Executive Summary

Through effective evidence-based advocacy and provision of technical assistance UNICEF Belarus contributed to significant gains in improvement of the legal and policy framework, including the:

- Revised Law “On Health Care” approving the lowering of adolescents’ age from 16 to 14 for applying for ordinary medical services without parental consent that lead to wider utilization of youth friendly health services;
- Draft national strategy concept papers on de-institutionalization and inclusive education;
- Concept Note and Plan of Action on Children’s Palliative Care Services Development until 2018;
- Plans of Action on Peer Education and on Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission on HIV (PMTCT) for 2014-2015, and;

Continued advocacy from UNICEF, other UN agencies, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and civil society organisations (CSOs) supported by evidence and good practices, and coordination of a high level regional conference “Strengthening Child Protection Systems to Protect Children from Neglect, Abuse, Exploitation and Violence” forged the Government’s commitment to develop a comprehensive national response to domestic violence. This system will be based on the special law on prevention of domestic violence stipulating widening access of survivors to health, legal, psycho-social and community support services and measures to combat predominantly male aggressive behaviour.

2014 was marked by finalization of the audit with the overall conclusion that UNICEF Belarus’ controls and processes were well established and functioning during the period under the audit. Audit recommendations were seriously considered by the Office and welcomed to strengthen management practices. The majority of recommendations have been closed while pending ones will be completed in timely manner.

In collaboration with other UN agencies, UNICEF provided substantial technical assistance in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Universal Periodic Report (UPR) recommendations. The Government’s commitment to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has not been fulfilled yet.

UNICEF continued its advocacy for the improved monitoring and complaints mechanisms, providing opportunities for stakeholders to learn from internationally recognized best practices, including on functioning of ombudsperson for children’s rights. Forming strategic and sustainable partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders continued to be a priority to improve the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of programme and advocacy work. UNICEF played a catalytic role in forging effective partnership around the child-focused development agenda within national plans and programmes, including on Children and Protection of their
Rights, Gender Equality, Demographic Security, and HIV Prevention to close equity gaps. Constructive cooperation between national and regional governmental institutions, CSOs enhanced the provision of services to children with disabilities, child victims of violence, those in social danger and most-at risk adolescents (MARA), and enabled the introduction of peer education principles into the general secondary school and promoted healthy lifestyle patterns.

The focus on equity has required UNICEF to place particular emphasis on strengthening collaboration with, and empowering CSOs. There is broad consensus amongst decision-makers at all levels that CSOs have strong potential in many cases to render more effective, client-oriented services to the most disadvantaged populations. CSOs can reach the hard-to-reach more easily and extend assistance to marginalized groups of children. The UNICEF programme made every effort to equip national civil society actors with the knowledge and skills needed to map, track, and address disparities at the sub-national and community levels.

The 2016-2020 UNDAF will be the second joint partnership strategy of the UN development organisations in Belarus. A draft UNDAF has been prepared by the UNCT in consultation with the Government, civil society, private sector, national and international partners. It has been developed to support the achievement of national development priorities with the aim to ensure sustainable development in Belarus based on human capital development, equitable and sustainable knowledge-based economic growth, inclusive, responsive and accountable governance, environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources. Every effort was made to ensure that the UNDAF outcomes reflect a consensus of different stakeholders, including the Government, the UNCT, CSOs and private sector.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

UNICEF Belarus did not provide humanitarian assistance in 2014.

**Equity Case Study**

The realization of the rights of the most vulnerable, excluded and disadvantaged groups of children continued to be a main priority. Over the last three years UNICEF sharpened its programmatic focus on MARA within a regional multi-country project, thus contributing to an effective national response on HIV/AIDS. Despite the concerted efforts on HIV prevention, the level of risk behaviour practices remains very high among young people in Belarus. According to sentinel surveillance data from 2009, 15.6 per cent of female sex workers (FSW) and 7.3 per cent of injecting drug users (IDUs) were in the 15-19 age group. 6.4 per cent of interviewed IDUs started injecting drugs at the age 15 or younger, and 33.3 per cent between the ages of 16-18. In addition, young people were found more likely have sexual activities with non-regular partners and a higher number of partners. About 15 per cent of the FSWs were aged between 15 and 19. Forty per cent of those surveyed became involved in commercial sex work between the ages of 14 and 17.

To facilitate the provision of assistance to MARA, UNICEF initiated policy dialogue, built commitment of national and regional stakeholders, strengthened capacity of non-government organisations (NGOs) and enhanced state and non-state actors’ collaboration in provision of HIV testing and counselling (HTC) services for MARA tailored to their needs.

UNICEF facilitated the analysis of the normative framework and advocated for the legal lowering from 16 to 14 of the age when adolescents can apply for ordinary medical services (including HTC) without parental consent. The amended Law “On Health Care” was approved in 2014.
For evidence-based decision making UNICEF supported the study of key risk factors and needs of adolescents practicing risky behaviour as well as assessment of Youth Friendly Health Centres (YFHCs) and NGOs capacities for cooperation and providing HTC services. The survey revealed two main bottlenecks in providing access of adolescents to HTC: a lack of awareness on specific aspects of testing, and negative stereotypes and fears about HIV. In general, NGO workers expressed their readiness for rendering services to adolescents of risk groups but underlined the lack of capacity and insufficient practical experience of HTC services for MARA aged 15-17 in particular. The staff of YFHCs pointed out insufficient interaction with NGOs, a low level of motivation for working with MARA, and the lack of professional knowledge and skills on rapid HIV testing and post-test counselling of HIV positive adolescents.

Based on the surveys’ findings, roundtable discussions and expert groups’ recommendations, an algorithm of HTC services for MARA was introduced and subsequently tested in 10 cities most affected by HIV. The algorithm envisages the development of cross-sectoral collaboration, when outreach workers reach hard-to-reach adolescents, assess their behavioural risk factors, motivate and refer or accompany them to YFHCs for HTC. An integrated approach to service provision was applied including referral to HIV treatment, care and support if the adolescent is HIV positive, and to HIV-prevention and reproductive health promotion counselling if HIV-negative.

UNICEF’s advocacy around the comparative advantage of NGOs resulted in acknowledgement of their role by local authorities which was enshrined in cooperation agreements between NGOs and YFHCs. The multidisciplinary team approach, as one of the successful strategies in dealing with MARA, was also stipulated by the agreements. Inter-sectoral working groups, composed of representatives from local authorities, NGOs, health care providers, social workers and pedagogues were established in 10 cities and coordinated the work on HTC for MARA.

With UNICEF support, rapid HIV testing using saliva was introduced and contributed to the increased motivation of MARA for testing by mitigating their anxiety in waiting for test result. 4000 adolescents at-risk were reached through the outreach activities and 2000 of them were tested and benefited imposed to the full spectrum of the youth friendly health services (YFHSs).

To reduce stigma and discrimination towards MARA, community mobilization/public mass events including information-education campaigns (European HIV testing week) with the involvement of 6000 adolescents/young people were conducted.

