WAGE), UNICEF continued to advocate with MoWCA to develop a roadmap to address CEDAW recommendations, and for the review of the Women’s Development Policy. Technical inputs on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process were provided, ensuring that critical women’s and girls’ rights issues are supported by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

Since the 1980s, the ready made garment (RMG) industry in Bangladesh has experienced rapid growth. In line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the Children’s Rights and Business Principles, UNICEF is working with 10 factories to develop, model and implement child rights respecting policies and practices. Through a process of capacity building, in-depth analysis of impacts and consultative action-planning, UNICEF has secured the commitment of business to address the most salient child rights impacts, laying the foundation for scale-up across 4,000 possible businesses.

The Mothers@Work programme was implemented in the RMG sector, targeting female workers. It focused on ensuring implementation of minimum standards that support the rights of working mothers to a healthy and friendly working environment; promote equality and non-discrimination; and protect and promote the rights of infants and young children to breastfeeding.

**Gender equality**

UNICEF Bangladesh’s 2017-2020 Country Programme adopted a life-cycle approach to programming, with a standalone Outcome on Adolescent Girls and Boys. Prioritized areas include ending child marriage (ECM), adolescent health and nutrition, secondary education and adolescent participation.

Ending child marriage is UNICEF Bangladesh’s principal targeted gender priority, with expenditures at approximately US$3 million reaching approximately 120,386 girls, imparting life skills based education (LSBE), skills training, and adolescent-friendly health services. UNICEF supported the Government of Bangladesh to enact the Child Marriage Restraint Act (2017). While it has a special provision allowing for marriage under 18 years of age under special circumstances, joint advocacy of UN, donors and civil society resulted in the Government revising the provision, limiting its application within strict conditions of the Rules of Law and with prior Court consent. UNICEF supported the Government to launch Bangladesh’s first ever national multimedia campaign on ECM, engaging 14 million Bangladeshi youth through social media alone, promoting the 109 helpline as a call for action. The Ministry of Finance was supported on the first baseline expenditure assessment study on child marriage, toward enabling sectors to review budget allocations and choice of interventions for adolescent girls.

UNICEF pushed for inclusion of key strategies for both in and out-of-school adolescents in Bangladesh’s first ever secondary education sector wide approach (SWAp) to reduce dropout and increase cycle completion, which, when finalized in 2018, will impact 6 million adolescent girls.

The MoHFW was supported to develop accreditation guidelines for implementing the Women Friendly Hospital Initiative (WFHI) in 27 district hospitals providing 24/7 services for emergency
obstetric care services and gender responsive health services. In 2017, approximately 494,926 mothers received services in these facilities. The WFHI model is included in the MoHFW’s operational plan in the HPNSP.

The Mothers@Work programme was launched in Dhaka to strengthen maternity rights and protect breastfeeding among young working mothers, through partnerships with government, private sector, and NGOs. The programme recommends seven standards for an enabling environment, protecting rights and entitlement of working women. In one year, the Mothers@Work programme reached more than 7,000 young working women in the RMG sector and provided a model for scale-up across other factories in Bangladesh.

**Environmental sustainability**

In collaboration with the Government and Dhaka University, UNICEF Bangladesh successfully modelled the managed aquifer recharge (MAR) research for safe drinking water in coastal areas. By the end of the project in June 2017, key policy and operational guidance documents were drafted for advocacy and use by the sector. These include context specific technical and social data, social marketing plans, operational guidelines, ownership and financial models, as well as a decision-making framework for use of MAR. The Government of Bangladesh has included MAR as a rural water supply option in its National SDG 6.1 Action plan.

