

## Botswana

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### Part 1: Situation update in the country

In 2018, Botswana maintained a stable macroeconomic environment with a low inflation rate of 3.1 per cent and stable exchange rates. According to the International Monetary Fund baseline scenario, economic growth is expected to rebound modestly to 4.4 per cent supported by higher diamond sales and greater government spending. According to the UNICEF-commissioned fiscal space for children analysis, the Government was the key driver of progress, contributing over 35 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). The Botswana Multi-Topic Household Survey 2015/16 reported considerable progress made in reducing poverty, with a decrease in national poverty incidence from 19.3 per cent in 2009/10 to 16.3 per cent in 2015/16. The proportion of those living in extreme poverty (below US\$ 1.90 a day) has also reduced from 6.4 to 5.8 per cent. The country, however, remains among the most unequal countries in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 0.52, a gender inequality rank of 108, and an inequality-adjusted human development index of 0.403. Inequality increased between 2010 and 2016.

In the political sphere, the presidential transition process has begun. The automatic succession provision of the Constitution allowed the Vice-President to take over the Presidency; he will serve as the President to run for election in the next general elections in October 2019. Several re-shuffles and reassignments in the Cabinet and among permanent secretaries has made dialogue continuity challenging in 2018.

The Government in partnership with United Nations officially launched the Sustainable Development Goals roadmap in February 2018. The Vice President (now the President) in his opening speech affirmed the need for national ownership, sustained advocacy and coordination of the Goals by mainstreaming them into all programmes and policies. Following extensive consultations with various stakeholders, a comprehensive national Sustainable Development Goals communication strategy was adopted. In December 2018, Statistics Botswana, with support of UNFPA, published a stats brief on baseline data of the Botswana Domesticated Sustainable Development Goals Indicator Framework. The base year for the Sustainable Development Goals indicators is 2016.

Gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse, became a focus of public discussion. The UNICEF Botswana-supported national campaign on the prevention of sexual

exploitation and abuse of children was launched by the First Lady of the Republic of Botswana, at the end of November 2018 under the slogan E Seng moNgwaneng, meaning 'hands off our children'. The President made a public commitment to draft laws that ensure protection of children from any form of abuse. This four-month campaign also formed part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, led by the Government with the support of the United Nations.

A visit by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues reviewed legislation, policies and practices for the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities. The special rapporteur acknowledged the Government's efforts to address the economic disadvantages faced by remote-area populations and marginalized groups such as the Basarwa. Such policies and intentions are not always translated into practice and implementation, however. Minorities living in remote areas face difficulties in equitable access to education and public health care. The Special Rapporteur mission highlighted that the lack of availability and analysis of data disaggregated by ethnicity, religion and language hinders decision-making.

In late 2018, there was a diarrhoea outbreak in parts of Botswana, thought to be caused predominantly by Rotavirus, mainly affecting children under five years old. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), at the peak of the outbreak 18 of the 27 districts reached epidemic level. From September to October, 5,606 cases of diarrhoea with dehydration were reported and 37 deaths, giving a case fatality ratio of 0.7 per cent. UNICEF Botswana and WHO supported the Government in addressing the outbreak by procuring oral rehydration salts and tube feeding devices. Multiple stakeholders' efforts resulted in effective management of 39,691 cases of diarrhoea.

Botswana continued to prioritize public investments in children. In the social development sector, priority spending for children averaged 11 per cent of GDP and 32 per cent of total government spending.

Education and health remained among the top budget priorities. In the education sector, developments included the early childhood development policy framework, the introduction of reception classes in many schools and providing bursaries for tertiary education. The framework enhances investment and lays the foundation for cross-sector interventions to support outcomes for children. Efforts to construct secondary education facilities in rural areas is commended. There are, however, concerns with heavy investment in tertiary education when the building blocks of education, especially primary education, suffer from inadequate resources.

The Government prioritized resources to expand provision of health services and enhance public health infrastructure. Aggregate health expenditures as a share of GDP remained stable, around 4 per cent. Globally, Botswana has the third-highest HIV prevalence among adults 15 to 49 years (22.8 per cent), but the country has made tremendous strides in tackling its HIV epidemic with progress on fast-track treatment targets and elimination of mother-to-child

transmission of HIV. The third national multi-sectoral HIV and AIDS Response Strategic Framework 2018-2023 (NSF3) was designed to accelerate the HIV response, enabling Botswana to achieve epidemic control by 2023 and to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. Children and young people are the focus populations.

In 2018, Botswana reconstituted the National Children's Council, mandated to discuss issues affecting the education, health, safety or general well-being of children. The Penal Code Amendment Act was passed, aligning the code with several provisions of the children's act.

### **Key issues and challenges**

In Botswana, children constitute about 40 per cent of the total population. The Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (MODA) of 2009/2010 data shows that 63 per cent of children live in multi-dimensional poverty, while almost 43 per cent of deprived children live in households that are above the monetary poverty line. Deprived children tend to live in large rural households headed by a female with low educational attainment, and with at least one member who is HIV positive, or disabled, or both. Many deprived children live in households that are not covered by social protection programmes. According to Social Policy Research Institute, approximately 77 per cent of children who are multi-dimensionally poor live in households that do not receive supplementary income.

Collection, analysis and release of key data continued to be delayed in 2018. The Multi-Topic Household Survey data collected in 2015/2016 was released in December 2018 but without anthropometric data; Botswana's stunting figures are therefore now almost 12 years old. An updated MODA analysis has been delayed to 2019. Data from a 2016 violence against children survey has not been released pending consultation in Government. The AIDS impact survey, originally scheduled for 2017, is delayed to 2019. The gender-based violence indicators survey was completed but not released.