The lack of professional knowledge and skills for HTC of MARA was addressed through the capacity development of multidisciplinary teams. Twenty national trainers were trained as resource persons and contributed to the knowledge and skills development of 177 local specialists. To ensure the continuity and sustainability of the education such innovations as online trainings (e-learning courses, webinars) and an electronic training tool, Integrated Computerised Adaptation and Training Tool (ICATT) specifically adapted for Belarus were used in line with traditional face-to-face instructor-led trainings.

For advanced knowledge sharing, best practices and experience exchange the educational branch of the Regional Knowledge Hub was created on the basis of NGO “BelAU” (www.belau.info/hub).

Special attention was given to the documentation of the work of NGOs and YFHCs on HTC for MARA. Best practices, human interest stories and gained experience of effective cooperation were posted on NGO “BelAU” website.
Based on the effective advocacy, results achieved and awareness-raising a new target group of adolescents and young people at-risk, as well as the role of NGOs role implementation of key activities, were enshrined in the State Programme on HIV prevention for 2016-2020. This will contribute to further strengthening of NGOs capacity and their possibility to mobilize resources within the framework of the state social contracting mechanism.

Future strategies will include the support in the development of a national system for ongoing assessment and analysis of HIV risk and vulnerability among young people, the expansion of HIV prevention services for adolescents and young people at-risk, introduction of behaviour change communication for healthy lifestyles and risk reduction, and popularization of mobile applications to ensure adolescents’ timely access to services. Popular sites for adolescents and social networks will be updated with information about YFHCs and NGOs. The database of HTC service providers will be installed in the mobile application "The risk calculator" along with the ability to navigate to the location of the nearest organization. The mobile application will be able to be downloaded from the UNICEF Regional Knowledge Hub.

**Summary Notes and Acronyms**

ABA Applied Behaviour Analysis  
ADOS Kit Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule Kit  
ARV Antiretroviral Medicines  
ASD Autism Spectrum Disorders  
BCP Business Continuity Plan  
BelAU Belarusian Association of UNESCO Clubs  
CCTV Closed-Circuit Television  
CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women  
CEE/CIS Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States  
CFC Child-Friendly City  
CFCI Child-Friendly City Initiative  
CMT Country Management Team  
CO Country Office  
CP Country Programme  
CP Officer Child Protection Officer  
CPD Country Programme Document  
CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child  
CRING Country Report on Indicators for National Goals  
CSOs Civil Society Organisations  
DCT Direct Cash Transfers  
ECD Early Childhood Development  
ECI Early Childhood Interventions  
EMC Evaluation Management Committee  
ERM module Enterprise Risk Management Module  
EU European Union  
FSW Female Sex Worker  
HACT Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers  
HRBA Human Rights Based Approach  
ICATT Integrated Computerized Adaptation and Training Tool  
ICT Information and Communication Technology  
ID Identification Document  
IDU Injecting Drug User
External communication and advocacy were used strategically to accelerate equity-focused programme results. In November 2014, UNICEF Regional Office and the country office, together with the MFA conducted the milestone regional conference “Strengthening Child Protection Systems to Protect Children from Neglect, Abuse, Exploitation and Violence”. This high level event was successfully used as an opportunity to forge further commitment and disseminate the information on child protection and helped to draw attention of the general audience, civil society and media to the agenda of zero tolerance towards all forms of violence.

UNICEF in cooperation with UNFPA, facilitated a nation-wide awareness raising campaign “Playroom without Violence” (http://detskaya.unicef.by) on prevention of child abuse and neglect in the family. The UNICEF Belarus National Ambassador, tennis player Max Mirnyi became the campaign identity. This was part of the country-wide three stage information campaign “Home without violence”, which aimed at increasing knowledge of parents on non-violent children’s upbringing. The campaign helped generate nationwide discussion in the media aimed at changing social norms concerning violence against children.

A communication programme “Four rules of successful parents: Play. Read. Talk. Hug.” was designed for parents caring for young and preschool age children, by providing practical advice to assist them to understand the importance of early education and development.

During the year, UNICEF reinforced partnerships with celebrities. In addition to UNICEF Belarus National Ambassador, tennis player Max Mirnyi, the Belarusian well-known rock singer Vladimir Pougatch was appointed as UNICEF National Ambassador to expand UNICEF’s communication coverage. His participation in the Regional Child Protection Conference and in the launch of the global initiative #IMAGINE attracted extra attention to CRC@25 and child rights agenda.

Due to consistent communication efforts three major country on-line media resources posted information on UNICEF position/activities or cited UNICEF reports 137 times: more than double in comparison with 2013. The UNICEF Belarus Facebook account commenced operating in September 2014, and reached about 9,000 people.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

The Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA) provided a framework for UNICEF Belarus to share experience and best practices with other UNICEF offices and their partners in the CEE/CIS region. The participation in the RKLA’s Reference Groups’ discussions, events and a multi-country evaluation of the childcare reform substantiated by access to resource materials were instrumental for UNICEF equity-focused programming in Belarus.

With the aim to further advance the child protection agenda, the UNICEF Regional Office and country office, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) conducted the milestone Regional conference “Strengthening Child Protection Systems to Protect Children from Neglect, Abuse, Exploitation and Violence” with participation of high level government delegations from 18 countries of the CEE/CIS region. The conference provided a space for dialogue among governments in the region and civil society partners on the good practices/challenges/lessons learned contributing to care and protection of children.

Within a multi-country project on MARA coordinated by the UNICEF Regional Office for the CEE/CIS (RO) the educational branch of the Regional Knowledge Hub was created on the basis of NGO “BelAU” (www.belau.info/hub) providing platform for advanced knowledge sharing, best practices and experience exchange. A regional network of specialists/youth advocates was
established to ensure effective advocacy for the rights of the most vulnerable adolescents, youth empowerment, legislation improvement and YFHSs scaling up.

UNICEF Belarus facilitated knowledge and best practices exchange with UNICEF Georgia, UNICEF Field office in Abkhazia and its implementing partners (local NGOs) on Early Childhood Development (ECD), good parenting programming, including the methodologies to train community leaders, teachers and nurses on parents’ counselling. This bilateral initiative will contribute to formation of good parenting practices in Abkhazia.

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

Lack of inter-sectoral coordination and cooperation between different Ministries remains the main bottleneck that influences effectiveness of programmes addressing children's needs. In 2014, significant progress was made in promoting and strengthening cross-sectoral linkages and synergies, one of the main approaches pursued by UNICEF Belarus.

UNICEF continued to advocate for formalisation of child care standards and protocols of cooperation regulating the referral mechanisms and multidisciplinary work which ensures a child’s right to a family environment. UNICEF provided technical expertise for the development of the Inter-sectoral Action Plan on Child Injury Prevention for 2014-2018 that was approved by ministries concerned, including Ministries of Health, Education, Interior, Emergency Situations, Labour and Social Protection, Sports, and the National Statistical Committee.

To contribute to greater synergies in provision of assistance to children with disabilities UNICEF provided support in piloting model of inter-sectoral cooperation in provision of early intervention services.