UNICEF Bangladesh supported the installation of a solar energy cold chain for the expanded programme on immunization (EPI) in those health facilities that have no reliable grid electricity, representing about 3 per cent of the country’s cold chain points. This includes facilities without electricity grid and facilities that are repeatedly affected by cut off of electricity for prolonged periods during storms, heavy rains and coastal surges. These facilities are situated in coastal areas and hilly areas of the country. Presently EPI uses photo voltaic, battery-based ice lined refrigerators and Solar Direct Drive (SDD) equipment. The programme currently uses 71 solar cold chain ice-lined refrigerators and freezers, of which 10 are SDD without requiring batteries. This equipment has proven to be reliable in serving the needs of the health facilities for EPI vaccine storage.

UNICEF supported various partners with guidelines for construction of child friendly spaces (CFS) taking into consideration the natural environment. Children were provided with non-toxic materials in the CFS. Use of local renewable materials was promoted and was ensured using, for example, straw, died leaves and bamboo.

As part of the UN Greening the Blue initiative, UNICEF Bangladesh installed solar power systems in five zonal offices and energy-efficient LED lighting in all offices to reduce carbon footprint. An Environmental Footprint Assessment (EFA) was completed in July 2017, which is guiding the design of the new UNICEF office. The proposed design includes environmentally sound features including rain water harvesting, solar power and water re-use.

**Effective leadership**

UNICEF Bangladesh’s country management team (CMT) met monthly in 2017, ensuring oversight of management, programme and operations key performance indicators (KPIs). At the end of each quarter, a more extensive CMT meeting was held to monitor progress of implementation of the annual management and programme priorities contained in the Annual Management Plan.

In November, an enterprise risk management workshop was held to review the operating
environment and ensure risk-informed decision-making. As a result, UNICEF Bangladesh’s risk assessment matrix was updated.

In 2017, decentralization was further enhanced with divisional implementation plans developed and implemented by field offices (FOs). The FOs also gained financial authority. A manual, including minimum management standards, was developed to guide FOs.

Significant progress was made on the implementation of the HACT Plan as a risk mitigation measure. Minimum requirements for programmatic visits, audits and spot checks were met and exceeded in some cases.

Efforts continued to strengthen business continuity preparedness. UNICEF Bangladesh has a comprehensive business continuity plan. Management focused on the Rohingya Refugees response, with record time response by key staff. Some challenges were encountered regarding vehicles, office space and visas for surge staff.

The UN Country Team (UNCT) undertook a programme criticality exercise to enable programmatic activities under critical and challenging contexts.

Innovations in 2017 focused on knowledge of staff around standard operating procedures (SOPs). A pocket-sized booklet highlighting key steps in operations processes and personnel was developed along with video animated key SOPs. The objective was to simplify access and understanding of UNICEF Bangladesh SOPs to facilitate risk-informed, user-friendly and practical decision-making.

Management relations with the staff association were open and constructive, with active participation of the association in quarterly joint consultative committee meetings. Further efforts were made to increase open communication through all staff meetings.

### Financial resources management

UNICEF Bangladesh continued to improve systems and procedures to ensure efficient, prudent and effective management of its financial resources. The CMT used dashboards from Insight in monthly meetings to facilitate review of progress and status of key management indicators. All bank reconciliations were completed, uploaded and approved in VISION within the DFAM deadlines with regular follow up of the reconciling balances.

UNICEF Bangladesh introduced notable improvements in cross-sectoral budget monitoring, management and reporting. Throughout 2017 the direct cash transfer (DCT) and the regular resources (RR) and other resources (OR) expenditure rates were monitored to meet the benchmarks of less than 5 per cent outstanding DCT over six months. Expiring grants were constantly monitored.

To effectively respond to the Rohingya Emergency, UNICEF Bangladesh established a Cash on Hand Account (COHA) and provided continuous support to the Cox’s Bazar Operations. L3 SOPs were also triggered to facilitate flexibility and expedite processing of HACT and other invoice payments. More than 40 emergency programme documents were reviewed and signed. UNICEF also processed 2,643 T2F invoices, 20 per cent more than those processed in 2016. The VAT refund process was streamlined resulting in reduction in the number of rejected VAT refund claims by 50 per cent compared to 2016. In 2017, UNICEF Bangladesh collected VAT refund amounting to US$292,154.24.
UNICEF Bangladesh managed to roll out eZHACT, with minor challenges. Since 30 October 2017, the system has contributed to effective emergency response.

