Executive Summary

January 2013 marked the start of the new Country Programme (CP), which focuses on the reduction of disparities and inequalities.

Achievements:

1. Legislative amendments passed by cabinet to protect the rights of children, including the passage, by the House of Representatives, of amendments to the Criminal Code in December 2013 to increase protection of children who are survivors of sexual abuse and those who are mentally ill. The amendments also address issues of gender neutrality and increase penalties for perpetrators of sexual abuse against children.

2. Following up on the UN Secretary-General Study on Violence against Children, the Kingston Declaration (2012) and the Bridgetown Declaration and Plan of Action (2012), Belize became the first country in the Caribbean to develop a National Road Map to End Violence against Children.

3. The Make Your Child Count Campaign on birth registration was successfully concluded in the second quarter of 2013, with UNICEF and its counterparts becoming widely recognised for stellar achievement in this regard. Over 18,000 children and families in over 185 communities were reached with birth registration services.

4. The Ministry of Education (MoE), in collaboration with UNICEF, continued its institutionalisation of the framework of Quality Child Friendly Schools (QCFS) as a national policy. In the first year of the initiative, a quality framework to guide the implementation of the initiative was developed.

5. HIV prevention and the prevention of early pregnancy were also a primary focus of UNICEF’s programme on HIV in 2013. Consequently, under the framework of the UN Joint Project on Adolescent Girls, UNICEF has been working with government entities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and UN agencies to design an effective skill-based education programme for adolescents in and out of school.

Collaborative Partnerships:

As part of the Effectiveness & Efficiency initiative, the Belize country office (CO) became part of the Panama Shared Services Centre (SSC) in January 2013. SSCs are being replicated in the organisation to realise efficiency gains, costs savings and set standards in business processes.

A concerted effort between the CO, Internet technology personnel from the Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO) and headquarters in New York City made the Lightweight and Agile Information Technology (LIGHT) project a reality in mid-December 2013. LIGHT is a technical architecture project that prototypes the concept of the server-less field office supported by an IT service centre (LACRO). The idea of a server-less office is to enhance effectiveness and efficiency by significantly reducing a field office’s ICT infrastructure and raising the possibility of working from anywhere.

UNICEF continued to maintain the Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation (MHDSTPA) and the MoE as its key counterparts. These ministries have established an inter-sectoral mechanism for planning and implementing programmes and policies. Additionally, political partnerships with the Office of the Special Envoy for Women and Children has resulted in increasing advocacy for children with disabilities as well as highlighting the issue of violence against children.

Shortfalls:

The definition of the programme strategies and the needed “shift” in the way we collaborate with the government were the two main constraints affecting the country programme. As a result of these shortfalls, the financial implementation of resources was not at the optimal level.
Country Situation Affecting Children and Women

The 2013 Millennium Development Goals (MDG) report and post-2015 Development Agenda re-confirm that poverty remains a challenge for Belize, with total poverty at 41.3 per cent, rural poverty at over 70 per cent and urban poverty at 30 per cent. Many deprivations are manifested in barriers to critical social services such as education, early childhood development (ECD), health, nutrition and protection.

The 2011 Situation Analysis highlighted children as the most marginalised and poorest sub-group of the population, with a poverty rate of 50 per cent and indigent people accounting for 21 per cent. The data trends indicate the children living in south-side Belize City, where poor housing and the risk of drug abuse and violence are prevalent, and where dysfunctional patterns of male socialisation, fractured families and too few socially-approved opportunity structures have led to an increased chance of exploitation and child protection issues. Although there continue to be a number of challenges faced by Belize relating to child protection, on 19 December 2013 the government passed amendments to the Criminal Code that establish stricter laws to strengthen the child protection system. This was a historic victory for UNICEF and its key partners.

In Toledo and Stann Creek, the burden of poverty falls heavily on children. Inequity in the rural Toledo district (population of 27,566, of which 49.7 per cent is indigent) is marked, where poor road conditions, lack of proper water, sanitation and nutrition, and threat of flooding/other weather hazards, are a direct result of its geographic location. These problems manifest themselves in barriers related to delivery systems, capacity constraints, public policy and budgets. The children who are hardest to reach (e.g., those living in Otoxha) are deprived of basic services (http://talent.idealabstudios.com/index.html). Children from these communities have a decreased chance of being registered at birth and obtaining official documentation. This situation has prevented many children in Toledo and in the Stann Creek district from accessing other services, which results in increased risk of exploitation, poor nutrition and child labour, especially amongst children who live close to the Guatemala border and within the "banana and citrus belt."

Lack of access to social services has had a negative impact on the nutrition of children. According to the Belize Bio-marker Survey (2012), the southern region reported the highest prevalence of anaemia (31.6 per cent). In particular, Garifuna and Mayan children showed a high prevalence of anaemia (27.8 per cent and 17.3 per cent, respectively). In addition, the prevalence of ferritin deficiency in the absence of inflammation was highest amongst Garifuna children. With respect to child health (MDG 4), Belize maintains high immunisation coverage, with a rate of 96.6 per cent in 2009. With respect to the child mortality rate, progress was made from a drop of 44 to 17 per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2010. The proposed target is 8 per 1,000 live births by 2015. The infant mortality rate dropped significantly, from 35.3 to 14.2 per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2010. Maternal health showed signs of improvement between 1993 and 2010; however, efforts to improve breastfeeding for new-born children up to five months old will be targeted through A Promise Renewed (APR) interventions, since a low breastfeeding rate of 4.7 per cent was reported in the 2011 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS).

In the Stann Creek district, deprivation has a gender face in which inequities are evident in barriers to and bottlenecks in crucial social services, especially sexual and reproductive health. Inequalities as a result of lower economic and socio-cultural status of adolescent girls manifest in decreased chances to negotiate safer sex and/or accessing sexual and reproductive services. The 2011 MICS indicated low knowledge of ways to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV amongst young women in Stann Creek (48.9 per cent). Comprehensive knowledge about HIV amongst adolescents aged 15 to 19 years old is low, at 39.1 per cent. The MICS noted disturbing trends in sexual behaviour amongst this population, with 13.4 per cent reporting having had sex with a man 10 or more years older in the last 12 months. Additionally, data from the 2013 MDG report reveals that the adolescent (15-19 years old) birth rate is highest in the Stann Creek District — 84 per 1000 — with 64 per cent of this age cohort not using any contraception. The MoH also reported that over 16 per cent of females between 8 and 24 years old gave birth by age 15 and over 43 per cent by age 18.

In Belize — with half of its population below the age of 20 — only 31.7 per cent (MICS 2011) of children between 36 and 59 months old attend early childhood education. Most of the children enrolled in pre-school
continue to live in urban areas, primarily Belize City. Toledo, which is the poorest district, has the greatest need for early childhood services, particularly those for children with special needs, as well as better nutrition for children, especially in rural areas. Children with disabilities are also amongst the most disadvantaged and discriminated segment of the population. In the recently-published Situation Analysis of Children with Special Needs and Disability (2013), the percentage of children between 3 and 18 years old diagnosed with some form of disability was estimated to be close to 15 per cent. Additional data from the 2011 MICS show that more than a third (36.4 per cent) of children aged 2 to 9 years old were at risk for one or more disabilities, with Stann Creek District recording the highest at-risk percentage (59.3 per cent). Inequities are evident in the quality of accessible services available to this population and the families that care for them.

In 2013, key bottlenecks were identified in birth registration, ECD and adolescent HIV prevention. The primary obstacles affecting ECD priorities are lack of legislation/policy; socio-cultural practices and associated beliefs surrounding early childhood care and education, which prevents parents from sending their children to pre-school; and direct and indirect costs for pre-school education. The introduction of Monitoring of Results for Equity Systems (MoRES) through the new Country Programme Document (CPD) in 2013 allowed both the CO and partners to monitor programmes and policies to ensure that the equity approach of reaching the most marginalised children is evidence based and, consequently, achieving the expected impact.

### Country Programme Analytical Overview

The first year of implementing the current country programme has confirmed the appropriate criteria applied when establishing the geographic locations as well as the target population prioritised in the CPD. Toledo, Stann Creek and south-side Belize City remain the most deprived and unequal regions in the country. There are many challenges for children and their families in these areas to enjoy full access to basic social services.

At the end of 2013, the office conducted an introductory session of the MoRES framework for its counterparts. The different working groups identified, on average, four main determinants as the main reasons for several deprivations: social norms; management and co-ordination; access to adequately-staffed services, facilities and information; and social and cultural practices and beliefs. In 2014, the removal of identified bottlenecks and barriers will mark the approach the CO will follow to establish and sign PCAs and workplans.

The development and operationalization of national policies is one of the strategic shifts the CO needs to make during 2014. Stronger support to government entities for progress toward a sustainable and equitable agenda would create a more favourable environment in which to advance children’s rights. The support to specialised NGOs will continue based on the need of designing and testing new localised models that can be properly documented and later replicated at the national level.

In terms of programmatic areas, there are three main pillars the CO will focus on: child protection, with special emphasis on reducing violence against children; ECD and the importance of developing an integrated model/approach; and social protection. In this latter issue, UNICEF may play a key technical role in the definition of a national social protection system having children at the centre of it. The inclusion to the CO team of an International Social Policy Specialist would enhance our support to the country in this area.

The CO will conduct its Mid Term Review (MTR) in the second half of 2014. As a result of this process, it is expected that some revisions may need to be made to the Intermediate Result (IR) indicators and the programme strategies to reflect better UNICEF’s co-operation with the country. The MoRES implementation will provide valuable information to review the current CP.

In terms of the UN agenda, UNICEF will continue its commitment to forging stronger partnerships with sister agencies. More UN joint programmes and initiatives are also expected to be implemented as discussed with United Nations Country Team (UNCT) member agencies. UN common services is also an area where progress can be achieved.
Humanitarian Assistance

Although the rainy season during 2013 eclipsed expected levels and some localised floods were registered in various districts, no major emergency situation as a result of the impact of a hurricane or tropical storm was faced by the country. The UN system was in close contact with the government for possible humanitarian assistance; however, there was no need for international support.

The CO maintains an up-to-date Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) statutory electronic tool. We also have a small stock of emergency supplies strategically located in three areas of the country; these would allow the office to assist rapidly children affected by emergencies if there were a need. It is worth mentioning that, instead of having a small stock of supplies, the CO explore the possibility of having more reliable information of local and internationally-available suppliers that can be rapidly contacted in the aftermath of an emergency. Neighbouring Mexico opens up a wider list of providers. Establishing a “formal” relationship between the Mexican Civil Defence and Belize National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) could be an important agenda for the UN in the country.