The Child Friendly City Initiative (CFCI) supported by UNICEF facilitated a more holistic and complementary approach to the creation of a conducive environment for children’s development and participation, contributed to strengthening of inter-sectoral cooperation, mobilization and motivation of the decision-makers, professionals, parents and caregivers to unite around child rights realization.

The piloted model of inter-sectoral collaboration (involving social workers, healthcare providers, education professionals and law enforcement officers and NGOs) at district and local community levels clearly demonstrated that the different social sectors can efficiently work together in preventing and counteracting domestic violence.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

UNICEF, in collaboration with other UN agencies, provided substantial technical assistance in the implementation of the CRC, CEDAW and Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations. In March 2014, national consultations on the implementation of the UPR recommendations were held. The event was arranged upon the initiative of the UNCT and the Belarusian MFA with assistance of the Office of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR). Guided by the children’s rights agenda UNICEF provided input into UNCT contribution for the 2nd cycle of UPR.

UNICEF continued to undertake a convening role through building alliances and partnerships with national line ministries and other agencies, local authorities and civil society organisations to undertake joint efforts on removal of the most acute bottlenecks in realisation of particular rights of the child: to live in a family environment for children aged under three (U3), to be
protected from violence, neglect and abuse at home, to be born HIV free, to get quality health care, education in accordance to the child’s ability and health status.

As part of the preparation of the new Country Programme Document (CPD), a rights-based, equity-focused Situation Analysis (SitAn) was conducted with pro-active involvement of the national counterparts. The SitAn looked at the status of children’s rights in the country, the causes and drivers of inequities, identified duty bearers and right holders’ capacity gaps, and provided evidence for prioritization in UNICEF programming for the next Country Programme cycle. The SitAn findings and conclusions will support the national planning and development processes, drafting policies, strategies, budgets and national laws to provide necessary support to the most vulnerable children and decrease existing equity gaps.

Knowledge gained at the advanced UNICEF Programme Policy and Procedures (PPP) training attended by three programme officers was instrumental for enhancing programming and application of the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) in the preparation of the new Country Programme (CP) and the UNDAF, particularly within two thematic areas “Inclusive, Responsive and Accountable Governance” and “Sustainable human capital development: health, education, social inclusion and social protection”.

Gender Mainstreaming and Equality

The country office continued to give utmost attention to gender mainstreaming in programming. This was done through a combination of policy advocacy and provision of evidence for informed decision-making, recommendations on legislative framework development and improvement in line with international standards, strengthening inter-sectoral cooperation, transformation of social norms and stereotypes perpetuating gender inequality, monitoring of women’s and children’s rights realization and capacity development of professionals and decision-makers. UNICEF facilitated strengthened coordination of UN action towards greater gender equality through chairing the UN Gender Theme Group and membership in the National Council on Gender Policy.

UNICEF actively promoted gender mainstreaming within 2016-2020 UNDAF preparation process.

UNICEF continued to work with partners to collect, analyse and disseminate data disaggregated by sex and age to reveal and analyse gender disparities, in order to provide evidence for informed decision-making on Government policies and strategies as well as strengthen capacity of data producers and enhance skills of data users. In order to ensure the availability of additional evidence on the manifestations of gender inequality, UNFPA and UNICEF supported the National Statistical Committee to conduct a Time Use Survey in 2014-2015. The survey provided an opportunity to analyse the division of paid and unpaid workloads between men and women; to understand how men and women use their time inter alia time dedicated to childcare depending on their age, marital status, and presence of children in households and the level of well-being. The survey also examined the weekday and weekend activity characteristics of school-going children focusing on how youth divide their time between such domains as reading and studying, work, maintenance, and leisure.

Being the penultimate year of implementation of the 2011-2015 CP, UNICEF Belarus identified the need to assess to which extent gender equality considerations have been taken into account in the design, implementation and budgeting of the current CP. Identification of key challenges, gaps and lessons learned, an assessment of staff capacities in regards to gender
mainstreaming and the formulation of recommendations are expected to provide key highlights for the new 2016-2020 CP as well as for any other strategic documents and decisions to ensure that gender dimensions are systematically addressed.

**Environmental Sustainability**

Environmental policy is a key element of sustainable development of the Republic of Belarus. Issues of ecological and economic activity, sustainable usage of natural resources are at the head of the national priorities. The implementation of environmental policy aims to ensure the Government bodies, scientific and public organizations, the population of the country, as well as foreign partners possess objective information about the situation of the environment, natural resources and their protection.

The Chernobyl nuclear accident consequences and sustainable development of affected territories remained on the national agenda of the Belarus Government and UN agencies. UNICEF Belarus continued to promote the importance of providing access for the population residing in Chernobyl affected areas to reliable, easy to understand information on child health and development, health-securing practices for people to protect themselves from additional contamination by radionuclides, as well as to overcome fears associated with radiation and to address health threats arising from causes unrelated to Chernobyl.

**Effective Leadership**

Under the leadership of the UNICEF Representative, the finalization of the audit started in May 2013 in off-site format and continued in July 2014 as an on-site phase was a management priority for UNICEF Belarus. Continuous support provided by the RO within audit process was instrumental. The audit final report December 2014 concluded that the controls and processes of UNICEF Belarus were generally well-established and functioning during the period under the audit. The audit recommendations were handled in a systematic way and welcomed as an opportunity to strengthen management practices. The audit response was included into CMT agenda as a standing item until the audit is considered officially finished and closed.

In line with the audit’s recommendation, the role of the UNICEF Country Management Team (CMT) was strengthened in terms of membership and functions. Following the auditor’s recommendation, the CMT decided to establish a Programme Cooperation Review Committee (PCARC), instead of the existing Project Review Committee, The PCARC will assess the proposed projects in terms of their contribution to the achievement of the planned outcomes and outputs, aimed at closing equity gaps and capacity of implementing partners.

The risk-informed management practices were re-examined through the audit process to ensure a more systematic approach to risk assessment and management. The office management reviewed the nature and significance of risks, re-assessed their implications for the achievement of the country programme objectives and office functioning. As the result, the number of risks was increased, and mitigation/management measures were updated/developed and uploaded into the UNICEF online system, InSight. Following the audit recommendation, the Office Management Plan (OMP) for 2014-2015 was reviewed to ensure that office management priorities are aligned with the revised risk and control library.

In line with the audit recommendations, the country office strived to improve the monitoring mechanism of field trips, paying special attention to implementation of follow-up actions.

The UNICEF Belarus advisory and review committees and task forces were active and
functioned well during the year. The CMT met five times to discuss major office objectives and priorities, and define follow-up actions. The Minutes of the meetings were shared with all staff members for follow-up actions and placed on the shared drive.

As reflected by Regional Monthly Monitor, which provides the main performance indicators for all countries in the CEE/CIS region, UNICEF Belarus's performance indicators were virtually all positive in 2014.

The office Business Continuity Plan (BCP) provided policy and guidance to ensure that correct modalities are carried out critical to the process and operational services when exposed to a broad range of risks, including acts of nature, critical infrastructure failure, loss of key suppliers and catastrophic loss. The BCP for 2014 was updated and signed by the Representative.