**Fundraising and donor relations**

In 2017, UNICEF Bangladesh revised the accountability structure for implementation of the office’s fundraising strategy. Implementation oversight now lies within the Deputy Representative’s Office, while specific coordination and follow-up with donors is a shared responsibility of the Deputy Representative’s Office; communication, advocacy and partnerships section and field services. A database to track fundraising efforts was developed and is maintained by the Deputy Representative’s Office. This helps to predict the likelihood of future funding and to plan more systematically.

During the first year of the new four-year programme, US$63.2 million other resources regular was allocated, of which US$16.8 were new resources secured in 2017. An additional US$32.3 million was raised for 2018-2020. The Country Programme funding gap stood at 63 per cent at year end.

A total of US$71.3 million in other resources emergency was mobilized to respond to four major emergencies in 2017. Of that amount, US$68.2 million was raised against the US$76.1 million Humanitarian Action for Children appeal for the Rohingya refugees.

Government contributions represented 64 per cent of the resources mobilized in 2017; 17 per cent were funds from UNICEF National Committees, including private sector and charity organizations; 9 per cent was from Foundations; 6 per cent from Global Programme Partnerships and Global Thematic Funds; and 4 per cent was from the Central Emergency Response Fund.

Funding for three joint programmes was secured in 2017. Global Affairs Canada is supporting the implementation of a UNICEF-UNFPA project on MNCH and the UK Department for International Development is funding a multiagency programme on Strengthening Humanitarian Preparedness and Response, which includes two interventions: Emergency Preparedness and Assistance for Rohingya Refugees.

A total of 77 reports were prepared by Programme Sections with quality assurance by the Reports Officer prior to a final review by the Deputy Representative. All but three reports were submitted on time.

**Evaluation and research**

UNICEF’s evaluation management team (EvMT), chaired by the Representative, oversees evaluation and research activities in the office. The team met on a quarterly-basis to review new submissions and assess progress. As part of a shift towards increasing quality and relevance of the evaluation function, a P3 research and evaluation specialist position was created.

Because most evidence generation activities take longer than a year to complete, the 2017 integrated monitoring and evaluation plan (IMEP) was conceived as a two-year plan. An internal PRIME document was maintained to update activity progress. Some technical difficulties with the PRIME website prevented the office from keeping the online system up-to-date.

Two evaluations were commissioned during 2017. Findings for the C4D Programme 2012-2016
are being used to strengthen local capacity by supporting the development of C4D-specific curricula in local universities. A management response was prepared and is under discussion. Findings from the evaluation on the local capacity building and community empowerment (LCBCE) programme will guide the design of the next phase. A management response will be developed following finalization of the report.

Baseline survey results on the implementation of labour laws surrounding maternity leave and breastfeeding informed the development of standards for the Mothers@Work initiative. The preliminary findings from the effectiveness trial of day-care versus usual-care management of severe pneumonia informed the Bangladeshi Paediatrics Association Conference. Programme targets were being revised based on the adolescent health project’s baseline survey. The WASH sector was developing a first of its kind manganese removal system to protect children from negative effects of high concentrations of manganese in water. Initial data on its effectiveness was used to improve the design for scale-up in 15 sites. Baseline data of the Arsenic Union Project will be used to develop national operational guidelines for arsenic mitigation in drinking water.

**Efficiency gains and cost savings**

As a member of the local UN Operations Management Team (OMT), UNICEF Bangladesh continued to benefit from significant economies of scale. Benefits included common Long Term Agreements (LTAs), banking services and security. To help identify strategic areas for increasing common action, the OMT worked on developing the Business Operations Strategy. The draft Road Map was under review and will be finalised by January 2018. Once operational, the Strategy will facilitate greater efficiencies by cost sharing and piggybacking on each other’s services.