Effective Advocacy

Fully met benchmarks

In 2013, UNICEF was actively involved in advocacy with the government and strategic multi-sectoral partners to promote the rights of children and women. Key interventions included advocacy to remove barriers to the inclusion of children with disabilities into their communities in order to allow equitable access to health, education, protection and participation. In August 2013, two documents were launched on the situation analysis of children with special needs and disabilities, and on blind and visually-impaired children. These reports recommended that interventions be made to increase access to programmes and support for children with disabilities, their families and care-givers. Advocacy continues for legislation to be enacted regarding the rights contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Dissemination of the findings of Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4 (MICS4) advocated for changes to close the gap in providing basic services to the most vulnerable children. The evidence served to inform policymakers about removing bottlenecks from systems that affect children’s well-being, resulting in better programmes and policies for adolescent girls, health, nutrition, water access, hygiene and sanitation in schools. This data also guided the formulation of the new country programme.

Increasing advocacy through the production and dissemination of information and communication materials about children’s rights as per the CRC and the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) continued, such as right to education from an early start (ECD posters); the right of children to clean water and basic infrastructure, including adequate bathroom facilities in all schools (fliers and notebooks); assessing the situation of children with disabilities and children who are blind and visually impaired; ensuring that adolescents have supportive systems, especially as they relate to service delivery programmes and child protection, including parental care (parenting video) and ending violence against children (children-voiced videos and public service announcements).

The CO advocated for media nation-wide to improve the quality and quantity of reports on children’s rights and to use the requisite sensitivity and ethical standards to maintain the dignity of children whose stories they tell. Recognising that media reports have a major impact on how a society is seen by its citizens and by the world, media guidelines were produced by key stakeholders and the National Broadcasting Authority to set standards by which journalists and media executives in Belize ought to behave. The guidelines were drafted to apply equally to television, radio, on-line and print media, especially as it relates to violence.

The office promoted the right of all children to be protected through the End Violence Against Children initiative. Partners joined in creating a national road map and campaign to end violence against children by advocating, building the capacity, engaging and mobilising care-givers, adolescents, government and civil society organisations to develop, implement and monitor a robust child protection system using programmes with models focusing on violence prevention and safe and protective environments.
Continued advocacy for strengthening the birth registration system to increase access to services for hard-to-reach communities led to a 10 per cent increase in birth registration in the Stann Creek and Toledo districts showing 97.7 per cent and-95.8 per cent birth registration, respectively, attained through the Make Your Child Count campaign over a two-year period.

**Capacity Development**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

In 2013, UNICEF collaborated with the University of the West Indies (UWI), NGOs and the Government of Belize (GoB) to strengthen core capacities in monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Based on the Shared Conceptual Framework on National Capacity Development in Evaluation and Civil Society (Segone, Heider, Oksanen, De Silva and Sanz) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the CO embarked on several initiatives to support development programmes to achieve equitable and gender-responsive results.

**Strengthening civil society contribution**

In 2013, the CO continued its collaboration with the University of the West Indies, Open Campus (UWIOC) to train 20 mid-level professionals from civil society, strengthening their capacities in M&E. The CO and the civil society M&E network, which was established in 2011, recognise the added value of strengthening the advocacy function of civil society within the policy-making environment, and agreed that the achievement of this goal required the strengthening of civil society’s capacity to conduct or commission evaluations. During 2013, this network of professionals had quarterly two-day trainings in the areas of results-based management (RBM) at the programme and policy levels, equity focus evaluations and MoRES. Discussions are ongoing to formalise this network for further gains in capacity development.

**Strengthening national capacities as a part of good governance**

Within the Programme Co-operation Agreement with UWIOC, the CO supported 44 professionals, representing 16 agencies (both governmental and non-governmental) in increasing their capacity to manage and account for resources invested and results produced. These professionals' strengthened capacity to budget and manage for results was a direct impact of the training received in financial management and project management.

Additionally, collaboration with the Belize City Council provided UNICEF an opportunity to present, during a two-day workshop, on the Core Commitments for Children (CCC’s) in humanitarian situations. The session included 50 participants from city councils, government ministries, NGOs and other international agencies. The capacity development highlighted the need for children to be at the centre of any development and programming for emergency preparedness and response. Strengthening in this area will definitely continue in 2014 for the GoB and other partners.

**Strengthening existing data management system toward the establishment of a national system tool**

In accordance with the Paris Declaration to promote national ownership and leadership for country-led evaluation systems (CLES), the CO collaborated with the MHDSTPA in conducting a one-week training of 15 technical personnel from the MoH, Ministry of National Security (MNS), Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MOEYS), Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB), Central Information Technology Office (CITO), MHDSTA, University of Belize (UB), National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC), National AIDS Commission (NAC), UNICEF and DevInfo. The latter is the government-approved software for the current Inter-agency Public Safety Management Information System (IPSMIS).

The goal of expanding IPSMIS and consolidating all the country DI implementations is to create a single national system tool. Participants of this training now have the capacity to administer and manage on-line applications; conduct mapping; and create presentations and reports to identify and highlight any info referencing national and sub-national situations, both on-line in dashboards, galleries and reports. Finally, participants should be able to export data output for incorporating into regular publications and policy briefs,
for advocacy, for better policy and planning (to close the equity gap) and to support the country’s international reporting commitments.

**Communication for Development**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

Communication for development (C4D) strategies promoted positive behavioural and social changes as well as community mobilisation and engagement in several areas of the country programme.

The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) campaign aimed at effecting behavioural changes such as proper hand-washing, hygiene and sanitation. This was done by encouraging the entire community to take action on WASH. Communication materials such as informational leaflets and animation/PSAs accompanied outreach activities, which included health fairs, clean-up campaigns and hygiene demonstrations. This resulted in communities becoming more involved in and forming school committees to improve and maintain bathroom facilities at several quality child-friendly schools. Target audiences included children, parents, communities and school administrations. Collaboration with the MoE and MoH as well as communities provided the evidence for the necessary investment to improve various schools’ bathroom facilities and access to quality water, reaching thousands of children.

Strong advocacy and communication on disabilities resulted in increased attention to the situation of children with disabilities. Evidence from a Disability Situation Analysis was presented to a very diverse audience consisting of policy-makers, civil society, academia, the general public and media, and was used to shape communication on the special needs of children with disabilities. Comprehensive coverage in print, television, radio and social media further encouraged several stories about the challenges faced by children with disabilities. Heightened awareness of challenges faced by children with disabilities inspired actions by the Special Envoy for Women and Children, including the building of Belize’s Inspiration Centre, which will provide comprehensive services for children with disabilities.

UNICEF supported the Belize Broadcasting Authority and worked with Media Train in the United Kingdom to develop guidelines through facilitated sessions and consultations with professionals from all media outlets to improve the quality and quantity of reports, and to stimulate the creation of media spaces and programming about children’s issues.

The Make Your Child Count birth registration campaign ended in 2013 after three successful years of implementation. Outreach to communities, education and awareness through local and national media accompanied by engagement of local governments, civil society and communities contributed to achieving almost 100 per cent birth registration in Belize. The campaign data provided policy-makers with evidence of the value of a robust birth registration system sustained by trained staff working in an efficient and resourced network across the country, especially in rural areas.

The CO joined UNICEF’s global call to end violence against children by launching the End Violence against Children campaign, which was initiated with multi-partnership engagement. A high-level meeting with children and other key stake-holders resulted in much national attention to the situation of violence against children as well as the development of a national road map to end violence against them. A key feature of this road map is the development of a communication strategy targeting children, parents, community leaders and other key stakeholders to end violence against children.

**Service Delivery**

*Fully met benchmarks*

In 2013, collaboration continued with national partners and the GoB to assess the priority areas requiring service needs. The key area of WASH in schools persisted as a critical area requiring service delivery.
A comprehensive WASH assessment and evaluation in 2011 showed that children’s lack of access to adequate sanitation facilities and poor hygiene practices have been identified as major barriers to cultivating a child-friendly environment in primary schools in Belize. UNICEF, therefore, continued its convening role with its main partner, the MoE, to mould and institutionalise a comprehensive strategy that would eventually become a consolidated management response or action plan. One major constraint for the MoE, however, has been its limited capacity to focus fully on every particular aspect of the WASH in Schools initiative at the local level without compromising their national agenda. Most schools generally fall under particular faith-based mansagements, which seems to impede the MoE's direct intervention, where possible, on WASH-related situations.

UNICEF directly supported service delivery in enhancing school improvement plans by managing the contracts and project management of remodelling and construction of bathroom facilities on a small number of QCFS. This mode of operation was requested by the MoE at a consultation with key senior managers in February 2013. The premise was that the funds will be managed more efficiently and control of the implementation more holistic. By doing so, the management of available project funds, direct communication with school managers, principals and parent-teacher associations on WASH-related activities, and the frequent follow-up on infrastructure installation and maintenance were significantly enhanced. This mode of service delivery also allowed the CO to network efficiently with the US Fund for UNICEF and private donors who were funding the initiative.

This approach was considered a first step in implementing better WASH interventions in specific schools with the aim at covering all target schools in Belize on a gradual basis. WASH advocacy has gained the interest of a private donor with specific timelines and consistent oversight. At the same time, the success of the project has yielded another commitment of US $200,000 to address school improvement plans in more QCFS.

Directly-supported service delivery in 2013 helped to build sustainable quality education systems with equity. There was the development of government and school management capacities, with successful models of QCFS on display where parental and community involvement were pivotal. Finally, the capacity of the CO was also developed and maximised since new business processes were explored and addressed in meeting the needs for construction contracts and commodities. In 2014, UNICEF will continue its focus on the next phase of WASH in Schools on a smaller set of schools utilising the QCFS platform.

**Strategic Partnerships**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

UNICEF continued to maintain the MoH, MHDSTPA and MoE as its key counterparts. These three ministries have established an inter-sectoral mechanism for planning and implementing programme and policies in the social sector, which serves as a useful platform for ensuring effective co-ordination and implementation of UNICEF-supported programmes. This mechanism has been particularly effective in co-ordinating the implementation of the ECD policy, as all activities are jointly planned, monitored and implemented by the three ministries. UNICEF plans to continue to invest in ECD by supporting these ministries to build their capacity to implement strong models for ECD informed by regional best practices.

Additionally, political partnerships with the Office of the Special Envoy for Women and Children has resulted in increasing advocacy for attention to children with disabilities as well as highlighting the issue of violence against children. These high-level political partnerships will be maintained in 2014.

UNICEF continued to seek opportunities to engage in joint programmes with sister UN agencies in an effort to strengthen UN co-ordination and coherence, maximise resources and ensure impact of UN programmes in Belize. Seven UN agencies signed the UN Joint Programme on Strengthening the Resilience of South-side Belize City to Enhance Citizen Security and Development. This is the second joint programme in which UNICEF has been involved. In 2012, UNICEF established partnerships with four other agencies to implement the UN joint programme for adolescent girls. In 2014, UNICEF will seek additional opportunities to engage in joint programming with other UN agencies.
One major area for improvement is partnering with civil society. Many civil society organisations operate in Belize; however, their efforts are not co-ordinated and they often lack the capacity to implement programmes with national coverage. However, civil society remains an important partner to ensure that the voices of rights holders are heard and that sustained platforms exist for them to claim their rights. In 2014, UNICEF will support civil society to strengthen it in order to broaden its scope and impact.