### **Education**

There are widespread concerns about the quality and relevance of education and training. Approximately one-third of children do not have basic numeracy and literacy skills after four to five years of primary education. More than two-thirds of children completing a full course of primary and secondary education do not meet the level of education to move into higher education or quality employment. The Government offers basic education for all children, however over 30,000 children, especially in marginalized and disadvantaged communities, are out of school due to their socio-cultural background and/or economic status.

While pass rates for primary school have gradually improved, junior and senior secondary students continue to perform poorly, with over 65 and 70 per cent of children failing the exams, respectively. The enrolment of male pupils in pre-primary education in 2014 constituted 49.7 per cent while female enrolment stood at 50.3 per cent. The gender parity index for participation in pre-primary education is 1.01 per cent, almost equal access to pre-primary education for both boys and girls. Lack of access to quality early childhood development for children in marginalized and disadvantaged communities is considered a factor contributing to

the failure of children to achieve expected curriculum objectives. The trends show that children in urban areas have access to better early childhood development services than in rural settlements.

Areas including early childhood development, out-of-school programmes, and improving learning outcomes---that are fundamental to supporting education of the most disadvantaged children---receive limited public funding. There are concerns over heavy investments in tertiary education, while the building blocks of education – especially primary education – suffer from inferior quality and inadequate resources.

### **Health and nutrition**

The latest national estimates from the 2017 Botswana Demographic Survey Report demonstrated changing patterns of childhood mortality. Since 2006, both infant and under-five mortality rates were declining. However, in 2017 the number of deaths of children under five doubled from 28 in 2011 to 56 deaths per 1,000 live births; the infant mortality rate rose from 17 to 38 per 1,000 live births. Maternal mortality ratio also increased from 127.0 to 156.6 per 100,000 live births between 2015 and 2016. Diarrhoea and pneumonia are leading causes of death among children under five years of age. It is estimated that 70 per cent of all institutional under-five deaths occur in the first 28 days of life.

Botswana is among the few countries in Southern Africa that have not made progress towards meeting the 2025 World Health Assembly nutrition target of reducing the number of stunted children by 40 per cent. Despite high access to health care and several interventions to address malnutrition, an estimated one in three children remain chronically malnourished. The prevalence of stunting remained constant between 1996 and 2007 (29 and 31 per cent, respectively). New stunting data is still pending, but available sporadic data indicates a stunting rate above 20 per cent in many districts. The average family diet is low in micronutrients, predisposing women to poorer maternal nutrition status contributing to low birth weight.

Several barriers hinder the implementation and oversight of maternal and newborn health interventions. Particularly inadequate training of front-line health workers in managing the leading causes of death, rotation of health care workers, lack of specific budget allocations for maternal and newborn health, disjointed and inadequate health information systems reduce the effectiveness of health care.

The current level of government spending as a proportion of general government expenditure puts Botswana below the Abuja target of 15 per cent. Public resources allocated to the health sector are not aligned with the sector-specific strategies and programmes, including the Integrated Health Services Plan for 2010-2020. This situation presents difficulties to separate budget and expenditures by functional categories; for example, primary health care and in-patient care. Therefore, resource allocation is based on incremental line items and respective votes and is not programmatically oriented.

### **HIV and AIDS**

In Botswana, HIV prevalence among young people (15-24 years) remains high at an estimated 7.9 per cent with significant gender disparity. Adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 are twice as likely to be infected with HIV as boys of the same age. Each week, 61 new HIV-infections occur among young women (15-24 years) and 29 new infections occur among adolescent girls (10-19). It is estimated that up to 70 per cent of adolescents living with HIV were infected vertically and thus have been living with the virus, often without treatment, for many years.

Comprehensive knowledge of HIV remains low, condom use among sexually-active young people is declining, forced sex is high, and high teenage pregnancy rates continue to be reported in certain parts of the country. There were still an estimated 14,000 new infections in 2017. Gaps in overall prevention programming, HIV testing and treatment for adolescents and young people persist. Only 70 per cent of children under 15 years old are currently on treatment, compared to 86 per cent of adults. Only 50 per cent of young people living with HIV are on treatment.

Progress in reducing new HIV infections among adolescents and young people is constrained by inter-generational and transactional sex, peer pressure, stigma and discrimination. The recent 'All In' consultations with adolescents in Botswana established that youth participation is either limited or non-existent in national development processes, including planning and delivery of HIV and health programmes.

### **Child protection**

Physical violence against children continues to be a serious and prevalent issue in the country. The 2016 Second Botswana Youth Risk Behavioural and Biological Surveillance Survey among students aged 13-19 years old found that more than 22 per cent of those surveyed had been sexually active, and one in five of those were forced to have sex in the preceding 12 months. Numerous demand-side bottlenecks, such as harmful traditions and practices in the home and community, impede protection, support and care for children. Gender-based violence and gender inequality increase the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV infection and constrain them from accessing needed services and support.

UNICEF Botswana advocated through community engagement with traditional leaders and women to curtail social norms and cultural practices that perpetuate sexual exploitation and abuse against children. This promoted a continuum of prevention, including early intervention and response through structures such as the children's consultative forum; village and district child protection committees; the National Children's Council; Department of Social and Community Development and civil society organizations. Universal birth registration was also supported through collaboration with the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs, the Ministry of Health and Wellness and key service providers at the sub-national and community levels.

In 2018, despite the re-constitution of the National Children's Council and the alignment of the penal code to the children's act, the full implementation of the Children's Act remained a challenge due to factors such as inadequate resource allocation or limited capacity of service

providers to implement. A misalignment continued between the act and other legislation such as, inter alia, the criminal procedure and evidence act.

## Part 2: Major Results including in humanitarian action and gender, against the results in the Country Programme Documents

UNICEF Botswana's Country Programme is centred around two, core pillars: child poverty, and adolescents and HIV/AIDS. A third pillar, programme effectiveness, supports the delivery of results around the first two pillars.