UNICEF Bangladesh also saved significant amounts of money in 2017, as summarized below.

### 2017 Cost Savings Summary:

**Supply**

- 84 POs against LTA as of 19 Nov, 2017-goods: US$37,479
- 20 contracts for services against LTA as of 17 Nov 2016-services: US$8,924

Supply Sub Total: US$46,403

**ICT**

- LED Light (Electricity): US$4,000
- Solar System Electricity: US$4,455
- Generator Fuel save: US$960
- Audio/Video Conference: US$105,500
- Reduce printer: US$5,000
- Printing paper saving: US$197 ICT

Sub total: US$120,112

**Admin**

- Outsourcing Tea/Coffee: US$5,501
- Transport unit Saving: US$7,306
- PSB: US$30,400 3rd
- Floor savings: US$121,000

Admin Sub Total: US$164,207
Finance
Foreign exchange gains through negotiations with Standard Chartered Bank: US$219,103
Finance Sub Total: US$219,103

Total Savings 2017: US$549,825

UNICEF Bangladesh also achieved efficiency gains through the Business Support Centre (BSC) by providing error-free and timely submission of transactions to GSSC. To better understand client needs, BSC conducted a customer survey covering UNICEF Bangladesh and FOs. The overall service rating was satisfactory. BSC also established a practice to organize periodic open discussion meetings with PAs throughout 2017 to help minimize turnaround time of documents and processing time by sharing best practices.

Supply management

Supply components played a key role in supporting programme implementation. UNICEF Bangladesh's supplies and services amounted to US$15.85 million in 2017, reflecting a 150 per cent increase compared to 2016. This was mostly due to supplies procured for the Rohingya Response. Procurement services accounted for US$76.7 million in 2017, 12 per cent less than in 2016.

Procurement of supplies increased three-fold as more offshore and local supplies were procured to meet the humanitarian requirements of the Rohingya Response. UNICEF Bangladesh, in coordination with Supply Division, arranged Pre-Finance (Bridge Funding) from Supply Division amounting to US$1 million for the procurement of vaccines under Procurement Services to ensure uninterrupted delivery of vaccines to Bangladesh.

In response to the Rohingya refugee crisis, in September 2017 UNICEF Bangladesh delivered approximately 250 tons of supplies through two chartered airplanes (including hygiene kits, water purification tablets, jerry cans, primary teaching and learning materials, recreation kits, micronutrient and therapeutic foods, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, tents and tarpaulins among others).

A new warehouse was established in Cox’s Bazar for the emergency response and prepositioning of supplies. This is in addition to the UNICEF Khulna warehouse managed by WFP. Humanitarian supplies worth US$1.03 million were prepositioned at UNICEF Cox’s Bazar and WFP warehouses.

UNICEF Bangladesh managed 83 LTAs, of which 29 were established in 2017 for procurement of routine supplies and services, leading to reduced transaction time, shortened lead-time/delivery period, and improved relationships with suppliers. UNICEF Bangladesh also managed construction and rehabilitation projects in 2017. UNICEF Bangladesh utilised global LTAs established by Supply Division for engineering services and undertook several construction activities, including 12 cold rooms (out of the 36 planned under the GAVI project) as part of the supply chain strengthening. Ongoing projects included: construction of 10 pre-primary model class-rooms; design of new UNICEF House-Dhaka; construction and renovation of CFSs in court rooms; and, construction of three model para centres and support to the temporary learning centres and child-friendly spaces for the Rohingya Response.