In 2013, UNICEF assumed the role of chair of the UN Joint Team on HIV. Consequently, UNICEF will represent the UN on the National AIDS Commission (NAC), which is the country co-ordination mechanism for HIV.

Efforts were made to strengthen partner capacity through a memorandum of understanding with the UWI. Courses were offered to partners in financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and Harmonised Approach for Cash Transfer (HACT). There is a need to improve efforts to engage in more strategic partnerships — particularly with the private sector — build capacity of partners in financial management and engage in more robust monitoring of partners. UNICEF plans to undertake a comprehensive review to ensure that partnerships are strategic, partners meet the standards required by HACT and that they are fully aware of and able to maintain the requirements set out by UNICEF.

**Knowledge Management**

* Mostly met benchmarks

In 2013, the CO undertook several initiatives with the GoB to enhance performance through learning. Partnering with several ministries and universities, the CO has supported the systematisation of knowledge management by capturing and utilising data to highlight the gaps in equity, with a focus on the marginalised populations in the targeted communities of south-side Belize City, Stann Creek and Toledo.

**Data Management System**

DevInfo technology has been adopted by several national entities to improve national knowledge management systems:

National Women’s Commission

In 2012, the CO and NWC embarked on an initiative to strengthen the national statistical system as it relates to the collection, production, dissemination and use of sex-disaggregated data for improved policy analysis, advocacy and programme planning, with a specific gender focus through the use of Devinfo. A specific output of this initiative is a sex-disaggregated database: Belize Gender Info 1.0. 2013 saw the launch of the on-line version of Gender Info ([http://nwc.cds.com.bz/DIWeb/](http://nwc.cds.com.bz/DIWeb/)).

Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation

The CO has supported the MHDSTPA in the initial stage to consolidate all the country DI implementations into one central repository. This involved the design and implementation of a DI version for the NAC and managing current implementations (at various levels of current development) for the NCFC (NPainfo), the NWC (GenderInfo) ([http://nwc.cds.com.bz/DIWeb/](http://nwc.cds.com.bz/DIWeb/)) and SIB (BelizeInfo). Sub-national analysis of the achievements of Horizon 2030, Millennium Development Goals/Post-2015 Agenda have also been accomplished.

The MHDSTPA agreed to use DevInfo/DI technology as the management system. In turn, the CO supported the national capacity-building to ensure that the team (MHDSTPA, MoH, MoEYS, SIB, MoE, MNS) could administer and manage an on-line application, including a good knowledge of the data model, data entry and management, and automatic methods to convert/upload existing electronic databases (census, surveys, administrative statistics etc.) to DI databases.
Knowledge Portals

Knowledge Portal on Children of Belize

The CO has continued to support the UWI in the management of the Knowledge Portal on Children of Belize called The Belizean Child. This portal is a one-stop resource for all information (compiled from 2003 to 2011) on children living in Belize. The purpose of the site is to facilitate access to key information for policy-makers, researchers and all other interested persons.

Digital Mapping

The CO has also created a data-sharing portal for use with digital mapping: http://talent.idealabstudios.com/index.html. It will be used to highlight the situation of 10 communities. They were identified as areas of focus for the CO and government based on several deprivations faced by the communities and on the community’s rank on SIB’s “Classification of major cities, towns and village in Belize by socio-economic status of their residence.” These target communities were the bottom 10 in the poorest quintile. This data-mapping portal will support bi-annual monitoring of the impact of targeted interventions aimed at removing the barriers to crucial social services.

Human Rights-based Approach to Co-operation

Mostly met benchmarks

In 2013, UNICEF engaged in much advocacy around Article 19 of the CRC, protecting children from violence, abuse and exploitation as well as advocacy on the implementation of the recommendations in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Given the current situation of violence against children, UNICEF joined the global movement to advocate for increased protection for children from violence, abuse and exploitation. These efforts resulted in the GoB’s renewed commitment to follow up actions outlined in the UN Secretary-General Study on Violence against Children.

Advocacy for increased attention to the rights of children with disabilities was undertaken through the launch of the State of the World Children’s report as well as a national situation analysis on children with disabilities.

UNICEF provided inputs to Belize’s Universal Periodic Review report as well as Belize’s report to CEDAW, and continues to work closely with the government to complete the submission of the CRC report, which is pending.

During the last quarter of 2013, Belize hosted a visit by the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. This marks the first time that a United Nations Human Right Council-appointed Independent Expert was invited by the government and signals the government’s commitment to addressing the issue of trafficking. Belize was noted for having ratified the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, as well as adopting the 2013 Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Act and the establishment by law of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council (ATIP-Council) under the 2013 Act, and the passage of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Prohibition Act, 2013. Concerns raised included the capacity and willingness to identify trafficked persons, availability of statistical data and the indiscriminate criminalisation of migrants for irregular entry into Belize.

In 2014, UNICEF will work closely with other UN agencies to support the government in building its capacity to respond to trafficking in persons.
Gender Equality

Mostly met benchmarks

In 2013, the CO supported several initiatives to fast-track gender mainstreaming. In terms of data analysis, the UN joint team launched *The Status of Adolescent Girls in Belize*. This report, based on data calculated using the 2011 MICS4, provided decision-makers and policy actors from all sectors data on the social, demographic, health and economic circumstances of young people in Belize to aid in evidence-based planning, reporting and to track trends over time. Additionally, in collaboration with the NWC, the first on-line sex-disaggregated data base, Gender Info (http://nwc.cds.com.bz/DIWeb/), was launched.

The Belize Gender Info (BGI) is a monitoring tool that tracks progress on the implementation of the Revised National Gender Policy (RNGP), passed by Cabinet on 19 March 2013. It also serves to monitor the recommendations emanating from CEDAW. The BGI was completed with invaluable assistance and collaboration from the Policy and Planning Unit of the MHDSTPA.

Aligned with the RNGP, the BGI is built on the priority areas of health, education, violence-producing conditions, wealth and employment generation, and power and decision-making. The 2013 RNGP (http://www.nationalwomenscommission.org/Publications/NGP_final) is a revision of the first National Gender Policy passed in 2002. Dubbed as progressive by gender experts from ECLAC and the CARICOM Secretariat, the policy identifies and examines the inequalities experienced by both men and women and boys and girls, and suggests strategies to correct gender disparities as well as give direction for the co-ordination and implementation of the policy. However, the inclusion of the vulnerable populations of men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers, etc., within the policy has sparked tension between the government, religious groups and the UN.

The CO continued to apply a cross-cutting approach to gender inequality by ensuring that a gender perspective is integral to all activities and programmes. In the 2011 WASH assessment, the results showed that only 30 per cent of schools in the nation met the national standards of 25 girls per toilet and only 33 per cent of schools met the standards of 50 boys per toilet/urinal. Major work and communication for development in WASH in 2013 addressed this situation of bathroom facilities for boys and girls to the extent that there is a draft guideline for water and sanitation standards in QCFS. Work will be ongoing in this programme for 2014.

In conclusion, the CO continues to play an active role on the UN Gender Theme Group in Belize.

Environmental Sustainability

Mostly met benchmarks

Belize’s attribute as a low-lying coastal country contributes to its status as one of the region’s most vulnerable countries to the adverse impacts of climate change. While its contribution to global warming and climate change is negligible, the country is impacted by this phenomenon. Other visible impacts include increased erosion and inundation of coastal areas, increase in temperature, sea level rise, flooding and increasingly intense hurricanes and storms. (Climate Change UNFCCC Meeting 2012).

Annual heavy rains and flooding throughout the country underscored the need to heighten further awareness about such vulnerabilities and pointed to the need to ensure children’s right to clean water, proper sanitation and hygiene education. In addition, the CO supported the MoE and partners such as the Toledo Institute for Development and Environment. Through their programmes, indigenous children participated in sports for development coupled with environmental education in which boys and girls improved their school and community environment through environmentally-sound activities such as cleaning waterways; planting trees; creating green spaces where children learn in a conducive environment; establishing recycling programs; painting murals with environmental messages such as impacts of climate change, mitigation and adaptation; and promoting WASH activities. They raised awareness in their communities as they participated in the creation of a healthier and cleaner Belize. They further advocated for a healthier environment through
television and radio and in schools and community as they engaged entire communities to participate in their annual football competition. Most communities are located along the coast, thus positively impacting over 6000 vulnerable residents and further extending to the neighbouring Stann Creek district and beyond.

Annually, Belize experiences environmental change-related impacts manifested as greater incidences of seasonal floods, storms and hurricanes, and diminishing natural and human ecosystem functions. Annual incidents of natural disasters, particularly the annual floods, affected the most disadvantaged families, as their poorly constructed homes were flooded and their access to food and water compromised. Recognising the annual occurrences of natural disasters in Belize, UNICEF continues to advocate for disaster prevention and management with strategic partners, including the National Emergency Managing Organization, which disseminates the *Protect and Survive* booklets to people attending the shelters. These provide information on protecting the family’s health and well-being during a period of natural disaster.

Belize’s vulnerability to natural hazards and environmental fragility, in part a result of its location, climate and topography, requires that agencies strengthen their capacity in disaster management and co-ordination. The CO continues to build its capacity in this area so as to contribute to disaster risk reduction activities, including strengthening the early warning system within the UN and national partners to ensure the level of readiness required to respond quickly and efficiently to natural disaster threats and to maintain children’s rights to education, health, a safe environment and well-being.

**South-South and Triangular Co-operation**

During the reporting period, the CO carried out no major South-South initiatives.

The agenda for 2014 in terms of South-South co-operation looks very promising. Specific financial resources made available during the last quarter of 2013 have given us the possibility to explore various alternatives to concretise our support to the country:

- *Development of an ECD national policy*. The office has reviewed information from countries in the LAC region to identify those that could contribute to aforementioned result. Experiences from Uruguay, Chile and Cuba seem to be more appropriate to the Belizean context.

- *HIV prevention amongst adolescents*. A triangular co-operation between Belize, Jamaica and Brazil has been identified as a valid mechanism to bring to Belize important experiences from these countries, which have steady advancements in this area. In parallel, talks with the Brazilian Ambassador in Belize also support this initiative.
PC 1 - Quality of Social Services with Equity

**PCR 6110/A0/04/801** By the end of 2016, most excluded boys and girls in Toledo, Stann Creek and South-side Belize City are reached by policies and programmes with a gender perspective that increase protection, early childhood development and culturally-appropriate and child-friendly education and learning opportunities across the life cycle of 0-18 years, including during periods of emergency.