### **Goal area 1. Every child survives and thrives**

UNICEF Botswana continued to support government efforts towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals related to nutrition (Goal 2) and ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages (Goal 3). Specific focus areas include target 2.2 (ending all forms of malnutrition); target 3.2 (end preventable deaths of newborns and children under five years of age); and target 3.3 (end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat communicable diseases). The work was aligned to the goals of Botswana's Vision 2036 (long/healthy lives and safe/enabling environment for children to reach full potential) and National Development Plan 11 (key result area on enhanced social wellbeing).

#### **Health, nutrition and early childhood development**

As a result of increased malnutrition during the 2016 drought, UNICEF Botswana has supported the Ministry of Health and Wellness to develop a nutrition surveillance system that can routinely capture quality nutrition data. The University of Oslo developed a nutrition information system using the DHIS2 tracker platform. The University of Oslo team was also commissioned to build the capacity of the information, communication and technology team with the Ministry of Health and Wellness. In 2018, the system itself was developed. It will be tested during the first quarter of 2019, following which the use of the system will be piloted in two districts to demonstrate potential for scalable roll-out of the nutrition information system nationally. Ultimately, it will monitor acute malnutrition and set thresholds that will trigger alerts, in turn enabling timely nutrition responses. In addition, the data will inform forecasting and projections, leading to timely procurement and distribution of commodities to outpatient facilities.

In 2018, UNICEF Botswana helped the ministry update the guidelines for integrated management of acute malnutrition with support from the UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office. Inconsistencies in the application of IMAM protocols compromised care for malnourished children under five. The update of the guidelines will strengthen treatment protocols, enrolment criteria and linkages to social protection initiatives for malnourished children and their families.

Approximately 40 officials comprising medical doctors, dieticians, nutritionists, senior academics and social workers participated in the revision of the guidelines. In 2019, UNICEF Botswana will support the Ministry of Health and Wellness to develop a costed integrated management of acute malnutrition implementation plan which will include establishment of proper outpatient care in all hospitals and health clinics and strengthen the linkages between social protection and nutrition.

Social protection efforts are critical to reduce stunting, thus UNICEF Botswana and two ministries hired experts to evaluate the Government's supplementary feeding programme. The programme was implemented for over 20 years but had not been evaluated for nutritional adequacy, appropriateness and cost effectiveness. Undertaken between UNICEF Botswana, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the evaluation will commence in 2019. It is anticipated that evaluation findings and recommendations will inform policy and programme design to contribute to the reduction of stunting and wider malnutrition in Botswana.

Botswana has one of the lowest exclusive breastfeeding rates at 20 per cent (below the World Health Organization target of 50 per cent). As a result, UNICEF Botswana supported the introduction of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in 2018. It is designed to capacitate maternity nurses and midwives to promote and demonstrate early initiation of breastfeeding. The initiative will be rolled out to several facilities, in 2019, that will undertake self-assessments against the ten steps to successful breastfeeding to ensure 100 per cent scores.

UNICEF Botswana continued to support access to early childhood development through both upstream and downstream technical support. The early childhood development policy framework was signed in 2018 and an inter-ministerial oversight structure led by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Basic Education was being established to create senior-level accountability for outcomes. An early childhood development costed implementation plan is under development and will be used to advocate for budgeting for early childhood development services.

To demonstrate scalable options to test potential integrated early childhood development models, UNICEF Botswana, government partners and three non-government organizations are implementing early childhood development activities in the vulnerable districts of Ghanzi, Okavango and Kweneng West. The models are built around capacitating parents and caregivers on childcare and good feeding practices. They link service delivery and messaging using existing community structures such as chiefs, village development committees and community volunteers. Messaging uses interpersonal communication as a strategy. In this approach, caregivers are given time-specific and behaviour change relevant messages through dialogue at household level and through focus group discussions at relevant community forums. Interpersonal communication was strengthened by use of social behaviour change and communication materials during the sessions, and distributed to the caregivers as constant reminders of key messages. The intervention develops the capacity of Government and communities using approaches that include home visits, teacher training, malnutrition

screening and case referrals. The early childhood development models will be implemented over the next 12 to 18 months and evaluated at strategic points to assess scalability of the models from 2020.

In maternal and newborn health, UNICEF Botswana in partnership with World Health Organization supported the costing of the integrated strategy for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health to guide prioritization, implementation and monitoring of maternal and newborn health programming. Following the strategy development, UNICEF Botswana and the Ministry of Health and Wellness will introduce a newborn health mentorship programme in a high-volume maternity facility, for midwives to manage newborn complications and reduce newborn deaths. This mentorship programme will be supported with a South-South visit by the Ministry of Health and Wellness to Zambia, where a best practice example exists. While the visit was initially planned for 2018, extenuating circumstances led to a postponement to 2019.

The expanded programme on immunization is struggling, having achieved only a 60 per cent score for effective vaccine management assessment in 2017, below the desired 80 per cent mark. To address the low performance in vaccine cold chain and logistics, the Ministry of Health and Wellness received technical support from the UNICEF Regional Office to undertake a cold chain inventory that will be followed by the development of a cold chain improvement and optimization plan to ensure that highly potent vaccines are delivered to children. The plan will articulate all required cold chain equipment needs taking into consideration innovative modern technologies for vaccine storage.

As a response to a September to November 2018 diarrhoea outbreak in Botswana, UNICEF Botswana procured oral rehydration salts and tube-feeding devices for management of diarrhoea amongst children under five years old. Of the diarrhoea cases, 80 per cent affected children under two years. Because of concerted efforts by multiple stakeholders 39,691 cases of diarrhoea were effectively managed.