As part of partner capacity assessment, four end-user monitoring visits were carried out in 2017.
### Table 1: UNICEF Bangladesh – Procurement by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Break up of procurement</th>
<th>2016 (US$)</th>
<th>21 November 2017 (US$)</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme Supplies</td>
<td>3,524,681</td>
<td>11,572,007</td>
<td>328%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Contracts</td>
<td>2,765,590</td>
<td>4,276,867</td>
<td>155%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations Supplies</td>
<td>1,155,532</td>
<td>904,841</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement Services</td>
<td>87,307,702</td>
<td>76,665,011</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>89,174,830</td>
<td>93,418,725</td>
<td>105%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Security for staff and premises

The UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) assessed the threat in Bangladesh as ‘High’ in 2017. Beginning in September, the UN Security Management Team (SMT) endorsed a continuation of stringent mitigation measures, with minor relaxations. These affected in-country official movements, and restricted mobility of international staff and their dependents. Deployment of many national and international personnel in Cox’s Bazar due to the Level 3 emergency further contributed to staff security concerns.

UNICEF Bangladesh maintained its business continuity and programme delivery while ensuring staff safety. All UNICEF Bangladesh premises were 97 per cent compliant with the UN Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS). In 2017, efforts continued to improve building security by installing biometric access control in the office in Dhaka and additional surveillance cameras in the FOs. Residential security of international staff was enhanced through the installation of video door phones, fire safety and first aid equipment, and provision of disaster survival kits.

The migration of emergency very high frequency (VHF) radio communication from analogue to digital system was completed with US$178,983.59 received from UNICEF’s special security fund. An additional US$475,000 was received from the same fund to construct perimeter security components at the construction site of the new office in Dhaka. Seismic vulnerability assessment of FOs was arranged and three offices were identified for relocation.

UNICEF Bangladesh has a dedicated NO-B security officer (SO). In 2017, as part of the Regional Office support, the SO participated in a Security Analysis Processes and Practice (SAPP) course to enhance UNICEF Bangladesh’s security risk assessment capacity. The Regional Security Advisor conducted two missions to Bangladesh, including one joint mission with the blast engineer from Headquarters to advise on the construction of the new office. An international security specialist based in Cox’s Bazar was recruited to support staff safety during the Rohingya Response.

### Human resources

Under the new Country Programme, 208 fix-term positions were established. At year end, 186 fix-term and 31 temporary-appointment staff and 164 consultants were on board. Staffing
requirements increased due to two mid-year Programme and Budget Reviews to address the needs of the Cox’s Bazar Office following the declaration of the L3 emergency. UNICEF Bangladesh conducted mass recruitment, speedy deployment of local and international surge and consultancies in the areas of programmes, gender-based violence, innovations, humanitarian performance monitoring, field coordination, programme monitoring and budgetary dialogue.

Office-wide efforts to attract and retain qualified female and diverse candidates, including focused headhunting, open adverts and ensuring females are at the testing and interview stage, helped achieve parity ahead of regional and global statistics. An improved balance of programme and donor countries was evident from 63:37 to 50:50.

The performance management cycle was an integral part of office culture, with regular honest performance evaluation review conversations taking place throughout the year. One hundred per cent completion of 2016 end of year and 2017 mid-year performance discussions was achieved.

With the compounding security situation in Dhaka, the L3 emergency and increased workload, UNICEF Bangladesh engaged a staff counsellor and adopted flexible work options to alleviate burn-out issues.

Group training focused on organizational priorities and 100 per cent completion of mandatory courses by staff was achieved by July 2017. The 10 minimum standards on HIV in the workplace was integrated into the New Hire and online HIV training. Due to the intense human resources requirement for the L3 response, trainings were retooled on emerging needs and a few were deferred.

A task force was established to review the findings of the Global Staff Survey 2016 and an action plan was put in place to address four key areas: personal empowerment, work/life balance, career and professional development and office efficiency and effectiveness.

**Effective use of information and communication technology**

UNICEF Bangladesh leveraged deployment and implementation of cloud-based office automation tools in 2017. A SharePoint Team site also was rolled out. The implementation of Microsoft Direct Access enabled staff to work from outside the office seamlessly. Data connectivity and Unified Communication Services (voice and video conferences) between the country office and field offices were improved and bandwidth was upgraded. This increased effectiveness and facilitated inter-office dialogue and benefited programme implementation.