**Progress:**

PCR1 aims to ensure that the most excluded boys and girls are reached by policies and integrated programmes with a gender perspective in child protection, early childhood development and education. Within this component, much success was met in strengthening policies and legislation to realise the rights of children. Improved data in the area of nutrition, WASH and child protection also contributed to strengthening programming in these areas. This was achieved through strong partnerships with the Ministries of Education, Youth and Sports, Health, Human Development and Social Transformation, the Office of the Special Envoy for Women and Children, the National Committee for Families and Children, and several NGOs. Key achievements include:

2. Strengthened inter-sectoral co-ordination, planning and implementation of ECD programmes and policies by three ministries: Health, Education and Human Development.
3. Drafting of national standards for WASH and mobilisation of resources for strengthening WASH in schools.
4. Strengthened legislation to protect children from abuse and exploitation.
5. Development of a National Road Map to end violence against children as a follow up to the UN Secretary-General Study on Violence Against Children.
6. Finalisation of the Make Your Child Count Campaign on birth registration, reaching over 18,000 children and families.
7. Strengthened programme response to HIV prevention amongst adolescents.
8. Co-operation with the Ministry of Health to bring to zero the number of HIV infections amongst new-born babies.

These major achievements in policy, legislation and programmes within the first year of the country programme have laid the foundation for the development of quality programmes in ECD, child protection, education and HIV prevention that will ensure that the most disadvantaged children are reached with quality services. The emphasis during the next three years of the country programme will be on advocating and supporting government and NGO counterparts at all levels to strengthen capacity for targeted investment in children in the core areas of focus (ECD and education, child protection, and HIV prevention).

**IR 6110/A0/04/801/001** By 2016, a 25 per cent increase in the number of boys and girls (0-18 years old) in Stann Creek, Toledo and Belize District benefiting from quality education services across the life cycle (pre-school to secondary education).

**Progress: Toward Quality Education**

Improved access to quality, basic education in a child-friendly school environment is a priority for the achievement of MDG 3: universal access to primary education. Thus, the MoE, in collaboration with UNICEF, continued its institutionalisation of the framework of Quality Child Friendly Schools (QCFS) as a national policy. The overall goal of QCFS is to assist schools in their efforts to make them inclusive, children-focused and governed through democratic participation of the entire community. In the first year of the initiative, a Quality Framework to guide the implementation of the initiative was developed. Three components of the framework were piloted in five schools in the Toledo District and five schools in South-side Belize City. From 2011 to 2012, the number of QCFS expanded to 35 schools country-wide; in 2013, there are now approximately 65 QCFS.

**Capacity-building and Institutional Strengthening**

To become a QCFS, administrators, teachers, parents and students go through an evaluative and educational process that can be time-consuming. In 2013, UNICEF was able to give technical assistance and financial support to various decentralised units in the MoE for the institutional strengthening of 19 primary schools. Eleven of the primary schools are in the Stann Creek District, which targeted a vulnerable population of 4,672 students and 304 teachers and administrators. Five of the primary schools are in South-side Belize City with a disadvantaged population of 1,038 students and 38 teachers; outreach to the three island schools developed the capacity of 1,884 students and 75 teachers and administrators. In total, 19 disadvantaged communities benefitted from the provision of training in proper hygiene and sanitation and in QCFS.

UNICEF’s support and technical assistance to three District Education Centres out of the six is also on-going. A stronger partnership was forged with the Building and Maintenance Unit in the MoE, and its support on the project management team greatly facilitated the success of the physical implementation of the projects on the islands. This technical unit in the MoE worked closely with UNICEF in the training of maintenance committees for the three newly-formed QCFS on the islands. The co-ordination of this major activity will be strengthened for future work in 2014.
WASH in QCFS
The collaboration between the MoE and UNICEF has been on-going in efforts to improve water, sanitation and hygiene in QCFS. Data assessed from a WASH Evaluation (2011) helped to direct the WASH programme in 2013 in which UNICEF supported the MoE to remove barriers to quality education. In creating access, the MoE gained adequate buy-in from the community and stake-holders through school improvement plans, trainings and parent meetings, highlighting the importance of creating a safe, healthy and supportive learning environment—one of the key components of QCFS. With this thrust, all projects in water, sanitation and hygiene are embedded within the UNICEF-supported QCFS programme.

Funding from private donors and US Fund supported improved WASH facilities in primary schools. This funding allowed the MoE to hire an engineer and conduct an assessment on the situation of WASH facilities in eleven schools as a catalyst for the project. The assessment, completed in 2013, stimulated an unexpected outcome for UNICEF Belize. After discussing with the Government of Belize the engineer’s findings, the MoE, the Social Investment Fund and the National Emergency Organization (NEMO) all decided to partner with UNICEF to improve WASH facilities in 84 schools in the country, a development that costs around $4 million. The MoE has been able to obtain pledges for $1.4 million from the government and other partners for this project. In addition, it collaborated with the government in developing and adopting new common standards for WASH in schools. These standards are not complete, but the collaboration will continue in 2014 to ensure that the construction of WASH facilities meet acceptable international standards.

Inclusive Education in QCFS
UNICEF's support to NGOs such as the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired (BCVI) (www.bcvi.org) and the Congress of Maya Teachers continued to impact the quality of education for the most disadvantaged populations.

The work with BCVI focused on improving inclusive education for children who are blind, and the organisation managed the development of the Situational Analysis of Children Who are Visually Impaired (written in 2012), which was launched in 2013. High-level advocacy for children with special needs and disabilities was accomplished in 2013, with UNICEF’s support of BCVI and the Office of the Special Envoy for Women and Children, headed by Mrs. Kim Simp lis Barrow, the wife of Belize’s Prime Minister.

During 2013, UNICEF convened meetings with the National Resource Centre for Inclusive Education (NaRCIE) and BCVI to discuss technical support that was necessary for the government unit. The Situational Analysis of Children Who are Visually Impaired highlighted the concern that NaRCIE was not providing the minimum services for children who are blind: “These children are only visited once or twice per year instead of weekly or bi-weekly.” Although we can say that all children are included in the education system, capacity gaps in technical expertise has enabled NaRCIE to rely heavily on BCVI, who offer additional support to the blind students in schools.

The Improving Inclusive Education for Children Who are Blind project has filled two of UNICEF’s programme components by focusing on a life-cycle and human rights-based approach on children who are excluded and disadvantaged. This project has not only promoted inclusion but also provided much-needed educational support where it is most lacking: for children with disabilities, especially those in rural areas. In line with the CRC, this project offered, and will continue to offer, life-long educational support at no cost to the children and families, thereby offering a road to independence and self-sustainability.

However, the IBE project has also expanded into a Parental Involvement Intervention Programme (PIIP), where CMT has been able to mobilise parents, school principals, teachers and key village leaders in local PTAs. This project has greatly increased and strengthened community and parental involvement in indigenous communities. Further work will continue in this initiative for 2014, as the MoE has shown great interest in this development and is now looking to form district level PTA commissions. The Congress of Maya Teachers will continue to work closely with the MoE in QCFS, where a key component speaks to community and parental involvement.
1. Legislative amendments passed by Cabinet to protect the rights of children, including the passage by the House of Representatives of amendments to the Criminal Code in December 2013 to increase protection of children who are survivors of sexual abuse and children who are mentally ill. The amendments also address issues of gender neutrality and increase penalties for perpetrators of sexual abuse against children. This complements recent amendments to the Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Act and the introduction of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation Bill. Additionally, the Policy and Legislative Reform Sub-Committee of the NCFC completed an internal review of the juvenile justice amendments, making recommendations of existing laws that need to be strengthened or amended. These include the Penal Systems Reform (Alternative Sentences) and the Juvenile Offenders Act. In 2014, UNICEF will support the NCFC and the GoB in addressing these legislative amendments as well as strengthening the capacity of the juvenile justice system to address the rights of children who come in conflict with the law.

2. Following up on the UN Secretary-General Study on Violence against Children, the Kingston Declaration (2012) and the Bridgetown Declaration and Plan of Action (2012), Belize became the first country in the Caribbean to develop a National Road Map to End Violence against Children. Based on preliminary data collected on the situation of violence against children, a high-level meeting on ending violence against children was held in November 2013. The main objectives of the gathering were (1) to assess the situation of violence against children as a follow-up to the Secretary-General’s study and (2) to develop a road map to end violence against children. In preparation for the meeting, a desk review was conducted to map progress toward the implementation of recommendations from the UNSG study and to identify gaps. Given the current focus on armed violence prevention, actions to address it have been integrated into the national road map to end violence against children. This will ensure that the actions are long-term and sustainable.

A child protection task force has also been established to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of actions in the road map. The key counterparts in this component are the NCFC, the MHDSTPA, and the Office of the Special Envoy for Women and Children, and RESTORE Belize.

3. The Make Your Child Count Campaign on Birth Registration was successfully concluded in the second quarter of 2013 with UNICEF and its counterparts becoming widely recognised for stellar achievement in this regard. Over 18,000 children and families in over 185 communities in Belize were reached with birth registration services. Additionally MICS4 data demonstrated a 10 per cent increase in birth registration rates in Stann Creek District (from 87.6 per cent at baseline to 97.7 per cent) and 1.1 per cent in Toledo (from 94.7 per cent at baseline to 95.8 per cent).

4. UNICEF continues to collaborate with other UN agencies in the implementation of the UN Joint Programme to Strengthen the Resilience of Southside Belize City to Enhance Citizen Security and Development. Within the context of the Joint Programme, UNICEF’s focus is on building the capacity of institutions and care-givers that serve children and young people in south-side Belize City to facilitate their productive participation and to ensure that they benefit from the social assets of the community. Through a partnership with its main counterpart, RESTORE Belize, UNICEF is providing support to strengthen services and support to children and families, including psycho-social support to children and families who are exposed to violence as a part of their daily experiences. The aim is to build a model that can inform policies and programmes to protect children and their families from the impact of violence in communities with high levels of violence.

IR 6110/A0/04/801/003  By 2016, at least a 25 per cent increase in the number of girls and boys with access to health services (including sexual and reproductive health services), social, recreational and education services, and life skills education in order to reduce their social and economic vulnerability

**Progress:** In 2013, UNICEF, along with key counterparts, initiated programmes in HIV to address two important areas: HIV prevention amongst adolescents and prevention of mother-to-child transmission (MTCT).

Belize has made significant strides in reducing MTCT of HIV. However, some key bottlenecks associated with late ante-natal access continue to prevent Belize from getting to zero. In 2013, the MoH collaborated with UNICEF to design a communication strategy and accompanying materials to encourage early ante-natal access amongst pregnant women. Additionally, the MoH is strengthening the capacity of healthcare providers to engage in inter-personal communication with HIV-positive pregnant women to prevent MTCT of HIV. The campaign will be rolled out by the end of the first quarter of 2014.

HIV prevention and prevention of early pregnancy were also a primary focus of UNICEF’s programme on HIV in 2013. Based on available data on the situation of HIV and early pregnancy, 1 in 4 pregnancies to teenagers in Belize occurs in Stann Creek. Furthermore, MICS4 indicated a decrease in the percentage of young people (15 to 24 years old) with comprehensive knowledge of HIV (from 49.6 per cent in 2006 to 42.8 per cent in 2011). Additionally, young people represented 37 per cent of newly-diagnosed cases of HIV in 2011. There appears to be a direct correlation between HIV and sexually-transmitted infections (STIs), teenage pregnancy and early school leaving amongst adolescents in Stann Creek. Data from the 2010 census indicate that only 29 per cent of adolescents in Stann Creek transition from primary to secondary school.