### **HIV and AIDS**

Botswana has progressed in combating the HIV epidemic. The HIV transmission rate from mothers to children declined from 3.9 per cent in 2010 to 1.4 per cent in 2017, and 96 per cent of pregnant women living with HIV access treatment. Botswana is on the path to validate the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. UNICEF Botswana played a key role in supporting the national prevention of mother-to-child transmission programme, including technical support for evaluation, development of key strategic documents and data quality assessments.

The Government is committed to epidemic control by 2023 and ending AIDS as a public threat by 2030. In the next five years, the focus will be on scaling-up high-impact interventions and prioritizing populations who are more vulnerable to HIV-infection, or likely to be living with HIV. The involvement of all sectors at all levels of society will be emphasized in the implementation of the HIV-response to ensure that behavioural, biomedical and structural factors influencing

the epidemic are addressed.

To that end, in 2018, UNICEF Botswana and partners helped develop and finalize documents to guide an effective and efficient HIV/AIDS response. UNICEF supported strengthened multi-sectoral coordination of HIV programmes; improved young people's participation in programming; and commenced implementing and evaluating innovative and evidence-based HIV prevention, treatment, care and support programmes for adolescents and young people.

Key achievements included finalization of the National Strategic Framework 3 and the national standard package of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services for adolescents and young people. There was focus on adolescent and young people in the National Framework 3, ensuring implementation of well-defined, integrated, high-impact, age-appropriate and gender-sensitive interventions at scale. The national package of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services for adolescents and young people will guide how to address adolescent and young people's needs. In 2018, UNICEF Botswana supported the Global Fund proposal-writing, which leveraged additional resources, including over US\$ 2 million for adolescent girls and young women.

In 2018, UNICEF Botswana worked with government and non-government partners to reach over 45,000 adolescents and young people with information on HIV prevention and how to access services. The information was disseminated through radio and social media. In collaboration with the National AIDS Coordinating Agency and partners, UNICEF Botswana developed and launched the ShugaRadio serial drama and multi-media campaign. Reaching approximately 25,000 young people across the country, Shuga Radio filled a gap in evidence-based and youth-driven, behaviour-change communication, to improve HIV-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviours and prevent HIV. The show empowers adolescent and young people, especially girls and young women, with knowledge, skills and self-esteem to make better decisions on sexual matters that could put them at risk of contracting HIV. The show also encourages young people already living with HIV not to default on treatment.

The programme utilizes the popular MTV Shuga edutainment concept: episodes are followed by discussions to amplify the episode's issues. The radio show is linked to other venues such as social media, which is popular with the audience and more interactive than radio. The other linkage is in-school interventions and dialogue on the drama series' issues. Social and behavioural change communication material linked to the drama series is also distributed to students. To ensure evidence-based and relevant messaging, a pre- and post-assessment is done in schools to appraise interpersonal communication knowledge levels. This ensures that facilitators focus on the gaps and to assess changes in young peoples' knowledge and skills to make better decisions.

In partnership with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, four district health management teams and Botswana-Baylor Children's Clinical Center of Excellence, UNICEF Botswana is developing comprehensive models of care for adolescents living with HIV. In 2018, efforts focused on conducting needs assessments and focus group discussions with district

stakeholders, including adolescents and young people, to better understand the situation of adolescents living with HIV. Information will support the interventions to be implemented, evaluated and costed over the next two years.

In 2018, UNICEF Botswana continued to support the enhancement of multi-sectoral coordination for adolescents and young people's programming, to empower young people as leaders and agents of change and to create platforms for young people's meaningful engagement in policy and programming at national, regional and global levels. Chaired by the Ministry of Health and Wellness with the National AIDS Coordinating Agency as secretariat, the adolescent and young people committee was formalized and instrumental in overseeing the development of key national strategic documents, including the adolescent and young people component of National Strategic Framework 3, the national standard packages for HIV prevention, treatment and care, as well as Global Fund proposal development and grant-making processes.

Through the Global United Nations Volunteer Youth Advocate programme, UNICEF Botswana recruited a national United Nations volunteer to involve young people in programming. The roll-out of U-Report in 2019 will augment UNICEF Botswana's youth engagement. Through partnership with Peace Corps, a third-year volunteer was identified and supports implementation of UNICEF Botswana and Baylor-supported programmes at district level.

In preparation for the elimination of mother-to-child transmission country assessment in 2019, UNICEF Botswana supported the Ministry of Health and Wellness to conduct a routine data quality assessment of the prevention of mother-to-child transmission and syphilis programmes in 10 health districts and 70 health facilities. The findings and recommendations will improve quality of the programmes' data as well as prevention and management services at all levels.

## **Goal area 2: Every child learns**

UNICEF Botswana supported the Government on the Sustainable Development Goals for education, including target 4.1 (free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education for all); target 4.2 (access to equitable early childhood development, care and pre-primary education) and target 4.6 (achieve literacy and numeracy). Programmes and support are also aligned to Botswana's Vision 2036 goals (outcome-based, relevant, quality education) and National Development Plan 11 (the key result area on enhanced social wellbeing).

In 2018, UNICEF Botswana supported the Ministry of Basic Education in three fundamental areas: early childhood development, improved quality of education at primary level, and access to quality education, particularly out-of-school education for children.

UNICEF Botswana's work on quality education focused on the design and development of two remediation and enrichment interventions to enhance learning outcomes. Teaching at the Right Level focuses on numeracy and lays the foundation for integrating innovative remediation techniques into teacher delivery approaches. The partner non-government organization

implemented the concept in one district, and will test the concept in two more districts in 2019. Organisation facilitators delivered the remedial learning in 2018; efforts in 2019 will focus on how to integrate Teaching at the Right Level in school structures to ensure sustainability and continued improvements in learning outcomes. The Government is keen to expand delivery across all schools and indicated that they will assign suitable facilitators to do so. An Implementation plan for potential scale-up nationally will be developed, informed by mid- and end-line assessments.