The collaboration between UNICEF Bangladesh’s ICT and programme teams was key in the implementation of ICT for Programmes (ICT4P) initiatives aimed at enhancing effective and efficient programme delivery using ICT tools. ICT was engaged in the development and implementation of Online Case Management System of Child Protection, and C4D Feedback Centre for the Rohingya emergency, among many others and to develop and roll out the Meena game (now available in both Google and Apple apps store), Meet Meena portal and the Bangladesh Sishu Profile. During the L3 emergency response, the UNICEF Bangladesh website in Bengali language was created and a local payment gateway was integrated for donation collection.
UNICEF Bangladesh used ICT to further enhance the business continuity plan, and 3G Internet services were provided to all staff. Direct Access enabled independent and remote access to Cloud-based Applications and all other office electronic resources, including ERP/VISION.

UNICEF Bangladesh installed solar power systems in five field offices in 2017. This contributed enormously to cost savings and office carbon footprint reduction. Staff productivity increased as a result of zero downtimes due to power cuts. The implementation of Follow-Me Printing resulted in significant reduction in printing waste and contributed to cost savings in 2017.

Programme components from RAM

ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

OUTCOME 1 Management Outcome

Analytical statement of progress
UNICEF Bangladesh began a new country programme in January 2017 that runs to December 2020. The office annual management plan had ten programme, seven operational and seven management priorities. The management priorities covered key areas to set the tone for the rest of the country programme period. The country management team met monthly throughout 2017, ensuring oversight of management, programme and operations key performance indicators (KPIs). Each quarter, a more extensive CMT meeting was held to monitor progress of implementation of the annual management and programme priorities. UNICEF Bangladesh updated the risk assessment matrix to address the operating environment and ensure risk-informed decision-making in the office.

UNICEF Bangladesh decentralized field office operations and budget management within UNICEF to ensure efficient programme delivery with divisional implementation plans (DIPs) developed and implemented by field offices along with financial authority. DIPs helped in strategizing and fine tuning interventions based on local context for maximum benefit of the children. A Field Office Manual was developed to guide the office in decentralized management and to use as a reference to improve field office management. The manual sets out minimum management standards for field offices and provides practical guidance in line with the progressive decentralization process under four areas: management, programmes, coordination and question and answers.

Significant progress was made on the implementation of HACT Plan as a key risk mitigation measure in programme implementation. Minimum requirements for programmatic visits, audits and spot checks were met and exceeded in some cases. Key partnerships such as with the Foreign-Aided Projects Audit Directorate (FAPAD), a government department responsible for auditing foreign aided projects, facilitated continued timely audit of government partners. UNICEF invested in trainings and networking to ensure HACT principles and their application were understood and appreciated by FAPAD. Following the departure of the FAPAD Director, UNICEF will include training of the new Deputy Director in the 2018 plan.

UNICEF Bangladesh continued to strengthen business continuity preparedness. A comprehensive business continuity plan was in place. Management focused on the Rohingya Refugees response with record time response by key staff. Some challenges were encountered regarding vehicles, office space and visas for surge staff.
UNICEF Bangladesh increased its staff due to the emergency response efforts. A total of 208 FT positions (IP- 47, NO- 110, and GS- 51) were established in the new country programme. At year end 186 FT staff (IP- 37, NO- 99, GS- 50), 31 TA (IP- 6, NO- 13, GS-12) and 164 consultants were on board. There was a significant increase in the initial CPMP staffing due to two mid-year PBRs, creating and expanding the Cox’s Bazar Office following the declaration of the L3 Rohingya Response. UNICEF Bangladesh conducted a mass recruitment, speedy deployment of local and international surge and consultancies to meet the emergency needs.

The country management team and the Bangladesh staff association established a task force to address areas where the office achieved low scores in the Global Staff Survey 2017 (GSS). An action plan was developed and shared with all staff and implementation will be monitored regularly by management. Management relations with the staff association were open and constructive, with active participation of the staff association in the quarterly joint consultative committee meetings. Efforts were made to increase open communication through regular all staff meetings, with all field officers connected though video conferencing and able to contribute.