**Financial Resources Management**

Budget utilization was a major standing item in the agenda of the regular CMT meetings. Regular monitoring of the budget utilization allowed reaching almost 100 per cent expenditure rates in the programme and support budgets.

There were no over 9 months outstanding Direct Cash Transfers (DCTs). The majority of DCT did not go over 6 months. This is a clear indicator of the job done by the country office to address DCT challenges. To help implementing partners with DCT formalities (funds requests and liquidation reports) the office prepared a detailed instruction on the preparation of Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures forms. Partners were also requested to prepare narrative reports and submit them to the office upon utilization of each DCT tranche, as an additional control and monitoring point.

Following the recommendation from the audit to address and mitigate possible risks, UNICEF changed the algorithm of its DCT payments with special focus on the currency of payments. The office took into account the high risk of potential currency devaluation (reflected in the risk assessment profile) and strong expectations of the implementing partners to receive DCTs in local currency.

The two remaining accounts of Moscow Office (administered from Minsk) were closed in December 2014.

In line with the new Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT) Policy and Procedures, the office adjusted its HACT Assurance Activities Plan to reflect a complex of activities, including programmatic visits, spot-checks and audits. The Plan was built on a risk profile of programme partners, determined by micro assessments.

To have more value-added, the office ensured that programmatic visits and spot checks are undertaken wherever possible in tandem. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer is a part of this process. The Plan was updated quarterly and progress monitored by CMT. Weaknesses determined during the programmatic and spot checks were addressed by CMT, and risk mitigation plans developed.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

In 2014, the office followed established routines to track the timely finalisation and quality of donor reports. Five grants expired in 2014, each with a 100 per cent utilization rate. The fund utilization was regularly monitored.
In an environment of decreasing donor interest and support due to the status of Belarus as an upper middle-income country, resource mobilization continued to be a challenge. The UNICEF Representative constantly updated the diplomatic corps and the international community on UNICEF achievements and priorities, and worked to broaden international partnerships and collaboration. In February 2014, the UNICEF Representative took part in Informal Donors’ Coordination Meeting on Belarus (Brussels, Belgium) representing child agenda and effective delivery methods for EU member states, third country donors and international organizations. A set of project outlines with a total budget of US$ 3.5 million were delivered to international community.

Fundraising efforts brought some tangible results. A financial agreement between the EU and the Ministry of Health was signed and a joint UNDP/WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA project on health issues will be funded early next year with UNICEF share of US$ 815,000. The contribution agreement for the allocation of US$ 500,000 was signed between UNICEF and the Government of the Russian Federation for interventions aimed at child injuries prevention. For the 2011-2015 country programme cycle, UNICEF has a planned other resources (OR) budget of US$ 4.2 million, and has raised US$ 2,263,432, which represents 54 per cent of the total planned OR.

To address funding gaps, a Resource Mobilization Strategy was revised and amended with concrete fundraising tools, targets, resources, deadlines, mitigation measures and responsible personnel. As a UNCT member, UNICEF is preparing substantial agenda to the forthcoming end-January 2015 donor meeting. After completion of UNDAF development process the issues of the common fundraising strategy will be brought for consideration of UNCT.

**Evaluation**

The UNICEF Evaluation Management Committee (EMC), chaired by the Representative, provided strategic guidance for the development of the Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP), the office’s participation in the regional multi-country evaluation, and the SitAn planning. UNICEF Belarus was a part of the regional Multi-country evaluation “Child’s right to a family environment”. The accepted recommendations from previous year evaluations and evaluation management responses’ implementation were monitored.

Initially planned for 2014, an evaluation on “UNICEF’s contribution to results, coherence, leveraging and partnerships for child rights and equity interventions (UNDAF/CP end-cycle evaluation)” was cancelled due to its overlapping with the UNDAF review. Consultations with the RO M&E Advisor led to an agreement for one new evaluation to be carried over to 2015: “UNICEF assistance to strengthening national system of integrated support to children with special needs and disabilities and their families”.

Continuous support provided by Regional M&E section was instrumental and timely, and horizontal cooperation proved to be a very useful source of learning from other country office’s experience. A new format of IMEP, piloted by the RO, was used by the country office as an important planning tool. All 2014 research activities were on track.

The EMC ensured that the SitAn arrangements were strategically planned and managed through an inclusive process, and provided space for involvement and inputs from the key stakeholders including line ministries. The international consultant who guided a team of national experts was contracted to ensure a balanced analysis, quality review and capacity development. The SitAn findings were launched on November 4, 2014 and made available in
time to inform the development of the new country programme. The draft report was developed and is under verification with multiple stakeholders to be finalized for printing in early 2015.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

The Office applied a Common Services scheme with other UN agencies, sharing common rates, often with good discounts, for: 1) hotel rates; 2) translators and interpreters; 3) travel agent; 4) mobile phone operator; 5) stationery supplier; 6) courier; 7) bank; 8) events management; 9) printing.

The office location in one building with UNFPA, UNAIDS and UNHCR allowed for sharing drivers of all three agencies to go to UNCT meetings, for example or other common events.

Common services were included on the UN Office Management Team (OMT) and UNCT meeting agendas on an as-needed basis. The UNICEF Operations Manager chaired the OMT for the second year in a row.

The country office continued to strongly promote the use of the modern telecommunications technologies: Lync, Polycom, Skype, webex instead of the old and costly telephone system. The operations managers in the region created a Skype community that allowed quick, effective and cheap communication and experience sharing.

Despite the challenges of a small number of staff, the country office successfully established a proper segregation of duties protocol during the year.

UNICEF Belarus strictly controlled the quality of the replenishment requests to have cash liquidity and efficiency. All cash requests were compared against the market rates in Belarus and outside to get the better rate. The office used the FOREX Portal - the new UNICEF tool to process replenishment requests.

The country office continued to benefit from the use of the electronic banking system, which gave added value in terms of security, time and cost-efficiency.

An effective protocol of Value-Added Tax refunds from the Government was established allowing to refund funds in full and as quick as possible to protect from the currency devaluation.

**Supply Management**

In the reporting period the country office had a small supply component. All the procurement procedures were carried out on a timely basis and according to UNICEF rules and procedures.

Most of the procurement was low value and was carried out locally. Purchased services and goods proved to be of high quality and consideration was given that local procurement supported the local market. Although competitive tendering for “shopping” was not required, preliminary market research was performed to obtain quotations via phone, email and Internet to ensure the best value for money. The process was well documented. Following the audit recommendation, the country office decreased the threshold for the Contract Review Committee consideration from US$20,000 to US$10,000. This allowed bringing more supply cases to thorough scrutiny of the office Committee members for the better value and cost-effectiveness. Overall, there were six Contract Review Committee meetings in year 2014, for a total amount US$ 97,310.17.
The programme component covered the procurement of services including the elaboration of a database on the persons charged with domestic violence, research on the quality of preschool education, evaluation of respite care models and the assessment of the gender mainstreaming in Belarus country programme. As part of the preparation for the development of a new CP for 2016-2020, UNICEF also held a tender on the preparation of the SitAn.