UNICEF Botswana supported a literacy remediation intervention that strengthens teachers' responsiveness to student learning. The model is based on a UNICEF Botswana-commissioned study that revealed skills' gaps among teachers and recommended training for primary school teachers. Based on the research findings, Ministry of Basic Education will consider integration of remediation measures as part of the pre- and in-service training curricula. So far, the literacy pilot has been implemented in two districts to be scaled up in 2019. Evaluation of both the numeracy and literacy models will inform the development of a national remediation strategy to support teaching and learning from pre-primary upwards.

To ensure inclusive quality education to all children in Botswana, UNICEF supported the Government to develop a strategic approach to out of school education for children. In 2018, the policy was finalized and endorsed by the Ministry of Basic Education. The curriculum and assessment framework, the facilitator and learner materials, and the implementation strategy were developed and field tested in 2018. This process was critical in ensuring validation from the different stakeholders. UNICEF Botswana will continue to support the Government to roll out the 'out of school education for children' programme across the country. UNICEF will contribute to develop a training manual for facilitators in 2019, with the expectation that out-of-school education for children centres will be better equipped nationally to deliver quality education to those unlikely to re-integrate in mainstream education.

In response to the inequitable access to early childhood development and gaps in regulation, UNICEF Botswana collaborated with the Government to develop the early childhood development policy framework, which was endorsed in 2018. This policy guides and directs a nation-wide approach to caring for and educating young children aged 0 to eight years. UNICEF Botswana supported the Government to develop a costed implementation plan and common results framework for early childhood development. The plan will be the operational document for the early childhood development policy framework, to guide implementation and investment in early childhood development across Ministry of Basic Education, Ministry of Health and Wellness and Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development .

UNICEF Botswana supported the pilot and strengthening of a community-led, integrated early childhood development programme that targets caregivers, parents and early childhood development teachers to strengthen capacity to provide quality early childhood education. Through partner non-government organizations, UNICEF raised awareness among government officials; traditional leadership, such as chiefs; village development committees and parents/caregivers to secure their buy-in. Community volunteers capacitate families in their

homes on how best to care for their children with respect to education, health, nutrition and safety issues. The support will improve the situation for children immediately, and have ripple effects improving school results around numeracy, literacy and other competencies. The early childhood development models to be tested over the next 12-18 months will be evaluated at strategic points to assess benefits and options for scaling up from 2020. UNICEF Botswana will work with Government and partners, including the private sector and civil society, to explore partnerships that strengthen delivery of interventions through technical or financial support.

As a component of the early childhood development work, UNICEF Botswana supported the evaluation of the national reception class programme in 2018. The evaluation assessed the quality of the pre-primary education programme since its inception in 2014. The findings show that an enabling environment exists to implement pre-primary education; and demonstrated the need for inter-ministerial coordination to ensure access to, and quality of, early childhood education. Evaluation recommendations will inform government efforts to build on the benefits from reception classes, as well as the roll-out of reception classes in 100 per cent of primary schools from the current 70 per cent coverage, and the potential of increasing from one year of pre-primary school to two years.

In addition to the continuous review of the proof of concept at strategic points, UNICEF Botswana is collaborating with the Ministry of Basic Education, Ministry of Health and Wellness and Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to conduct an early childhood development baseline study in Ghanzi, Okavango, Kweneng West and Kgalagadi North. The baseline study in the four priority districts will provide up-to-date data to form part of the comparative analysis between pre- and post-early childhood development interventions.

The current domestic allocation for education is 29 per cent of the government expenditure, a level aligned with global standard. However, there is need to rationalize expenditure in education for improved efficiency. UNICEF Botswana with the World Bank, is supporting the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and Ministry of Basic Education to undertake a public expenditure review on education that will be completed in 2019.

### **Goal area 3: Every child is protected from violence and exploitation**

UNICEF Botswana continued to support government efforts towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals related to peace, justice and strong institutions (Sustainable Development Goal 16) with specific focus on target 16.1 (reduce all forms of violence and related death rates) and target 16.2 (end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children). The work is also aligned to the goals of Botswana's Vision 2036 (inclusive society that provides opportunities for all and safe/enabling environment for children to reach full potential) and National Development Plan 11 (key result area on social upliftment).

In 2018, UNICEF Botswana continued to advocate for the prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse against children. The advocacy efforts by UNICEF Botswana and other

partners resulted in two key achievements in legislative reforms. The Penal Code Amendment Act was passed in 2018, aligning the code with several provisions of the Children's Act.

UNICEF Botswana conducted a study on girls sleeping with older men. The study analysed knowledge, attitudes, and practices as a precursor to the launch of the national campaign on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of children. The findings will inform design of interventions to protect children. The study revealed that sexual abuse is perpetuated by lack of knowledge around what constitutes sexual abuse, and that certain cultural norms that support male dominance, poor parental supervision, poverty and secrecy around sexuality issues predisposes children to sexual exploitation and abuse. The results of the study informed the design of the key messages for the campaign.

The national campaign, led by UNICEF Botswana but jointly planned with Government, non-government and United Nations partners, was launched by the First Lady of the Republic of Botswana, at the end of November 2018 under the slogan 'E Seng moNgwaneng' (hands off our children). It was supported by His Excellency the President of Botswana, chief executive officers of corporates, politicians and other influential members of society who signed the E Seng moNgwaneng pledge. The President also made a public commitment to prioritize drafting of laws that ensure protection of children from any form of abuse.