Consequently, under the framework of the UN Joint Project on Adolescent Girls, UNICEF has been working with the Belize Family Life Association (BFLA), Productive Organisation for Women in Action (POWA), the MoE and the MoH and other UN agencies to design an effective skill-based education programme for adolescents in and out of school. The key barriers targeted include levels of knowledge, access to services and changing social norms (acceptability of early sexual activity and pregnancy). The programme is being implemented in all schools in the Stann Creek District, reaching over 3,000 adolescents. The programme will be delivered by students trained as peer educators and by trained adult educators. Students will be trained to offer additional information and support to peers. Monthly awareness and education activities targeting the entire school population will also be organised by peer educators (based on a
best practice model at two secondary schools in Belize City). School counsellors would also be integral to the dissemination of information.

Given the fact that several schools place restrictions on the depth of information students receive, especially as it relates to information on condoms, activities will be organised outside school hours at the parks, beach and other venues popular with students.

It is important to note that there are limited best practices in the area of prevention amongst adolescents in Belize. Consequently, this programme is being carefully documented and will serve as a model than can be replicated in other parts of the country. The current south-south collaboration with Jamaica and Brazil on HIV will serve as an important opportunity to build local capacity for HIV prevention, thus ensuring the effective implementation of this programme.

The intervention and C4D campaign in improving early ante-natal care and access for pregnant women will be imbedded within A Promise Renewed (APR) initiative led by the MoH and supported by UNICEF and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO). In 2013, the Belize National Survey on Micro-nutrients Bio-markers (BNSMB) was launched. The micro-nutrients measured were iron, B12, folic acid/folate and vitamin A. The deficiencies of some of these micro-nutrients are impacting the health of Belizians, as it causes neural tube defects. Significant deficiencies in anaemia, for example, were prevalent in women and children from the southern region, the poorest part of the country.

Initiatives for child development in 2013 will be prioritised through advocacy, empowerment and by strengthening the know-how and capabilities of public institutions in ensuring provision of quality services in child protection, ECD and education. The IR will promote early cognitive stimulation, provide guidance to improve readiness for early childhood education and support parent education. The cross-cutting strategy of ECD includes high-impact health interventions that can ensure that good quality early life experiences and nutrition interventions are critical to child growth and social and cognitive development. South-South and Set Aside Funds for 2014 will give an opportunity to strengthen the global strategy of A Promise Renewed. In committing to this global strategy, the multi-sectoral approach will be applied in Belize where interventions in health, nutrition and WASH will impact the same marginalised group to achieve results for child survival and development in families and communities with a road map for a ratified ECD policy.

The south-south/triangular operation will offer Belize a great opportunity to develop a sound model as a best practice for the LAC region, since UNICEF has received a direct request from the GoB to help develop a national policy on ECD. This co-operation will also allow Belize to explore great integrated models for ECD already practiced in LAC, such as the “Educate your Child” Cuban model and others developed in Chile, Uruguay and the eastern Caribbean for 2014.

IR 6110/A0/04/801/004 Effective and efficient technical support to programmes (Note: all staff salaries are from RR except Francisco Cuellar, who is paid from OR).

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**PC 2 - Monitoring Child Rights**

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**PCR 6110/A0/04/802** By the end of 2016, a well-constructed monitoring and evaluation system is being used to direct CRC reporting, social budgets, national plans and legislation, and examining delays and bottlenecks impeding child rights policy implementation

**Progress:**

In partnership with the GoB, several milestones were realised under this PCR:

**National Data Management**

With the ultimate goal of establishing a national data management system, the CO supported the training of 15 technical personnel from key data producing ministries in DevInfo7. These skills will allow the GoB to consolidate all national implementation of DevInfo into one central repository, while still managing ministry-specific databases. These skills will also allow administrators to create additional customisation such as a NAC database and manage current implementations (at various levels of development) for the NCFC (NPAInfo), the NWC (GenderInfo) and SIB (BelizeInfo).

**Child Budget**

The CO supported the evaluation of the National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents 2004-2015 (NPA) and the development of a road map for the NPA post-2015. Through its advocacy efforts with the NCFC, UNICEF plans to support the development of an NPA+2015 agenda and to empower the NCFC to establish clear budgetary lines for children as it relates to education, health, HIV/AIDS, child protection and culture. This agenda should also address and emphasise job creation and entrepreneurship boosting in order to strengthen opportunities for disaffected youth.

**Child-friendly Communities**

The CO supported the Belize City Council in the identification of Yabough as the pilot community for the UN Joint Project on Citizen Security. The Stann Creek Association for Reform and Empowerment (SCORE) was also supported in re-defining the TOR for the creation of Child-friendly Communities. Within the parameters of MoRES and guided by the "Brazil Seal Module", efforts were made to reinforce the prioritisation and strengthening of the use of evidence. This entailed establishment of strategic partnerships within two municipalities:
Stann Creek and south-side Belize City.

Policy Observatory
The 2013 Annual Work Plan (AWP) between the CO and UB sought support to latter in strengthening of the governance structure of the Policy Observatory. This entailed the expansion of the Public Policy Working Group; defining the roadmap that would guide the institutional process of transforming the Policy Observatory into a fully functional policy research and development institute; and the development of a Plan of Action for establishing the PPRI/ISERPD.

IR 6110/A0/04/802/001 IR: Quality, disaggregated and harmonised national and sub-national statistics, including administrative data systems, on children and women available

Progress:

IR 6110/A0/04/802/002 IR4: By 2014, 25 per cent of key national influencers (GoB, NGO/CSOs) are addressing issues of child rights with increased capacity in analysing budget procedures and allocations

Progress:

Based on the recommendation of the 2012 Budget Analysis - Public Finance for Inclusive Growth for Children and Youth in Belize: A Review of Evidence and Policy Options, the CO has been in dialogue with the NCFC to support the evaluation of the National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents 2004-2015 (NPA) and to develop a road map for the NPA post-2015. The NPA already includes budget allocation for education, health, child protection, HIV/AIDS, family and culture. The NPA+2015 should also address and emphasise job creation and entrepreneurship-boosting in order to strengthen opportunities for disaffected youth. In addition, the CO has conducted several meetings at the CEO level to validate several drafts of the Budget Analysis and identify various strategies needed to cohere with boosting the rural sector in Belize, where most of the poor and the most marginalised remain.

Without the expertise of a Social Policy Officer in the CO, progress on the achievement of the IR was constrained. However within the framework of the NPA, the CO intends to launch the budget analysis and to conduct, with the support of the UB- Public Policy Research
Institute/Institute of Social & Economic Research and Policy Development, several days of policy dialogue and discussion around the issue of “child-sensitive” programme budgeting.

**IR 6110/A0/04/802/003 IR5: By 2016, quality assurance system based on common minimum standards of service delivery applied across institutions for health, education and protection**

**Progress:**

The CO has advanced the achievement of the IR by supporting action at both the technical and functional levels:

- **Technical level:** Within the platform of the NCFC M&E sub-committee, the CO has provided technical support and advocated for the completion of annual reports for the various line ministries, including the MoEYS.
- **Functional Level:** The CO has signed an AWP with MoEYS to strengthen the Inspectorate Unit further. One of the primary functions of the unit is the Monitoring of the QCFS and to make recommendations to improve the quality of service offered by educational institutions.

After several reviews, including the mid-year and annual reviews, this IR was highlighted as one of those under consideration for removal from the CPAP (2013-2016). The findings from the review processes indicate that IR is redundant, as it is also captured under PCR1-Quality Social Service with Equity; and IR has no added value: the result (PCR 2) will be achieved even in the absence of this IR.

**IR 6110/A0/04/802/004 IR 6: By 2016, at least three municipalities are measuring the performance of actions/interventions toward improvements in quality of life, gender equality and social inequity**

**Progress:**

In 2013, the CO, in an effort to support the GoB in the creation of Child-friendly Communities and within the parameters of Monitoring Results of Equity Systems, reinforced the prioritisation and strengthening of the use of evidence to make better decisions to improve the lives of disadvantaged boys and girls by promoting systems to generate real-time data at the national and sub-national levels; and use the evidence as an advocacy tool to create the demand for better quality of service at the sub-national level. This entailed the establishment of strategic partnerships within two municipalities: Stann Creek and south-side Belize City.

**Stann Creek**

At the end of 2012, the Stann Creek Organization for Reform and Empowerment (SCORE) was established to bring focused attention to the underlying causes of child deprivation and take action to address the practical barriers and bottlenecks to the effective provision and use of services. The goal of the collaborative mechanism was to support community monitoring of health clinics, school performance, child protection (BR and violence against children) and HIV/ AIDS knowledge. This level of participation gave the community a sense of dignity and value.

SCORE, in its ideal collaborative modular design, was the ultimate mechanism that would facilitate a collaborative identity. Building on the recommendation of the NCFC M&E sub-committee, efforts in 2013 sought to strengthen and institutionalise SCORE by expanding the terms of reference of the Stann Creek Branch of National Gender-based Violence (NGBV) Committee to encapsulate the mission and vision of SCORE. Since it had similar stakeholder membership identified by the SCORE model, it provided an ideal opportunity to merge both entities. In light of this and in collaboration with the NCFC and the Department of Women Services, the CO supported several co-ordination sessions to review the role and functions of the NGBV Committee; co-ordinate meetings with the NGBV Committee to explore expanded functions amidst planning for the 16 Days of Activism; and explore the possible launch of an expanded committee within the 16 Days of Activism.

**Actions planned for 2014:**

- Launch of expanded Committee
- Three-year work-plan for Committee
- With Committee members, conduct a Sub-national Situation Analysis of Children in Stann Creek regarding health, education, protection and climate change

**South–side Belize City**

In 2013, within the context of the UN Joint Project Strengthening the Resilience of South-side Belize City to Enhance Citizen Security and Development, the CO provided technical support to the Belize City Council, RESTORE Belize and NCFC in the adoption of the social mobilisation model “Brazil Municipal Seal.” As a result of this strategic partnership, efforts were made to "Belizeanize" this model with participation of the leaders and youths in the Yabrough community. Through community meetings, key issues that affect their development were identified and key socio-economic indicators were pinpointed for a “Child-friendly Yabrough Community”.

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UNICEF Annual Report 2013 — Belize
Actions for 2014

- Development of a concept note for a Child-friendly Yabrough
- Launch of the UN Joint Team Project
- Launch of the “Belizean Municipal Seal”

**IR 6110/A0/04/802/005 IR 7: By 2016, the University of Belize Policy Observatory is directing partnerships with national policy actors through enhanced facilities and modalities of policy dialogue and debate around research findings and policy advice in the areas of child protection and education**

**Progress:**

In 2013, the CO supported the UB to establish the Public Policy Research Institute/Institute of Social & Economic Research and Policy Development. The progenitor of the institute is the UB Policy Observatory Project (Phase 2 A), which ended in December 2012. This initiative was the product of a joint project, launched in December 2007 by the CO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UB.