There was one case of offshore procurement from the Supply Division in Copenhagen related to the purchase of computers, which proved to be cheaper than purchasing within the country.

**Security for Staff and Premises**

The office management promotes the staff safety and security in the office. The Security Focal Point, shared by UN constantly monitored the security situation in Belarus and advised immediately if there were any concerns. In case of severe weather conditions (like winter storms) or dangerous public gatherings, the Representative in consultation with UNCT approved shortened working hours.

Following the audit observation, the office ensured that all the risks of operating in Belarus were included in the country’s risk assessment and clear risk mitigation/management measures/processes were defined and integrated into the Office Management Plan.

The office is located in Government-administered premises along with other UN agencies (UNFPA, UNAIDS and UNHCR) and diplomatic missions. In accordance with the Security Focal Point’s conclusion, the office premises are MOSS compliant. UNICEF vehicles are parked during the day in the guarded compound of the Office, and overnight in a secure garage.

In case of fire, UNICEF office has two exits and an evacuation plan was in place. Fire-alarm detectors are installed in the office corridors. Sufficient number of powder fire extinguishers is placed in the office premises according to the local fire-fighting rules.

Office doors on both floors are secure metal doors equipped with mechanical and electro-magnetic locks. There is no access to any window from outside due to height (there are number of floors below and above the offices).

In 2015, the office plans to buy and install CCTV system to enhance its security standards.

**Human Resources**

Office structure consists of two sections: Programme and Operations with 14 staff members. This composition ensured the inter-sectoral cooperation and quality of work, compliance with internal rules and regulations, reporting obligations and other requirements, achievement and documentation of results.

Following the MTR and PBR recommendations in 2013, there were some post changes in 2014, including two national officer post upgrades. At the beginning of the year, the Programme Assistant left for another job outside UN. A recruitment process was timely conducted and a new staff member was appointed.

Programme work was challenged by the maternity leave of Child Protection Officer. The outsourced ICT functions proved to be not as effective as initially considered.
The performance management was undertaken systematically, with clear deadlines for Performance Appraisal System (PAS) task definition and discussions monitored by the CMT. Honest PAS discussions were held for all staff members at mid and end year. 2013 year-end Appraisal phase for all staff members was completed by the end of March 2014. The 2014 PAS performance planning phase was completed by the end of April 2014. In addition to the official performance appraisals, staff members also had regular feedback discussions with managers and supervisors to discuss their work, aspirations, challenges and career opportunities.

In 2014, UNICEF Belarus continued a policy of investing in strengthening staff capacities to address programmatic issues. As part of the UNDAF 2016-2020 process the Social Policy Specialist participated in the regional UNDAF training and the regional training on integrating anti-corruption dimension into the UN Programming Process, along with representatives of UNDP and UN Resident Coordinator’s office. The knowledge gained was applied throughout the UNDAF 2016-2020 development process. Three programme officers (Social Policy Specialist, Child Protection Specialist and YPHD and HIV/AIDS Specialist) participated in advanced PPP training. The key elements of the training were shared and widely discussed with all staff. Knowledge gained was instrumental in the course of preparation of the new UNDAF and the new UNICEF Country Programme for 2016-2020 and in overall programme work. The ECD Officer completed the course on ‘Equity, Quality, and Leadership in Education through Harvard/UNICEF to further strengthen expertise. An e-learning course on Gender Equality was completed by four staff members. The gained knowledge will strengthen UNICEF’s work on gender mainstreaming in the new CPD.

The Operations Manager benefited from development assignments while providing emergency support for two weeks in both the Ukraine and Armenia.

Various platforms for knowledge sharing such as video-conferencing, joining communities of practices on the intranet and participation in network meetings were utilized. Training opportunities were encouraged with aim of individual professional development and sharing gained experience, knowledge and practice with the colleagues.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

The ICT function was performed to ensure the maintenance and improvement of the reliable and secure infrastructure as well as to grant access to corporate applications. This was aimed at supporting business continuity at the proper level in order to guarantee the effective implementation of the current country programme and ensure a continuous base for the coming one.

**Programme Components from RAM**

**ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS**

**OUTCOME 1** By the end of 2015 comprehensive social policy securing child rights protection and monitoring is developed, resourced and implemented

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

In 2014, a number of bottlenecks at the legal and policy level were successfully addressed in relation to vulnerable and most marginalized children. UNICEF conducted the Regional Conference on “Strengthening Child Protection Systems to Protect Children from Neglect, Abuse, Exploitation and Violence” in Minsk, providing a platform for constructive debate around
key areas that are critical for the prevention of and response to violence against children. The conference had participation of high level government delegation from 18 countries of the CEE/CIS region and top-level international experts and CSOs representatives from West Europe. The Conference took stock of progress in developing comprehensive child protection systems, reflected on good practices and future actions to safeguard children against all forms of violence. The Conference emphasized the importance of well-coordinated child protection systems and promoted inter-sectoral strategies and quality services for children and their families.

UNICEF continued to advocate for the establishment of an independent child rights monitoring mechanism in Belarus. To provide additional evidence on its effectiveness, the International Workshop "On national human rights institutions: establishment and functioning" with participation of well-known experts was conducted. It provided the opportunity to share views, best practices, challenges and lessons learnt. UNICEF presented on the role of the specialized institutions on child rights highlighting the specific features of their functioning in CEE/CIS countries.

The Situation Analysis of Children’s Rights in the Republic of Belarus exercise was undertaken together with the Government and in consultation with the RO to assess the situation of children, analyse trends in child outcomes, and identify specific patterns of inequities in realization of children’s rights and bottlenecks that could be addressed within the next programme cycle. SitAn preparation was a participatory process involving national stakeholders and experts. The draft SitAn report developed and submitted to the Government for comments and will be finalized in early 2015. The findings of the SitAn will strengthen knowledge base and inform evidence-based policy-making and programming.

Joint advocacy efforts of UNICEF, UNFPA and the Ministry of Interior resulted in the decision taken at the joint session of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child and the Parliament Standing Commission on Human Rights, National Relations and Mass Media on drafting the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention by March 2015. This is an important step forward to ban the corporate punishment of children and to better protect them from abuse and neglect.

UNICEF continued supporting the deployment of CFCI in 22 cities to facilitate conducive environment for children’s development and participation, increasing effectiveness of local planning and budgeting, strengthening inter-sectoral coordination. Children’s parliaments/councils functioning in the cities help to implement youth creative initiative and strengthen adult-youth cooperation to ensure the enabling environment in the best interests of children.