The campaign formed part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, an initiative led by the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs with the support of United Nations Women. The campaign specifically targets men, as the main perpetrators of violence, exploitation and abuse. Large corporates such as Barclays Bank, FNB Botswana, Debswana, Wilderness Safaris and G4S organized dialogue around sexual exploitation and abuse with staff members and children as their contribution to the campaign. Youth digital influencers, churches, musicians, parliamentarians and local celebrities participated in the campaign by sharing key messages.

The public launch was the beginning of a four-month campaign of media and community-level engagement across the country. Facebook followers increased from 10,984 to 14,190 by December 2018 while Twitter increased from 1,850 to 4,362 followers by December 2018. The campaign reached 146,743 people representing more than nine-times increase. There was community engagement with civil society, parents, children, traditional and religious leaders. Anecdotal evidence showed a remarkable rise in individuals voicing their views and experiences because of the campaign. Tweets reflected intentions by individuals to share campaign messaging with family members who may be covering up abuse perpetrated by relatives. Others have expressed, inter alia on radio, that they will start to speak to their children about sexual exploitation and abuse.

The community engagement with traditional and religious leaders as well as local government officials began in late 2018 in two districts. The community dialogue mobilized stakeholders to address social norms and cultural practices that perpetuate sexual violence, abuse and exploitation against children. Harmful social and cultural attitudes run deep in Botswana,

especially in rural areas. UNICEF Botswana's discussion of sexual abuse with a full council meeting in Maun Administrative Authority in North West district resulted in local councillors making a commitment to create dialogue with parents, caregivers and communities in their respective council wards on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse against children. The UNICEF Botswana advocacy champion, a former Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, was instrumental in these discussions. He also participated in a TV programme focused on the need for parents to openly talk about issues around sexuality with children, particularly girls, including saying "no" to sexual advances by older men. The message also focused on the importance of positive parenting to reduce harsh and inconsistent discipline while enhancing parent-child relationships.

As part of child protection system strengthening, UNICEF Botswana supported the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (Department of Social Protection) to develop a social worker toolkit and to map models for positive parenting. Both exercises contribute to a safe and protective environment for children to grow and reach their full potential, by empowering social workers, parents and caregivers to prevent and respond to sexual, physical and emotional abuse against children. Both the social worker toolkit and the positive parenting models will form part of the wider efforts by UNICEF Botswana to support the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development in 2019 and 2020 to professionalize the social service workforce. Efforts around positive parenting will be an avenue for cross-sectoral collaboration and convergence to achieve better outcomes in early childhood development, child protection, health and education.

UNICEF Botswana and the Ministry of Nationality, Immigration and Gender Affairs (MNIGA) explored technical solutions for birth registration. UNICEF Botswana facilitated a study visit to Mozambique to learn from and exchange good practices on birth registration through innovation and technology for development. Key lessons from the visit, such as technology options for birth registration and the importance of coordination and operations between ministries, will help the Government meet the Sustainable Development Goal target on birth registration. The Government has the potential to use mobile technology to notify births in rural communities and hard-to-reach areas. This will facilitate increased coverage and improve the rate of birth registration to achieve universal registration by 2020. Birth notifications will address rural communities who cannot reach birth registration points on time to register births, due to travel cost and distance. The use of mobile technology to notify births will also eliminate late registration cases because events will be reported timely and electronically.

In 2018, UNICEF Botswana solidified its position as the leading voice for and with children. Particularly, UNICEF Botswana strengthened its media relations. One hundred per cent news coverage was positive. The coverage on children's rights increased from 63 stories in 2017 to 165 in 2018, and 40 per cent of these articles covered UNICEF Botswana key messages. Online engagement with adolescent and young people increased because of initiatives such as the Facebook takeover which was conducted as part of World Children's Day. Facebook page followers increased from 10,984 in 2017 to 14,190 in 2018 while Twitter grew from 1,850 in 2017 to 4,314 in 2018. To strengthen engagement with young people, UNICEF Botswana

established a partnership with the Government, civil society and a mobile network provider for the roll out the U-Report platform in early 2019.

Partnerships with members of the CEO Council for Children's Rights proved instrumental in achieving public advocacy goals, particularly around sexual exploitation and abuse and early childhood development. Three companies (Debswana, FNB, and Wilderness Safaris) extended maternity leave from the legally-required three months to four months, while fathers are now entitled to five days paternity leave. Three companies (Barclay's, Choppies Supermarkets and FNB) explored how they could support early childhood development centres, breastfeeding rooms and other child-care options for employees. Barclays committed to support early childhood development centres especially with respect to vulnerable children in Ghanzi, and to participate in the study on the effects of sexual violence to business in Botswana.

The results of the assessment will inform likely interventions in 2019. Members of the CEO council also carried messages on early childhood development and sexual exploitation and abuse in activities such as Barclays' annual cultural festival and wellness days. Barclays participated in the Go Blue campaign on World Children's Day in support of children, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Several companies undertook a survey to better understand the extent that employees have been affected by sexual abuse among relatives or friends. The survey findings quantified the working time lost due to sexual abuse and monetized the potential loss to the company. The findings will also be used to influence corporate decisions to address the effect of sexual exploitation and abuse on staff. Botswana amended its corporate social responsibility programme to focus on children and women, as well as the environment. All members of the Council agreed to be ambassadors of the national campaign and facilitated involvement of their staff in spreading campaign messages. In support of the campaign, Wilderness Safaris included a component on prevention of sexual abuse on their annual environment retreat for children.

### **Goal area 5: Every child has an equitable chance in life**

UNICEF Botswana continued to support the Government's efforts towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals related to poverty and social protection (Sustainable Development Goal 1) with specific focus on target 1.2 (reduce poverty in all its dimensions) and target 1.3 (achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable by social protection). The work is also aligned to the goals of Botswana's Vision 2036 (creating inclusive society that provides opportunities for all) and National Development Plan 11 (key result area on enhanced social wellbeing and end poverty in all its forms).