Progress was made in developing the 0.85 acres of land received from the Government in 2016. In 2017, UNICEF Bangladesh established a construction unit and received US$1,475,000 from DFAM. Management also used the all staff meetings to share the building plans for the new UNICEF House to be constructed in Dhaka. The building will be deemed a green building. This will include the water reticulation systems, lighting and the general use and amount of energy that will be available to its residents.

Innovations in 2017 focused on knowledge of staff around standard operating procedures (SOPs). A pocket-sized booklet highlighting key steps in operations processes and personnel was developed, along with video animated key SOPs. The objective was to simplify access and understanding of UNICEF Bangladesh SOPs to facilitate risk informed, user-friendly and practical decision-making by staff.

UNICEF Bangladesh leveraged deployment and implementation of cloud-based office automation tools in 2017. A SharePoint Team site also was rolled out. The implementation of Microsoft DA (Direct Access) enabled staff to work from outside the office seamlessly. Unified Communication Services (voice and video conferences) between Country Office and Field Offices were improved and bandwidth of data connectivity was upgraded, increasing effectiveness and facilitating inter-office dialogue to benefit programme implementation.

In 2017, the terrorism threat in the country was assessed at ‘High’ by the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). The UN Security Management Team (SMT) in Bangladesh endorsed a continuation of stringent mitigation measures, with minor relaxations since September 2017. The measures affected in-country official movements and restricted movements and social activities of International Staff and their dependents. Deployment of many national and international personnel in Cox’s Bazar due to the Level 3 Rohingya Response further aggravated staff security issues and concerns.

**OUTPUT 1 Effective and Efficient Governance and Systems**

**Analytical statement of progress**
UNICEF Bangladesh began a new country programme in January 2017 that will run to December 2020. The 2017 Annual Management Plan (AMP) was prepared at the start of the
year, setting out the key priorities for management, programme and operations, and the main oversight mechanisms. The management priorities covered key areas to set the tone for the rest of the country programme period.

The country management team met monthly throughout 2017, ensuring oversight of programme and operations key performance indicators (KPIs). Each quarter, a more extensive CMT meeting was held to monitor progress of implementation of the AMP priorities. UNICEF Bangladesh updated the risk assessment matrix to review the operating environment and ensure risk-informed decision-making. Statutory committees were in place and were functioning well.

UNICEF Bangladesh was scheduled to be audited in the fourth quarter of 2017. The planned audit could not be undertaken due to the L 3 Rohingya Refugee emergency, which was declared on 21 September 2017 to 31 March 2018. The audit is expected to take place in 2018.

Management relations with the staff association were open and constructive, with the active participation of the staff association in the quarterly joint consultative committee meetings with management. Efforts were made to increase open communication through regular all staff meetings with active participation from field offices through video conferencing.

OUTPUT 2 Financial Resources and Stewardship

**Analytical statement of progress**

UNICEF Bangladesh maintained effective oversight of key financial management indicators, using dashboards from INSIGHT and key performance indicators (KPIs). The CMT reviewed progress on KPIs and agreed on action points to address identified gaps. UNICEF Bangladesh introduced notable improvements in Cross-Sectoral Budget monitoring, management and reporting. This effort paid off through improvements in general grant utilisation and timely implementation of the programme. Throughout 2017, Direct Cash Transfer (DCT) and the Regular Resources (RR) and Other Resources (OR) expenditure rates were monitored to meet the benchmarks of less than 5 per cent outstanding DCT over six months. No funds were lost in expired grants.

UNICEF Bangladesh made progress in Value Added Tax (VAT) management in 2017. A work process was agreed on with the Duty Exception and Drawback Office (DEDO), the government agency in charge of VAT, and more than 50 per cent of VAT due in 2017 was reimbursed, reducing the 2017 outstanding VAT receivables in VISION.