OUTPUT 1 By the end of 2015, the Government addresses targeted gaps in legal and institutional frameworks related to the provision of preventive and protective services to children

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF provided technical and organizational support to the national experts and Pluriconsult Ltd in conducting a multi-country evaluation of results achieved through child-care system reform within the KRA 1. The second draft report of the multi-country evaluation was commented and discussed afterwards in the report validation meeting. The draft communication, dissemination and engagement plan as follow-up of the evaluation is under development.
As a result of close cooperation of UNICEF with the National Statistical Committee (NSC) and continued advocacy for data collection or its greater disaggregation, data on children was made publicly available for policy formulation, monitoring and UNICEF flagship publications. An English version of the MICS4 report was completed and disseminated. MICS4 findings were distributed nationwide through different channels including bill-boards, national NSC site (http://belstat.gov.by/uploads/file/U_uroven/MICS/itogovyj_otchet_miks4.pdf) and global UNICEF site. UNICEF support was provided to the national counterparts in the Country Reporting on Indicators for the Goals (CRING) database update. The country demonstrated its ownership of the national database of socio-economic indicators BelarusInfo which was updated and analysed in terms of including indicators to monitor domestic violence prevention and response.

To protect the right of children with disabilities to quality education and the right to live in a family environment, UNICEF provided the inter-agency groups of specialists under the auspices of Ministry of Education with expertise in drafting the Concept Papers on Inclusive Education and De-institutionalisation.

OUTPUT 2 By the end of 2015 local authorities, young people, children and CSOs are engaged in alliances for building child friendly cities

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF continued to support the work of Children/Youth Parliaments as an effective instrument of children/youth engagement in decision-making at the city level to ensure that voices of children are heard and their views are counted (RKLA 10). To provide the platforms for transparent discussion and peers’ feedback, the action plans and reports of Children/Youth Parliaments are placed on their webpages or social networks groups.

Young leaders, including members of Children/Youth Councils/Parliaments presented social creative initiatives and practices on children’s participation in monitoring of child rights realization at the community level with peers at the 9th National Children’s Forum “Children of Belarus: for a strong and prosperous country”. Targeted work on capacity development of the members of Children’s/Youth Councils/Parliaments helped to refocus youth initiatives from entertainment to social development issues.

The insufficient cooperation and lack of partnership between children and adults as a bottleneck impeding progress in the realization of child rights were discussed at the scientific-practical conference “Children and Adults: Partnership for the best Interests of an Individual, Society and Nation”, and addressed through the joined implementation of the children’s creative initiatives and widened cooperation of the Children’s/Youth Councils/Parliaments with the local Executive Committees.

The National Child-Friendly City (CFC) Coordination Council awarded Honourable Status of CFC to Pružany, Zhodino, Brest and Polotsk, following an analysis of their progress. The specially designed symbols of CFC Honourable Status Award were presented to the Cities’ Mayors and Chairpersons of the Children’s/Youth Parliaments at major events to contribute to better understanding by the citizens of the core essence of the initiative, and for building commitment and ownership, promotion of proactive participation and cooperation of children and adults in the CFC Initiative implementation. The rating of Belarusian CFCs is available on the website www.detivgorode.by.

To develop capacities of local authorities on social budget optimization in the interest of the
children, consultations with Russian experts were conducted and a thematic workshop is planned in the 1st quarter 2015.

OUTCOME 2 By the end of 2015, an increased number of vulnerable children and families benefit from quality and inclusive social services in education, health and protection

Analytical Statement of Progress:

Strengthening the capacity of the national system of special education to apply a child-family centered approach for integrated assistance to young children with special needs continued to be a key focus for UNICEF and national partners, primarily the MoE and CSOs. Technical expertise and financial support were provided to the network of developmental centres to further advance early developmental assistance to young and preschool children with special needs and increase equity in usage of services in rural and urban areas.

In parallel, UNICEF in collaboration with the MoH and other partners undertook a planning process to upscale work on ECI and home visiting. The piloted mechanism of inter-sectoral ECI, tools for early risks detection among children U1 and capacity development of national specialists contributed into greater synergies in provision of assistance to children with special needs.

HIV prevention and adolescent health promotion remain the top priority areas of cooperation with the Government. UNICEF sharpened its focus on MARA. UNICEF initiated policy dialogue, influenced evidence based decision-making, facilitated state and non-state actors collaboration and introduction of HIV testing and counselling services tailored to MARA needs as well as contributed to the significant progress in changing social stereotypes and attitudes towards MARA.

UNICEF influenced the prioritization and assisted in resource mobilization for the prevention of child morbidity, disability and mortality from external causes. To address the bottleneck in the insufficient inter-agency coordination, UNICEF provided technical expertise for the development of the Inter-sectoral Action Plan on Child Injury Prevention for 2014-2018 that was approved by ministries and agencies concerned.

To ensure the creation of the enabling environment the Concept Note for palliative care (PC) services development, which includes policy and legal framework, capacity strengthening and M&E as well as a Plan of Action until 2018 were finalized.

UNICEF efforts to ensure the child’s right to be born HIV free resulted in development of the National Plan of Action on PMTCT for 2014-2015 which was approved by the MoH.

Late identification of families at-risk, weak inter-sectoral cooperation, lack of family-centered services and their low effectiveness as well as social acceptance of violent behaviour have impeded the implementation of child’s rights to family environment. To address these bottlenecks UNICEF continued to assist the Government in the development of integrated family-centred social services to minimize risks that could lead to child neglect and abuse. UNICEF supported the drafting of the national strategy on de-institutionalisation. The strategy aims at reducing the number of residential care institutions, further reinforcement of gatekeeping mechanism, expanding opportunities for family-type placement of children deprived of parental care focusing on children U3 and children with disabilities, and the capacity development of professionals.
Prevention and mitigation of domestic violence consequences were in the focus of attention. Jointly with UNFPA and IOM, UNICEF supported national counterparts in setting up an inter-sectoral collaboration model involving state and non-governmental service providers at local community level; ensuring the functioning of a free hotline for the survivors of domestic violence, as well as a crisis counselling line for children and adolescents; and conducting public awareness campaigns on domestic violence.

OUTPUT 1 By the end of 2015, young and preschool children, including children with special needs have access to quality integrated ECD services and early education in urban and rural areas.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Within the equity agenda UNICEF gave special attention to children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) to increase parents and professionals’ knowledge and understanding of autism. To ensure inclusion of children with autism into the education system in regular preschools and schools, UNICEF Belarus pursued a complex approach embracing legal framework improvement, capacity development of parents and professionals and the creation of adaptive, developmental educational environment. UNICEF facilitated increased understanding of the necessity to apply a multidisciplinary approach in the provision of services to such children. An order on “Creation of a multidisciplinary team to support inclusion of children with autism into mainstream schools” was issued in Minsk. Algorithms for inter-sectoral cooperation between the Developmental Centres of the MoE and children’s policlinics of the Ministry of Health (MoH) for psychological, medical and pedagogical support to children with autism spectrum disorders were developed and piloted.

UNICEF assisted in setting up two resource centres in Minsk and Baranovichi. The capacity of education specialists in assistance to children with autism was strengthened through:
- Four practical seminars on sensor integration, with involvement of Russian international experts;
- Comprehensive training of 10 specialists from the of Minsk developmental centre went on educational diagnostics based on ADOS (Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule) Kit and Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) techniques,
- Supplying resource centres with educational diagnostic materials on ADOS.