In 2018, UNICEF Botswana continued to build national support for policies aimed at reducing child poverty through improved public finance for children. The work is centred around policy analysis and capacity-building government institutions. Budget briefs contributed to the identification of public financial management-related challenges in education, health and social

protection. UNICEF Botswana sensitized policymakers and policy advisors who have influence on the ministerial budgets about these issues and initiated closed-door discussions on the ways to address them. As a result, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is considering implementation of strategic reforms, including the adoption of performance-based budgeting practices in the education sector. Inspired by the budget briefs and fiscal space analysis mentioned below, the Ministry of Health and Wellness and National AIDS Coordinating Agency initiated an in-depth analysis of public investment in maternal and child health and HIV prevention, respectively.

A UNICEF Botswana-commissioned study presented and analysed the fiscal space that is available to the Government to undertake and expand priority expenditure on child-related services. Based on the findings, a fiscal model was developed to demonstrate alternative fiscal space to finance child-related policy. The efforts strengthened capacity of the Government on realistic resource projections and sectoral prioritization for children.

A workshop was held for 10 participants from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and other line ministries with a role in planning and spending. They were trained on macroeconomic and fiscal projections of a range of policy scenarios on the fiscal space available, for more effective spending for children. The trained officers will help conduct child-focused budget analyses in forthcoming years. UNICEF Botswana will expand engagement with social sector ministries and sub-national government bodies to enhance their capacities for policy analysis and development. In 2019, activities planned in the joint annual workplan with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and other social sector ministries ensure that learning is translated into practical actions.

Following the budget brief and fiscal space analysis, the Government requested technical assistance and advice to support an education sector analysis and expenditure review. In response, UNICEF Botswana and the World Bank partnered to support Botswana's Education Sector Public Expenditure Review. This joint effort will generate solid evidence on sector-spending patterns to inform policy changes. UNICEF Botswana will actively use both the process and findings in advocacy with stakeholders for investment in early childhood. During the 2018 Article IV consultation with Botswana, UNICEF Botswana and International Monetary Fund exchanged views and advocated to safeguard core social spending and better target spending by shifting education spending from tertiary to primary and pre-primary education.

UNICEF Botswana promoted budget transparency and accountability by supporting the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development to develop the action plan to improve Botswana's score on the 2019 Open Budget Survey. High-level advocacy efforts following the 2017 survey results led to publication of key budget documents on Ministry of Finance and Economic Development's website, fully functional since August 2018. UNICEF will continue its partnership with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development around budget transparency initiatives and facilitate the Open Budget Survey in 2019.

UNICEF Botswana partnered with United Nations Development Programme to operate the R-

UNDG's proposal to support governments' financing for development agendas. A workshop, organized by the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, stimulated discussions around opportunities for joint work to the financing for development agenda in country. In 2019, UNICEF Botswana's engagement in this area will focus on improving domestic resource mobilization and financing the child-related Sustainable Development Goals.

Renewed engagement with the World Bank created opportunities for joint advocacy and a broader national discussion on the social protection issues for children and their families. In 2017, the Government engaged the World Bank in preparation of the national social protection framework with its policy document to move from the current, fragmented approach to a systems approach to social protection. In 2018, the Government, with support of the World Bank, developed a second draft of the framework (yet to be endorsed). UNICEF participated in discussions, reinforcing the need for early childhood development to be included in the social protection package as well as the need to evaluate the feeding programmes. UNICEF continued to advocate for introduction of a family support or child grant to guarantee income security for poor households in the long-term. UNICEF Botswana will advocate for the same in 2019.

To support the Government to strengthen its social protection systems, UNICEF Botswana, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Ministry of Health and Wellness launched an evaluation of the vulnerable group feeding programme. Part of the evaluation, commencing in January 2019, is a value-for-money analysis that will improve efficiency and effectiveness of public spending in/for social protection programmes. A multi-stakeholder technical working group was established to guide progress, including the development of an investment case for prevention of stunting in Botswana.

In 2018, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development benefited from an impact assessment that analysed vulnerable children and youth affected by the closure of the Bamangwato Concessions Ltd. Mine in Selebi Phikwe. This research, particularly, contributed to the ongoing discussions about response options and strategies to mitigate negative impact of the mine closure on children and their families.

### Part 3: Lessons learned and constraints

UNICEF Botswana has identified five lessons learned and constraints with respect to our work in 2018.

**First**, having implemented upstream activities (technical support to policy and legislation) and downstream efforts (community-level proofs of concept) for two years, UNICEF determined that both types of support are relevant in Botswana. Thus, the original theory of change that presented the value of using both approaches remain intact. In 2019, UNICEF Botswana will continue to navigate between approaches to ensure that children's lives are improved.

UNICEF Botswana will avoid a “one size fits all” programme approach, meaning that different programmes will find different balances between upstream and downstream work, or focus on just one of the two. UNICEF Botswana will continue to explore a more geographically convergent approach to downstream work in which multiple programmes are using this approach in a single district. This strategy is particularly relevant when child wellbeing indicators can be improved by multiple interventions.

**Second**, strengthened risk preparedness is required to address ad-hoc emergencies and recurrent climatic stresses. The diarrhoea outbreak in the third quarter of 2018 required a quick reaction to procure oral rehydration salts (oral rehydration salts) and tube feeding devices on behalf of the Government. UNICEF Botswana ensured quick delivery of supplies, despite limited in-house emergency capacity, and with crucial support from UNICEF headquarters and regional office. Recurrent drought conditions in the country may harm the well-being of children. Despite low levels of risk, UNICEF recognizes the need to be better prepared to respond to situations. In 2018, UNICEF Botswana strengthened its risk preparedness through the UNICEF Botswana emergency preparedness platform, contracting expertise to support the development of a risk preparedness plan, including terms of reference for the emergency focal person and the emergency management team (standard operating procedures developed this year).