In June 2011, the CO committed financial support to the Policy Observatory up to the end of 2012. With this support, the Policy Observatory project, with the support of the UB’s Research Office, undertook the necessary preparatory groundwork for the establishment of the institute, including the development of its initial research portfolio, formulating its governance and operational systems, enhancing basic research capacities at UB faculties, establishing research partnerships and networks, and identifying financing sources.

In 2013, the CO assisted UB in strengthening the governance structure of the Policy Observatory by supporting:

- Expansion of the Public Policy Working Group, from the original external membership (four persons) to include four members from the UB community, representing the academic and the administrative layer of the UB;
- Defining the road-map that would guide the institutional process of transforming the Policy Observatory into a fully-functional policy research and development institute;
- Recruitment a Project Manager whose broad frame of reference would be to develop and implement a Plan of Action for establishing the PPRI/ISERPD; and
- Selection of the Regional Child Observatory Institution.

At the end of 2013, UB reported several challenges that delayed or slowed the rate of achievement of this intermediate result:

- The lack of human capital that is motivated to undertake research, that sees research as part of the professional identity and that builds sufficient critical mass to create its self-motivating research community.
- Limited pool of qualified personnel to undertake role of Project Manager (recruitment process had to be extended to 2014).

Resignation of the President of UB.

**IR 6110/A0/04/802/006 Effective and efficient technical support to programme (Note: all staff salaries are from RR, except Marisa Matthews, who is paid from OR)**

**PC 3 - Cross-sectoral costs**

**PCR 6110/A0/04/803 By 2016, development-supported communication tools are enabling a co-equal knowledge-sharing process between users and source to raise consciousness and community participation in the design, implementation and measurement of results for ECD, continuous learning, WASH and child protection activities, which are built on non-material development indices as self-determination, self-reliance, cultural autonomy, ecological balance and human rights with equity, especially in times of emergency**

**Progress:**

UNICEF actively supported strategic multi-sectoral partners to advocate strongly to advance disadvantaged children’s agenda, especially those with disabilities. Key interventions included:

- Promoting breaking the barriers to inclusion of children with disabilities into their communities to allow equitable access to health, education, protection and participation.
- Using the findings of the MICS4 to advocate for changes to close the gaps in providing basic services to the most hard-to-reach children.
• Increasing advocacy through production and dissemination of information and communication materials about children’s rights as per CRC and CEDAW.

• Advocating for media nation-wide to improve the quality and quantity of reports on children’s rights and use the required sensitivity and ethical standards to maintain the dignity of children whose stories they tell.

• Promoting the right of all children to be protected through the End Violence against Children Initiative.

• The birth registration campaign continued as targeted parents/guardians of unregistered children acquired birth certificates; system strengthening and media outreach accompanied by engagement of local governments, civil society and communities.

• The End Violence against Children campaign was initiated with multi-partnership engagement in a national road map development accompanied by a communications strategy.

In the area of Communication for Development (C4D), the two programme areas were supported by strategies to promote positive behavioural and social changes as well as community mobilisation and engagement. C4D activities included targeting and engaging the right people; therefore, all activities considered multi-sectoral partners and diverse channel/platforms, including social media and traditional means:

• The child rights agenda was supported through the generation of publications and supported production of television programming that further stimulates children to know about their rights, roles and responsibilities.

• UNICEF supported the Belize Broadcasting Authority and worked with Media Train (UK) to develop guidelines through facilitated sessions and consultations with media professionals.

• The Disability Situation Analysis findings were presented to a very diverse audience consisting of policy-makers, civil society, academia, the general public and media.

• The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene campaign aimed at effecting behavioural changes such as practising proper hand-washing, hygiene and sanitation in the schools through informational leaflets, animation/PSAs, health fairs, clean-ups and hygiene demonstrations and forming school committees to improve and maintain bathroom facilities at several quality child-friendly schools.

IR 6110/A0/04/803/001 IR8: By 2016, a mechanism is established for the dialogic exchange of gender balance information, knowledge, ideas and values amongst individuals and worst of communities in areas of ECD, lifelong learning, WASH and child protection, including in times of emergencies

Progress:

In an environment of limited advocacy efforts, UNICEF has amplified its role by producing and increasing the reach of information and communication materials about children’s rights, as per CRC and CEDAW. This entailed the production of materials such as the right to education from an early start (ECD posters); the right of children to clean water and basic infrastructure, including adequate bathroom facilities in all schools (fliers and notebooks); assessing the situation of children with disabilities and children who are blind and visually impaired; adolescents to have supportive systems, especially as it relates to service delivery programmes and rights to children protection including parental care (parenting video); and ending violence against children (children-voiced videos and PSAs).

PC 4 - Generated Programme Component for Business Area 6110 and Cycle Number 4

PCR 6110/A0/04/800 PCR Support

IR 6110/A0/04/800/001 Financial Resources and Stewardship

Progress: As part of the Effectiveness & Efficiency initiative, the CO became part of the Panama SSC in January 2013, with the Operations Assistant in the CO as the SSC Focal Point. Operation SSCs are being replicated in the organisation to realise efficiency gains, costs savings and set standards in business processes. Additionally, the inherent role conflicts that result due to the small size of the CO in the use of VISION were significantly addressed by being part of a SSC. However, the CO has not been able to realise the efficiency gains fully as they relate to time-saving, communication gaps and effective planning in-house.

In 2013, the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was reviewed and updated with clear guides on the governance structures, including the allocation of staff responsibilities and accountabilities. The CO benefits from a monthly Programme Group and Country Management
Team meeting, which serve as the forum to review programme performance and management and operations using the management performance tools and indicators available on-line via Insight. In addition, the Contract Review Committee, Property Survey Board and Central Review Board have moved to the SSC with representation from the SSC country offices and meet as needed. The Learning Committee established and met the learning priorities based on the input given by colleagues. The local staff association works with management to represent staff interest and share critical information for staff development and protection. The Joint Consultative Committee serves as a forum for the staff association and management to raise and address key issues related to staff well-being.

In 2013, the Emergency Focal Point and the Emergency Assistant updated staff members on a regular basis with relevant information regarding emergency preparedness and response, and the importance of monitoring the EWEA System on the UNICEF intranet on a regular basis. This CO had a score of 98 per cent on the EWEA, the highest in the LAC region. When a storm is threatening, staff members received daily updates until the threat is over. The CO ERM profile is monitored by all staff and formally reviewed bi-annually in the context of the CMT.

The UNDSS Security Advisor and team with responsibility for Belize had a mission to assess further the risks associated with natural disasters, emergency and security that the UN faces in Belize. The team conducted personal security awareness training for staff members and dependants in November 2013, and they were also able to carry out premises and residential inspections. The Security Advisor also identified the need to integrate properly the areas of natural disasters, emergency and security as one in order to manage and respond effectively in the event of threats. The Security Focal Point in CO monitors, with UN colleagues, Belize’s threats, especially those related to violence and crime.

In moving forward, the CO will continue to utilise the Insight portal in monitoring performance indicators for operations management and programme.

The last audit of Belize CO was in 2007 and is scheduled to be audited again in 2014.

IR 6110/A0/04/800/002 Financial Resources and Stewardship

**Progress:** The CO aimed to safeguard the financial and other assets of the organisation by maintaining and improving financial and administrative systems and procedures to ensure efficient, timely, cost-effective and transparent utilisation of resources, including CO efforts through fundraising.

HACT training was done with partners through an agreement with the UWI to understand UNICEF’s financial processes. Arrangements were implemented by the CO to monitor programme funds and implementation rates by the respective Programme Officers through regular field visits to partners. With renewed commitment, the current Representative requested CO team support in the measures currently being taken in having HACT fully implemented and the CO becoming fully HACT compliant.

Programme implementation rates for Country Programme were seventy four per cent in terms of regular resources utilisation. Evidently, improvement is needed in matching the planned resources to the planned results, as the CO completed 2013 with a below-average utilisation rate. Direct Cash Transfer funds over nine months remained at zero per cent in 2013.

Savings in local staff costs were transferred to non-core posts to meet the shortfalls in operations cost. Monthly bank reconciliations are done in the Panama SSC and remain up to date.

The last audit of the CO was in 2007 and is scheduled to be audited again in 2014. Initial actions of uploading Programme and Operations documents to the Belize COP and attaching back-up documents in VISION have been taken. A draft Audit Guideline has been prepared by a consultant contracted by the Regional Office; final document will follow shortly and shared COs will assist in the preparation for an audit.

Clear progress was made toward cost savings that were realised in 2013 and beyond, and will contribute to the efficient management of Belize CO.

IR 6110/A0/04/800/003 Human Capacity

**Progress:** The CO began the 2013–2016 country programme with a complement of 13 staff members. Two colleagues resigned their respective posts to pursue other employment opportunities: Programme Specialist Pamela Scott and Receptionist/Typist Marsha Samuels. The former post was left vacant to explore the possible scenarios that can be proposed to the PBR. Recruitment for the Receptionist/Typist post was completed in June 2013 and Stasha Sheppard assumed duties the following month.

With full staff participation during the preparation and submission stages of the PBR exercise, the changes recommended by the PBR affected the following posts in the CO structure, effective 1 January 2014:

1. Creation: Social Policy Specialist, P3 (still under recruitment) and Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, NO-C (post filled)
2. Abolishment: Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, NO-B (incumbent), Communication Officer, NO-B (incumbent), Programme Specialist, NO-C (vacant) and Social Policy Officer, NO-B (vacant)
Subsequently, the posts with incumbent that were recommended for abolishment by the Regional PBR were approved by the GMT in September 2013. Communications Officer Anna Hoare was separated on 29 November 2013 and Planning, M & E Officer Paulette Wade was separated on 31 December 2013. In the recruitment exercise for an M & E Specialist, Ms. Wade was selected and re-appointed effective 1 January 2014. The Social Policy Specialist post is still under recruitment.

As part of the IP rotation exercise, the CO welcomed Ivan Yerovi as the new Representative and bid farewell to Christine Norton, who served as Representative for three years.

2013 ended with 11 staff members, with two posts under recruitment and four posts abolished.
Effective Governance Structure

As part of the Effectiveness & Efficiency initiative, the CO became part of the Panama SSC in January 2013, with the Operations Assistant in the CO as the SSC Focal Point. Operation SSCs are being replicated in the organisation to realise efficiency gains, costs savings and set standards in business processes. Additionally, the inherent role conflicts that result due to the small size of the CO in the use of VISION were significantly addressed by being part of a SSC. However, the CO has not been able to realise the efficiency gain fully as it relates to time-saving, communication gaps and effective planning in house.

In 2013, the BCP was reviewed and updated with clear guidance on the governance structure, including the allocation of staff responsibilities and accountability. The CO benefits from a monthly Programme Group and Country Management team meeting, which serves as the forum to review programme performance and management and operations using the management performance tools and indicators available on-line via Insight. In addition, the Contract Review Committee, Property Survey Board and Central Review Board have moved to the SSC with representation from the SSC country offices, and meet as needed. The Learning Committee established and met the learning priorities based on the input given by colleagues. The local staff association works with management to represent staff interests and share critical information for staff development and protection. The Joint Consultative Committee serves as a forum for the staff association and management to raise and address key issues related to staff well-being.