UNICEF Bangladesh continued to make steady progress in HACT implementation, with considerable strides noted over the last 24 months. The minimum requirements were exceeded. In 2018, UNICEF Bangladesh will focus on synthesising the HACT data and profiling the partners to ensure the feedback loop is closed and the data is used in future programme decision-making. All bank reconciliations were completed, uploaded and approved in VISION within the DFAM deadlines, with regular follow up of the reconciling balances. UNICEF Bangladesh worked well with the Global Shared Service Centre (GSSC) in Budapest, with the Business Support Centre as the primary contact point for Bangladesh.

To effectively respond to the Rohingya Emergency, a Cash on Hand Account (COHA) was established and continuous support was provided to the Cox’s Bazar Operations. L3 SOPs were
also triggered to facilitate flexibility and expedited processing of HACT and other invoice payments. More than 40 Emergency Programme Documents (EPDs) were reviewed and signed. UNICEF Bangladesh also processed 2,643 Travel2Field invoices, 20 per cent more than in 2016. To further improve transaction process efficiency, animated SOPs and a pocket booklet, ‘Smart Reference Guide on Operations’ were developed.

Regular meetings with Programme colleagues to discuss and address bottlenecks were convened throughout 2017. The eZHACT system was rolled out, with minor challenges, and has contributed to the effective emergency response since 30 October 2017.

OUTPUT 3 Human Resources Management

Analytical statement of progress
The new Country Programme (2017-2020) began in January with corresponding CPMP, wherein the office established 208 FT positions (IP- 47, NO- 110, and GS- 51). A total of 186 FT staff (IP- 37, NO- 99, GS- 50), 31 TA (IP- 6, NO- 13, GS-12) and 164 consultants were on board at year end.

There was significant increase in the initial CPMP staffing due to two mid-year PBRs, creating and expanding the Cox’s Bazar Office following the declaration of the L3 Rohingya Emergency Response.

UNICEF Bangladesh tracked all recruitment, with the aim to improve the office’s performance on timeliness of recruitment. Office-wide efforts to attract and retain qualified female and diverse candidates included focused headhunting, open adverts and ensuring females were at the testing interview stage. This strategy helped the office achieve parity ahead of regional and global statistics. The performance management cycle was an integral part of office culture, with regular honest PER conversations throughout the year. One hundred per cent completion of 2016 end of year and 2017 mid-year performance discussions was achieved.

The terrorism threat in the country was assessed at ‘High’ by the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). The UN Security Management Team (SMT) in Bangladesh endorsed a continuation of stringent mitigation measures, with minor relaxations since September 2017. The measures affected in-country official movements and restricted movements and social activities of international staff and their dependents. UNICEF Bangladesh maintained its business continuity and programme delivery while ensuring staff safety through augmented premises security; mission security support; emergency communication; emergency evacuation; incident management and residential security measures. An international security specialist based in Cox’s Bazar was recruited to further enhance staff safety during the Emergency Response.

With the compounding security situation in Dhaka, the L3 emergency, and increased the workload, a staff counsellor was engaged and UNICEF Bangladesh adopted flexible work options, SETCO, surge/mission deployments and R&R to alleviate burn out issues. Group training focused on organizational priorities and 100 per cent completion of mandatory courses by all staff was achieved by 30 July 2017. The 10 minimum standards on HIV in the workplace was integrated into the new hire and online HIV training. Due to intense involvement of most staff with Level 3 emergency response, trainings were retooled on emerging needs and a few were deferred.
A task force was established to review the findings of the 2017 Global Staff Survey and an action plan was put in place to address four key areas of personal empowerment, work/life balance, career and professional development, and office efficiency and effectiveness. UNICEF Bangladesh recorded a 100 per cent response rate during the 2017 global staff survey. As of 30 June 2017, the office achieved 100 per cent completion rate of all 13 Mandatory learning courses for all staff.

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#### Evaluation and research

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#### Lessons learned

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