Parents of children with autism spectrum disorders gained knowledge on “sensor integration” and “behaviour strengthening”. Ongoing advocacy by professionals, parental NGOs and UNICEF resulted in local authorities opening two integrated education classes in secondary schools and four integrated education classes in primary schools in Minsk. Three of them were equipped with UNICEF assistance in accordance with standards of learning conditions of children with autism.

UNICEF supported the development a model of emergency psychological assistance to families in crisis due to the birth of a child with severe and/or multiple disabilities which was presented at the Minsk City Council for consideration and further adoption. In parallel, the comprehensive capacity development of 152 educational psychologists was undertaken. The model facilitates prevention of abandonment of children born with several developmental delays to ensure their right to family environment (Regional Key Results Area (RKLA) 1).

Throughout 2014 UNICEF continued to focus communication activities on raising awareness on the importance of early childhood development (RKLA 3). A communication programme “4
rules of successful parents: Play. Read. Talk. Hug.” highlighted the importance of full parental involvement and responsibility for the early learning and development of a child. All materials are available on the Internet and in printed booklets and posters. It is planned to place posters in children’s policlinics, preschools and retail outlets to reach as many parents as possible.

UNICEF supported Government efforts to further develop the Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) system to provide quality assistance in early detection, intervention and rehabilitation to families with disabled children. An inter-sectoral database for registration of children under one who are at risk of developing neurological disorders or any other special need contributed to better planning and monitoring by local authorities and medical institutions was developed. This uses “cloud technology” and is accessible on the Internet by educational and medical specialists in all districts of Brest oblast. The tool for detection of early risks was tested by health professionals in Brest region. The early screening tool for early identification of maternal depression developed and presented to MoH for further approval. UNICEF in cooperation with national partners advocated for the scaling up of the database and the tools. With UNICEF assistance, the capacity of 55 children’s neurologists and psychologists in ECI and early rehabilitation of children under one was strengthened. To address a bottleneck in the lack of inter-sectoral cooperation, UNICEF assisted in piloting and documenting the model of health and education professionals’ cooperation in the ECI area in Brest region. To scale up this model, an advocacy round table with participation of MoH representative is scheduled for the first quarter of 2015.

OUTPUT 2 By the end of 2015 Ministries of Health and Education in cooperation with other line Ministries and CSOs ensure provision of comprehensive services on children and youth health and development and HIV/AIDS.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
To ensure greater synergy of all parties concerned, UNICEF provided technical expertise for the development of the Inter-sectoral Action Plan on Child Injury Prevention for 2014-2018. Special attention was given to communication component and improved inter-sectoral work (RKLA 6).

To ensure the quality of services in the mitigation of the consequences of trauma, UNICEF supported the finalization of the new clinical protocols for diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of injuries and orthopaedic diseases by the experts of the National Research and Practical Centre (NRPC) of Traumatology and Orthopaedics. To address parents’ capacity gaps, 118 parents were trained on creation of safe living environment for young children at home on the basis of the resource centre for parents established in the NRPC “Mother and Child”; three types of booklets on child injuries prevention under the slogan “Remember. Teach. Save” were developed and widely disseminated. Information materials were constantly updated and posted on the page "Child Injury Prevention" of the NRPC of Traumatology and Orthopaedics website (www.ortoped.by).

To promote the basics of life safety and increase the level of knowledge and skills on prevention of injuries among adolescents and motivate them for self-preservation behaviour, three types of booklets for children of primary school age to teach them for proper behaviour at home, on the street and at school) were developed and widely disseminated. In addition, a summer camp "Rescuer" with the participation of 80 children and rally competition of young rescuers-fire in a camp “Zubrenok” with the participation of 192 children from all regions of Belarus were conducted.

The bottleneck in the monitoring system was addressed through further disaggregation of data.
by injury type, from injuries occurring as a result of violence or child abuse. This will help to provide a more accurate and complete data for evidence based decision making.

The issues of most-at-risk (MARA) adolescents continued to be a focus of UNICEF Belarus agenda (RKLA 5, 10). The implemented strategies, best practices and results achieved in strengthening capacity of NGOs in provision of HIV testing and counselling services for MARA is presented in this annual report in the section "Equity case study".

To ensure the quality of care for adolescents in crisis and with deviant behaviour (RKLA 10), UNICEF focused on the capacity strengthening of psychologists, social pedagogues and health care providers. Within the framework of the Republican Scientific and Practical Conference "Psychological care for children and adolescents in crisis situations" three master-classes were conducted by the international experts to increase knowledge and skills of Belarusian specialists in:
- Diagnosis of crisis conditions of children and adolescents;
- State-of-the-art methods of assistance to children with posttraumatic stress disorders;
- Techniques of psychological and psychotherapeutic care and hotline services for adolescents with suicidal intentions, of those who experienced chronic stress or loss of friends or relatives.
Recommendations from the participants compiled in the conference resolution were submitted for MoH consideration.

For Peer Education scaling up (RKLA 10), UNICEF assisted in the establishment of the National Peer Education Council and revision of the Plan of Action on Peer Education for 2014-2015. To improve the methodological support and ensure the continuity of educational process the National Information Resource Centre (NIRC) on Peer Education was set up on the basis of the National Academy of Postgraduate Education. The access to the expert support, information and methodological materials is available through the peer education webpage on the National Academy of Postgraduate Education site (www.academy.edu.by). To address a gap in monitoring and evaluation, UNICEF assisted in the development and integration of peer education M&E system. This system allowed timely collection of information, monitoring of peer education achievements versus planned results and identification of the main bottlenecks and challenges of peer education integration in the country.

To facilitate the realization of the child’s right for family environment (RKLA 1), a comparative cost benefit analysis of the medical assistance to children in need of continuous artificial lung ventilation provided in the hospital’s emergency units, units of “Infant homes” or at home was conducted. The cost effectiveness of the palliative care (PC) for children at home was proved and UNICEF concentrated its assistance on the introduction of the out-patient PC services for children. Methodological recommendations and regulations on PC for children in need of sustained respiratory support at home were developed. Twenty three families have already benefited from PC provided at home. To ensure better planning and management of PC provision the work on the setting up the electronic register of children in need of PC was continued.

The capacity of 236 local specialists on multidisciplinary team work within the provision of children’s PC was strengthened at regional seminars and the level of knowledge and skills of 76 local specialists on the nutrition of children under palliative care were improved through the international training conducted by Russian experts. The methodological manual “Psychological aspects of children’s PC” was distributed.

To increase public awareness and tolerance towards children with life-limiting and constraining
disease, video-reel and printing materials (posters and leaflets) were produced and disseminated.

Concerted efforts were made to enhance increase effectiveness of the work of the National Expert Group on PMTCT through analysis of PMTCT regional data; development of the recommendations on further PMTCT system strengthening including the improvement of the sentinel surveillance; promotion of pregnant women adherence to anti-retrovirals (ARVs) and facilitation of NGOs and health care providers’ cooperation.