In 2013, the Emergency Focal Point and the Emergency Assistant updated staff members on a regular basis with relevant information regarding emergency preparedness and response and the importance of monitoring the EWEA System on the UNICEF intranet on a regular basis. This CO has a score of 98 per cent on the EWEA, the highest in the LAC region. When a storm threatens, staff members receive daily updates until the threat is over. The CO ERM profile is monitored by all staff and formally reviewed bi-annually in the context of the CMT.

The UNDSS Security Advisor and team with responsibility for Belize had a mission to assess further the risks associated with natural disasters, emergency and security that the UN faces in Belize. The team conducted personal security awareness training for staff members and dependents in November 2013, and they were able to carry out premises and residential inspections. The Security Advisor also identified the need to integrate the areas of Natural Disasters, Emergency and Security as one in order to manage and respond effectively in the event of threats. The Security Focal Point in CO monitors, with UN colleagues, Belize’s threats, especially those related to violence and crime.

In moving forward, the CO will continue to utilise the Insight portal in monitoring performance indicators for operations management and programmes.

The last audit of Belize CO was in 2007 and the CO is scheduled to be audited again in 2014.

Strategic Risk Management

The CO ERM profile is monitored by all staff and formally reviewed bi-annually in the context of the CMT.

The highest risk level remains the challenges of the aid environment, the threat of natural disaster and security risks due to rising crime and violence that could disrupt programme activities and reputation. In 2013, Belize became the pilot country office for the LIGHT project (server-less office) and this addressed the risk associated with ICT systems and information security. This risk level is now reduced to low.

With respect to the aid environment, new sources of funding were identified in 2012–2013 through the European Union, US Fund and a sub-regional approach to funding priority areas of work. The hope is that these efforts will minimise risks associated with reduced funding or lack of funding.

The issues of emergency and security and mitigation measures were regularly monitored by the Representative, Security Focal Point along with support from the UNSMT and UNDSS in Guatemala. The
necessary safety equipment was installed and staff members fully briefed on ways to mitigate and report potential threats or negative experiences in their environs that might threaten their safety or the programme workflow. Staff members and dependants attended personal security awareness training facilitated by UNDSS in November 2013.

As natural disasters are an on-going threat, the CO sought support from the Regional Office Emergency Advisors in Panama to obtain tool kits that include useful materials to prepare and respond to emergency situations and that could help with addressing disaster risk reduction. In regard to this latter point, the Emergency Focal Point and Emergency Assistant took part in training in 2012-2013.

The Business Continuity Plan was updated to cater to changes in the current environment and operating changes, including the roles and responsibilities of staff members involved in the Panama SSC.

The involvement of all key programme and operations staff in planning and goal-setting through the CMT and PGM continues to be an effective mechanism in ensuring that there was ownership, clarity and reduced risks concerning areas where gaps still exist.

In the area of programmes, the Annual Work Plans gave consideration to potential risks due to failures on the part of partners and/or UNICEF to put measures in place to mitigate risks or challenging circumstances. It should be noted that, without the full implementation of HACT, some of these failures/challenges and risks will continue to hinder the delivery of results for women and children in Belize.

In operations, role mapping and revision/assignment of roles and adding users from the Panama SSC was conducted to reduce further conflicts in VISION. Delegation of roles during fluctuating staffing arrangements is employed. Business processes are reviewed regularly to meet organisational standards. With the various levels of authorisations in VISION, priority is given to addressing issues that arise from existing work-flows and revisions made in identifying the responsible party and necessary action.

### Evaluation

The 2013 Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) brought together prioritised integrated data collection activities. These outputs supported evidence-based programming and were critical components in maintaining quality assurance for programme and operations management.

### Major Events

Events implemented included:

**Global Hand Washing**: integrated with the WASH in school programme. This was a key component of the AWP signed with the MoE.

**Symposium hosted by Policy Observatory**: A compendium of papers, “Towards a Compact for Belizean Development”, was presented and a day of discussion was hosted by the UB.

**Universal Children’s Day**: the MHDSTPA, NCFC and the Office of the Special Envoy for Women and Children, with the support of UNICEF, hosted a two-day symposium on “Ending Violence against Children”.

**National Parenting Conference**: Hosted in February 2013 by MHDSTPA, NCFC and UNICEF, this conference provided an opportunity to re-examine current efforts to identify how best to support and strengthen parenting initiatives in Belize.

### Internal Milestones

As a part of the mid-year review process, the CPAP was re-examined, PCRs and IRs were fine-tuned, gaps identified and corrective measures put in place. The annual review allowed relevant stakeholders to highlight actions taken during the year to advance results. In addition, the MoRES framework was presented and an initial bottleneck analysis was conducted in the areas of ECD and adolescents and HIV data.

### Studies

The adolescent girls data guide was completed in 2013. In addition, a geo-spatial map is under development. This on-line tool provides relevant and real-time information to guide interventions and humanitarian actions.

**Surveys**

Child Activity Survey: it was moved to April 2014. This will be conducted by SIB with financial support from the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Cognitive testing of the Functional Disability Module: cognitive interviews and data analysis completed. Final report to be finalised by Washington Group on Disability Statistics.

Reproductive health behaviours and emotional influence on HIV amongst boys and girls (10-24 years old): survey discontinued by Global Pulse due to the insufficient digital data.

**Evaluation**

Although two evaluations were planned in 2013, one was completed as an assessment — “Brief Analysis of Violence against Children in Belize” — and the other is under discussion with the MoE for possible implementation in 2014.

**M&E Capacity Development (CD)**

**National level**

In the absence of a national evaluation or planning unit, the CO has made great strides in strengthening national demand for M&E. The CO-UWI collaboration continues to provide a platform for project/programme managers to strengthen their capacities for results-based management and to strengthen national demand for M&E.

In an attempt to establish a national data management system, UNICEF and MHDSTPA collaborated on capacity development of fifteen national data producing agencies in DevInfo 7, Monitoring and Dashboard.

CO staff were encouraged to participate in several M&E webinars and on-line trainings, and to add at least one M&E training to their individual 2013 learning plan.

**Monitoring systems**

The CO monitoring systems include CPMP, AMP, BCP, Belize UN Inter-agency ERP, ERMP and OBMS.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

In the era of advanced technology, the CO faced financial and technical challenges in supporting appropriate IT infrastructure. A concerted effort between ICT personnel from LACRO and New York headquarters made the LIGHT project a reality in mid-December 2013.

LIGHT is a technical architecture project that prototypes the concept of the server-less field office supported by an IT Service Centre, in this case, LACRO. The idea of a server-less office is to enhance effectiveness and efficiency by significantly reducing a field office’s ICT infrastructure while still offering its staff a substantial portion of the IT service catalogue through a service centre as well as the ability to work from anywhere. All that is needed is an internet connection. The CO is now a server-less field office, lightweight and agile from an infrastructure point of view, with a very low IT footprint — hence the term “LIGHT office”.

LIGHT is ideal for this situation, given its small field presence comprising 13 staff members? It will facilitate the rapid deployment and/or re-deployment of office and staff in any situation, including emergencies. It is also ideal for One UN scenarios, as it simplifies sharing arrangements because an internet connection is all that our staff will need when sharing a building with other agencies.

A Global Virtual Private Network — using Microsoft’s Direct Access technology — gives end-users direct access to the UNICEF network from any location using an internet connection. UNICEF finally has a truly mobile workforce with the ability to work from anywhere: home, airport or half-way around the globe while preserving all the IT services that are provided when in office. By simplifying the back-end, IT infrastructure delivers a direct benefit to end-users. For example, there will be no need for local IT assistance for the simple act of connecting visitors to a local UNICEF office. The corporate Wi-Fi will automatically recognise UNICEF-issued laptops without the need for user action and losable manual keys.
Furthermore, remote end-user support over a secure internet connection will enable the LACRO Service Centre or HQ help desk to assist users with a global, anytime-anywhere end-user support without the need for the present cumbersome firewall rules.

LIGHT and UNICEF’s move to the cloud (Office 365) are symbiotic undertakings. While LIGHT entails UNICEF-owned servers, and the applications on the cloud are owned and hosted on outside servers, the two together form the complete set of services for the CO. End-users use the applications on the cloud for e-mail, calendaring, instant messaging, multi-party audio and video conferencing, SkyDrive Pro, Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote — all enabling users to work on their documents from a web browser.

These cutting-edge design and strategy solutions are in line with ITSS’s strategic direction to continue providing modern ICT advisory services as UNICEF businesses increasingly leverage ICTs as a business enabler.

LACRO had already been acting as some sort of Service Centre for the CO, so LIGHT built on that.

**Fundraising and Donor Relations**

In the second part of the year, the CMT adopted the practice of collectively reviewing, during its monthly meetings, the most important management indicators. This revision allowed the office to take proper and timely action in order to comply with the Organisation’s quality standards. In this regard, donor reports were sent on time and resource allocations were fully implemented.

Despite the fact that Belize is an Upper Middle Income Country, as per the income typology, and therefore a "donor orphan country," in 2013 the office was able to raise funds from the EU to support the child protection work on prevention of violence against children. Likewise, funds were also received from the US Fund to advance our support to WASH at the school level. The funding available for 2013 was completed with the resources received from the GoB for operational support, the Regional Office for HIV prevention amongst adolescents, south-south and triangular co-operation, and global thematic funding.

Looking at 2014, the challenges in terms of raising funds for the CP remain. There are some opportunities, however, through various mechanisms:

1. Bilateral relationships with governments: initial talks have taken place with the UK and Brazil delegations.
2. Country-specific proposals to be presented to National Committees: there is strong interest from private donors in the US to continue providing resources to our co-operation in the country.
3. English-speaking Caribbean COs fundraising strategy: - under the co-ordination of the Jamaica CO, special support from the US Fund is being provided to develop a strategy to support the COs’ efforts to fund the country programmes.
4. Development of UN joint programmes is also a fund-raising window of opportunity: it has been discussed within the UNCT that there is a need to dedicate additional efforts to prepare solid fundraising documents.
5. Private Sector: although not considered a PFP country in the region, the CO will explore the possibility to raise or mobilise resources from the small but committed private sector.
6. Prompt to emergencies: Belize faces recurrent threats from June to November every year — the Caribbean hurricane season. The office has the mechanisms to prepare pitch documents rapidly that could lead the office to receive emergency response funds.

**Management of Financial and Other Assets**

The CO aimed to safeguard the financial and other assets of the organisation by maintaining and improving financial and administrative systems and procedures to ensure efficient, timely, cost-effective and transparent utilisation of resources, including CO efforts through fundraising.

Collaboration with the United States Funds and private donors continued, as the CO hosted a visit in April
2013 that had a very positive result in that a donor extended US $100,000 in 2013 and made a commitment to further investments of up to $250,000 over the next year, if the results are favourable.