**Third**, scarce and uneven funding limits the scope of UNICEF Botswana programming in Botswana. The country office relies on regular resources and thematic funds for most of its programming. In general, very few public funds are available for Botswana, as only PEPFAR provides funding for children’s health and HIV

**Fourth**, the absence of quality and up-to-date data hinders child poverty analysis. For example, the most recent estimate of under-five birth registration is from 2014. Data from the Multi-Topic Household Survey, a key measure of poverty collected by Statistics Botswana in 2015/2016, was only released in December 2018. Malnutrition statistics should have been part of the survey, but they are not yet released and therefore data for stunting date as far back as 2007. The Violence Against Children Survey from 2016 has not yet been released. The delays in launching the Botswana AIDS Impact Survey this year mean an absence of current HIV incidence and prevalence estimates. The updated Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis that was planned for 2018 has been postponed to 2019 in the absence of up-to-date data.

To strengthen data availability, UNICEF Botswana has advocated that Statistics Botswana undertake a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, which has not been undertaken in Botswana for close to two decades. In addition, since the Botswana Multi-Topic Household Survey did not include child poverty analysis, UNICEF Botswana and Statistics Botswana have agreed to collaborate to analyse the data to create a child poverty statistics brief. UNICEF Botswana will also support the Government to strengthen the technical capacity of Statistics Botswana with key concepts and a practical framework for multi-dimensional child poverty analysis. It is anticipated that these efforts will increase integration of child poverty analyses into the Government’s existing survey and reporting processes.

**Fifth**, while non-government organization partnerships furthered UNICEF Botswana's ability to deliver, new partners need training in partnership engagement and reporting processes. In 2018, UNICEF Botswana increased the number of formal partnerships with non-government organizations from three to six to support community-level implementation. Capacitated and mandate-relevant civil society organizations are sparse and while the selected partners are considered low-risk, UNICEF Botswana recognizes the need to invest time and effort in capacity development of these partners. Given the newness of the partnerships, and despite the low financial disbursements, UNICEF Botswana will carry out more programme and financial assurance activities to ensure proper implementation.

In addition to the above lessons learned, UNICEF Botswana has analysed how cross-cutting strategies make our work more effective and efficient. Initiatives such as cross-sectoral programming, Public Finance for Children (PF4C) and enhanced partnerships have created opportunities for UNICEF Botswana to be a trusted convener and facilitator of dialogue between development partners, Government, civil society, and businesses.

In 2016, Botswana country office determined that cross-sectoral programming would be key to combatting sexual abuse/exploitation and enhancing the quality and quantity of early childhood development services. The #esengmongwaneng campaign against sexual abuse and exploitation combined the efforts of UNICEF Botswana experts in communications, HIV, child protection, communication for development and monitoring and evaluation. We collaborated with two ministries, civil society organizations, private sector entities and United Nations agencies. The partnerships will continue to be leveraged in 2019 as the campaign continues. Similarly, the endorsement of the early childhood development policy framework, as well as community-level implementation of early childhood development interventions, includes three key Government ministries' participation and three non-government organisations. It is implemented by UNICEF Botswana experts in education, child protection, nutrition, communication for development, and monitoring and evaluation. All these stakeholders will be involved in the 'early moments matter' campaign in 2019.

UNICEF Botswana's PF4C work demonstrated the value of working with several sectors in a handful of ministries and with programme specialists from various disciplines. In 2018, UNICEF Botswana conducted an interactive workshop for ten planning officers from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and other line ministries, resulting in enhanced cross-ministerial coordination and partnership. Active involvement of UNICEF Botswana specialists in PF4C advocacy is also crucial at the sectoral level. In 2019, each programme specialist will spearhead sectoral budget discussions and advocacy with the technical support of the social policy specialist. Department heads in ministries will also be engaged to ensure that budget data can be used to make decisions about effective and efficient allocations and expenditures.

To improve cooperation between senior Government and UNICEF Botswana staff, in December 2018 UNICEF Botswana Deputy Representative and four Permanent Secretaries signed workplans for the following year. The workplans include activities, indicators, and agreed financial contributions from UNICEF and from the Government of Botswana.

Finally, UNICEF Botswana learned that, while the chances of leveraging direct funding to UNICEF from companies is limited, opportunities to influence company policies and leverage technical support from companies for programme delivery can go a long way towards achieving results for children in Botswana. In 2018, the CEO Council for Children's Rights identified early childhood development and sexual abuse and exploitation as key priorities for the year. Three large companies gave women an extra month of maternity leave, while fathers are entitled to five days paternity leave. UNICEF Botswana encouraged private sector partners to explore how to provide breastfeeding rooms, a crèche service and other childcare options for their employees. Members of the council also carried early childhood development and sexual exploitation and abuse messages in their major activities such as annual cultural festival and wellness days.

In sum, despite the challenges of uneven funding and inadequate data, UNICEF Botswana has been able to leverage partnerships with non-government organizations, private sector, and more senior levels of government ministries to improve children's lives. Collaboration across sectors, both within UNICEF Botswana and between ministries, has resulted in more effective campaigns against sexual abuse and more nuanced understanding of budget processes. In 2019, UNICEF Botswana looks forward to building on the lessons learned regarding using both downstream and upstream approaches, capacitating non-government organization partners, and remaining vigilant about potential disasters. Backed by a full staff complement for the first time in four years, UNICEF Botswana stands ready to help improve the lives of all children in Botswana.

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