To address the gaps in the capacity development and quality of care, UNICEF continued cooperation with the MoH by providing assistance in updating the PMTCT protocols in accordance with WHO recommendations. The updating included medical care of HIV infected drug dependent pregnant women, promoting HIV rapid testing of pregnant women and their partners, and also support for the development of the National PMTCT conference concept to be held in 2015.

To reveal gaps, barriers, undertake appropriate actions and ensure the validity of PMTCT results UNICEF/WHO RO HIV/AIDS advisers facilitated a PMTCT data validation process.

OUTPUT 3 By the end of 2015, authorities at all levels ensure referral systems and services for protection of children

Analytical Statement of Progress:
To promote the right of children under three (U3) to live in a family environment, several high level meetings were conducted with officials from the Ministries of Education and Health to agree upon future joint steps and distribution of responsibilities in deinstitutionalization of children. A high rate of institutionalization of U3 children remain in Belarus. Key initiatives in overcoming the challenges in this area included: improvement of inter-sectoral collaboration aiming to prevent institutionalization of children U3; capacity development of service providers working with vulnerable families to keep the child in the family and prevent his/her separation and abandonment; support to single mothers at risk of child’s abandonment; substitute care/short term family placement schemes for infants under 3; re-profiling of an infant home to a specialised health centre providing health care and social services for young children with severe health disorders and their families. The lack of donor funding constrained implementation of the joint programme in 2014.

To improve the system of protection of children from abuse and neglect, UNICEF jointly with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) supported national counterparts in strengthening capacity to prevent and counteract domestic violence, setting up a model of intersectoral collaboration (involving education and social protection system, police, medical service providers, NGOs) at district and local community levels (KRA 2). Inter-agency collaboration protocols on counteracting domestic violence were approved by the local authorities in Kamenets, Kobrin, Moskovski (Brest-city) districts of Brest region. UNICEF also provided technical assistance in children’s hot-line services strengthening statistical data collection analysis and public awareness raising on domestic violence. More than 3,800 calls were received from children in 2014. The topic of about nine per cent of calls was child abuse and violence at home.

Weak inter-sectoral coordination and information flows among specialists at local level are the main bottlenecks to be addressed by the establishment of a database system. The local child protection system database is aimed to make easier the specialists’ networking, information
exchange and prompt action by professionals. A mapping exercise of available services for families and children was conducted and the data was inserted in the database for further use in support of the referral mechanism and rehabilitation work at local level.

UNICEF further supported integration of domestic violence topics into the secondary school curriculum. The teaching aid materials of the optional study course on Basics of the Life Safety (5-9 grades) and interactive training classes (10-11 grades) were developed, piloted at 15 schools in three selected districts of Brest regions, and then revised taking into account the feedback from teachers who participated in the piloting. The finalized materials have been endorsed by the national education authority and recommended for use at the secondary schools (5-9 grades) nationwide starting in the school year 2014-2015.

To overcome social acceptance of violence, UNICEF had previously initiated a nationwide three stage information campaign “Home without Violence”, in cooperation with UNFPA and partners. In 2014 the second stage of the campaign under the title “Playroom without Violence” was implemented, and aimed at preventing and countering violence against children, and increasing knowledge of parents and caregivers on the issue. An information kit for parents was developed, printed and disseminated on nationwide scale, consisting of:

- a brochure for parents containing the detailed information on violence against children and recommendations on caring for and treatment the children without any violence methods both corporal and emotional punishment;
- a brochure for parents caring for children under three years old with specific recommendations taking into account particular needs of young children;
- two posters (one for school age children and one for parents) with images illustrating violent situations to help children to identify abusive practices of adults and to make parents examine their upbringing behaviour. The posters contain phone numbers of two hot-lines helping children who faced violence.

UNICEF National Ambassador for Belarus Maxim Mirnyi, presented the principal messages of the campaign. All the information materials of the campaign were made available in hard copies and in electronic format on a specially created Internet promo-site http://detskaya.unicef.by. The PSA promoting non-violent up-bringing practice, child’s dignity respect by parents was broadcast by 5 national TV channels.

In May 2014 at the National Commission on the Rights of the Child meeting, the Ministry of Education (MoE) was designated to develop an interagency concept and improve the legal framework stipulating further de-institutionalization of orphaned children and children deprived of parental care, development of family-type care and closure of residential care institutions.

**OUTCOME 3 Programme efficiency and delivery enhanced**

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
In accordance with UNICEF guidelines in 2013 concerned governmental authorities of the Republic of Belarus and the United Nations Children's Fund in Belarus held a mid-term review of the country program for the period 2011-2013. The MTR was an opportunity to further refocus the country programme around equity and implementation of children’s rights. To this end, key social determinants enabling and/or hindering progress and critical bottlenecks and barriers in systems, services and practices were identified and will be addressed and monitored during the second half of the CP.

2013 was also marked by Audit which was instrumental in terms of re-assessment of its business practice, streamlined work processes and capacity development.
OUTPUT 1 Programme implementation supported by appropriate human resources

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Funds contributed to the overall achievement of country programme goals through covering staff related expenses that are not funded by two programme components inter alia “Social Policy for children” and “System strengthening for child well-being”.

The budget was also used to finance logistical support for various visibility and advocacy events, translation services and other miscellaneous services (advertisements, renting vehicles, etc.), contributing to the overall effective implementation of Country Programme.

OUTPUT 2 Programme implementation supported by appropriate supply and services

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Funds for “Supply and Services” were spent on maintenance of national legal database software, purchase of programme related statistical publications and programme related pouch services.

OUTPUT 3 Programme implementation monitored, evaluated and supported by relevant advocacy and communication activities

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The office continued to undertake communication initiatives to inform the public on the results of UNICEF programming in Belarus. Supporting UNICEF visibility, the second edition of a Donor Booklet in Russian and English languages was produced and widely disseminated. Meeting the challenges of fundraising environment, its main objective was to refocus the international community on child rights agenda, strengthen advocacy for children’s rights, and promote UNICEF’s programming and expand networks.

Partnerships with media partners and celebrities were enhanced during the year. UNICEF Belarus contributed to the biggest internet portal TUT.BY forming a children’s rights agenda and providing extensive coverage of domestic violence issue and social inclusion of children with special needs.

Work continued to strengthen the content on the UNICEF Belarus website in order to raise visibility.

UNICEF responded to the Government’s requests and supported the National Contest “Family of the Year 2014”. Conducted in accordance with the National Programme of Demographic Security for 2011-2015, this contest aimed raising the status and importance of a strong and happy family. This initiative was in line with the preamble of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which highlights the benefits of a child growing up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.

### Document Centre

**Evaluation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sequence Number</th>
<th>Type of Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belarus 2014 IMEP</td>
<td>2014/901</td>
<td>IMEP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Other Publications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations on the practical use of rapid tests for HIV testing of adolescents and young people at-risk at health institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations on counselling of adolescents with HIV testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of Peer Education Approach at the General Secondary Education institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational-methodological complex &quot;Training of teachers-consultants on the implementation of peer education at the general secondary education institutions&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV testing and counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 0-18 Up-bringing without Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children 0-3 Up-bringing without Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of Domestic Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Prevention of Domestic Violence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>