The GoB continued to fulfil its commitment to UNICEF’s programmes and operations support in the amount of $112,000.

The A Human Rights-based Approach to Child Protection: Changing Social Norms and Engaging Civil Society to End Violence against Girls and Boys in Belize proposal to the EU was successful. The EU extended one hundred and twenty one thousand Euros (after cost recovery) with expected results in fostering social change for the benefit of the most vulnerable boys and girls in selected urban and rural areas. With zero growth in regular resources, the current Representative continues the work of building partnerships with the donor community to improve aid effectiveness.

Additional Global Thematic Funds were also received and will be utilised in the areas of ECD and HIV south-south co-operation.

The HACT training was done with partners through an agreement with the UWI to understand UNICEF’s financial processes. Arrangements were implemented by the CO to monitor programme funds and implementation rates by the respective Programme Officers through regular field visits to partners. With renewed commitment, the current Representative requested CO team support in the measures currently being taken in having HACT fully implemented and the CO becoming fully HACT compliant.

Programme implementation rates for the country programme stood at 74 per cent for regular resources utilisation. Evidently, improvement is needed in matching the planned resources to the planned results, as the CO saw a below-average utilisation rate in 2013. Direct cash transfer funds over nine months remained at zero per cent in 2013.

Savings in local staff costs were transferred to non-posts to meet the shortfalls in operations costs. Monthly bank reconciliations are done in the Panama SSC and remain up to date.

The last audit of the Belize CO was in 2007 and is scheduled to be audited again in 2014. Initial actions of uploading programme and operations documents to the Belize COP and attaching back-up documents in VISION have been taken. Draft audit guidelines have been prepared by a consultant contracted by the Regional Office; the final document is to follow shortly and other Cos will assist in the preparation for an audit.

Clear processes were made toward cost savings that were realised in 2013 and beyond, and will contribute to the efficient management of the CO.

**Supply Management**

The CO supplies plan continues to be minimal for consumables, services and construction. The plan was duly submitted to the CMT for review, recommendations and approval for local procurement. Since the supply component of the country programme is very minimal, the only monitoring required is for the emergency supplies, since Belize has a potentially high threat for natural disasters. There was no need to procure emergency supplies in 2013. There are two controlled warehouses: one in the capital city of Belmopan and the other in Toledo District with a basic amount of emergency supplies (ORS, water containers, ECD kits, school in a box, hygiene kits, and recreation kits). Most items stored are distributed during the hurricane recovery phase to government counterparts. Monitoring of these emergency supplies is done by the supplies and emergency focal points once every quarter. During these monitoring visits, the inventory list is updated and expired goods are destroyed with the help of the government. This year, hygiene kits, ORS and basic health kits were distributed during the water sanitation and hygiene campaign in Belize City and southern districts. Footballs and basketballs were distributed to counterparts for assisting community-based organisations or community activists in south-side Belize City.
This year, the CO benefited from IT equipment assets, as the country office became the first server-less office supported by an IT service centre in Panama under the ICT re-architecture project dubbed “LIGHT”.

One persistent challenge Belize continues to face as a small country is the absence of a variety of high-quality suppliers. Belize does not have large manufacturing companies; as a result, the CO faces the challenge of high cost of some supply items due to import taxes, shipping and freight costs.

Human Resources

The CO began the 2013–2016 CP with 13 staff members. Two colleagues resigned their respective posts to pursue other employment opportunities: Programme Specialist Pamela Scott and Receptionist/Typist Marsha Samuels. The former post was left vacant to explore the possible scenarios that can be proposed to the PBR. Stasha Sheppard was the successful candidate for the Receptionist/Typist post and assumed duties in July 2013.

With full staff participation during the preparation and submission stages of the PBR exercise, the changes recommended by the PBR affected the following posts in the CO structure, effective 1 January 2014:

Creation: Social Policy Specialist, P3 (under recruitment) and Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, NO-C (post filled)
Abolishment: P M & E Specialist, NO-B (incumbent), Communication Officer, NO-B (incumbent), Programme Specialist, NO-C (vacant) and Social Policy Officer, NO-B (vacant)

Subsequently, the posts with incumbents that were recommended for abolishment by the Regional PBR were approved by the GMT in September 2013. Communications Officer Anna Hoare was separated on 29 November 2013 and P, M & E Officer Paulette Wade was separated on 31 December 2013. In the recruitment exercise for an M & E Specialist, Ms. Wade was selected and re-appointed effective 1 January 2014. The SP Specialist post is still under recruitment.

As part of the IP rotation exercise, the CO welcomed Ivan Yerovi as the new Representative and bid farewell to Christine Norton, who served in that role for three years.

In the area of staff learning and development, emphasis is placed on on-line self-learning, WebEx sessions and group learning as a means of cost-cutting and to increase efficiency. The planned team learning exercise for December 2013 was postponed to February 2014 due to scheduling conflicts, recruitment time challenges and other time constraints. Learning and development were also realised by the participation of the Representative (New Representative Orientation Training), ECD Officer (EQL), Adol.HIV/AIDS Officer (Child Protection System Mapping) and the P, M & E Officer (PPP and RBM) attending face-to-face training courses and workshops, and utilisation of e-Learning opportunities.

The e-PAS/PAS system is being utilised and all staff members are seeking to reflect more accurately their respective duties, responsibilities and expected results and outputs. Additionally, an exercise of updating job descriptions for six GS staff members was completed and sent to RHR for JD revision. However, challenges are still evident in the completion rate: 75 per cent or 9/12 for 2012 and 82 per cent or 9/11 PAS for 2013.

Coming out of 2011 GSS staff were encouraged to improve their work/life balance and take advantage of the various working schedules (tele-working, flexi-time) available. With the CO being a pilot office in the LIGHT project, staff members have greater flexibility in deciding where the office is/can be. The peer-to-peer support system has become a vital tool in staff well-being, with the CO having two basic trained PSVs. The local staff association and JCC continue to be invaluable resources in addressing staff concerns.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

Cost saving continued to be realised in 2013 with the measures enacted in 2012.
Cost-saving measures were realised in the CO in several areas. Belize is the pilot office for the LIGHT project that addresses the issues of high ICT support and telecoms costs in country. With no file servers in office, files are shared on the SharePoint and the Microsoft Cloud, and Lync is utilised for communication, clearly showing that “the office” can be anywhere.

Belize CO joined the Panama SSC as part of the Effectiveness & Efficiency initiative. In addition, Programme and Operations staff utilised the new technology (iPad and laptops), while Programme Officers and Representative used, to a greater extent, local aircraft instead of UNICEF’s vehicle and a driver to visit partners in Stann Creek and Toledo Districts; and they worked with partners to visit the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach areas where services were delivered, as per annual work plans. Increased use of communication services, where investments were made, were noted by conducting meetings via teleconference or video conference with partners, experts from the Regional Office and with Headquarters. There were savings of an estimated USD$3,000 by utilizing VOIP lines in communication with UNICEF offices worldwide.

Staff members are encouraged to take an active role in reducing costs by turning off lights when not needed for an extended period, to be conscious in the use of office supplies and to promote a green environment by printing less materials and making less copies.

Consolidated field visits to partners were undertaken so as to reduce the cost of transportation, amongst other logistical costs. Also, international travels were planned well in advance to curtail the higher airfare procurement cost.

Savings of over USD$1,000 in discounted internet service were achieved.

With the revitalisation of the UN Operations Management Team, negotiations are underway in procuring goods and services as ONE UN in the hope of realising greater cost savings.

**Changes in AMP & CPMP**

The CO has undertaken several initiatives to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

**Panama SSC:** in January 2013, with the Operations Assistant in the CO as the SSC Focal Point. Operation SSCs are being replicated in the organisation to realise efficiency gains, cost-savings and set standards in business processes. Additionally, the inherent “role conflicts” that result due to the small size of the CO in the use of VISION were significantly addressed by being part of a SSC. However, the CO has not been able to realise the efficiency gain fully as it relates to timesaving, communication gaps and effective planning in-house.

**LIGHT project:** in December 2013, this innovative initiative was launched with Belize being the only pilot CO. This addresses the issues of high ICT support and telecoms costs in country. With a server-less office, files are shared on the SharePoint and the Microsoft Cloud, and Lync is utilised for communication, clearly showing that “the office” can be anywhere. This project will demand a close revision of the BCP as the core objective, with capacity to access remotely the internal ICT systems in times of emergency.

**Management Structure:** changes recommended by the PBR affected the following posts in the CO structure effective 1 January 2014:

- Creation: Social Policy Specialist, P3 (under recruitment) and Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, NO-C (post filled)
- Abolishment: P M & E Specialist, NO-B (incumbent), Communication Officer, NO-B (incumbent), Programme Specialist, NO-C (vacant) and Social Policy Officer, NO-B (vacant)

Subsequently, the posts with incumbents that were recommended for abolishment by the Regional PBR were approved by the GMT in September 2013. Communications Officer Anna Hoare was separated on 29 November 2013 and P, M & E Officer Paulette Wade was separated on 31 December 2013. In the recruitment
exercise for an M & E Specialist; Ms. Wade was selected and was re-appointed effective 1 January 2014. The Social Policy Specialist post is still under recruitment.

These changes will result in new reporting lines, namely:
Social Policy Specialist, P-3, supervises:
Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, NO-C
ECD & Education Officer, NO-B
Adolescent HIV/AIDS Officer, NO-B

The Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist supervises:
Programme Assistant, GS-6
Monitoring & Evaluation JPO, P-2
The Operations Assistant, GS 6, supervises:
Receptionist/Typist, GS-3
river GS-2
Driver GS-3

With these changes, the CO office aims to become more effective in programme delivery and achieving results for children and women in the country.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

Summary

Acronyms
AMP – Annual Management Plan
BGI - Belize Gender Info
BCP - Business Continuity Plan
CLE - Country led-Evaluation Systems
CO – Country Office
CP – Country Programme
CPAP - Country Programme Action Plan
CPMP - Country Programme Management plan
CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child
DEC - District Education Centre
ECD - Early Childhood Development
ERM – Enterprise Risk Management
ERP – Emergency Response Plan
ERMP - Enterprise Risk Management Plan
EWEA – Early Warning Early Action
GoB – Government of Belize
GSS - Global Staff Survey
HDCA - Human Development and Capability Association
HFLE - Health and Family Life Education
ICT -Information and Communications Technology
IPSMIS – Inter-agency Public Safety Management Information System
IR - Intermediate Result
## Other Publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 The Situation Analysis of Children with Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The Situation Analysis of Blind &amp; Visually Impaired Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Rights, Respect and Responsibility Booklet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Rights fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Banners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Rights of children notebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Nutrition posters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Creating a healthy, safe and environment in QCFS notebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Creating a healthy, safe and environment in QCFS fliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 MICS brochure on thematic areas of Education, Early childhood development adolescent girls, Disability, Nutrition, WASH and Indigenous children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Emergency Situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Towards A Compact For Belizean Development- Compendium of Papers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>