

Brazil

Update on the context and situation of children

The year 2019 was marked by the beginning of the mandate of a right-wing Government led by President Jair Bolsonaro. During its first year, the government pursued three major policy priorities focusing on a far-reaching pension reform, economic liberalization and an anti-crime package which among other changes facilitates the purchase of arms by specific groups. In line with his critical comments on human rights during the election campaign, the President by decree weakened the National Council on the Rights of Children and Adolescents, excluding civil society members and restricting the Council's meeting schedule. The decision, however, was later suspended by the Supreme Court.

The Brazilian economy is gradually recovering, but at a lower rate than expected. After growing by 1.1 per cent in 2018 following one of the country's worst recessions, the Central Bank is predicting a growth rate of 1.2 per cent for 2019 and 2.2 per cent for 2020. The successful approval of the pension reform in October is expected to accelerate growth in 2020 and 2021.

UNICEF used the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to highlight Brazil's considerable progress in the fulfilment of children's rights. Child mortality saw a historic drop from 47.1/1,000 in 1990 to 13.4/1,000 in 2017 (SDG3). The rate of out-of-school children also significantly decreased from 20 to 4.7 per cent despite an expansion of the number of years of compulsory education (SDG4). Birth registration increased from 64 per cent in 1990 to almost 99 per cent (SDG16). Between 1992 and 2015, Brazil prevented 5.7 million children aged 5 to 17 from being victims of child labour (SDG8).

Despite this success, challenges persist. In 2016 child mortality (SDG3) rose for the first time in over 20 years and has not yet recovered back to 2015 levels with around 42,000 children under 5 who die each year. MMR vaccine coverage dropped since 2015, going from 112.8 in 2015 to 90.85 in 2017, and bringing back eradicated diseases such as measles. It increased again in 2018 thanks to government's national immunization campaigns. While indicators of basic health and education for early childhood development are above 90 per cent, there are important gaps related to caregiving practices with low levels of exclusive breastfeeding (41 per cent) and childcare coverage (34.2 per cent).

Despite a strong reduction of monetary poverty over past decades (SDG1), multidimensional poverty still affects six out of ten children and adolescents (32 million). While 83 per cent of the population uses basic sanitation and 94 per cent piped water, access to these services is a challenge especially in the North and Northeast (SDG6).

Violence constitutes another major problem, especially armed violence (SDG16). According to latest data from the Ministry of Health, 65,602 people were assassinated in 2017, compared to 61,517 in 2016. This number includes 11,804 adolescents (32 on average per day), the highest number globally in absolute terms. More recent data from the Brazilian Public Safety Yearbook shows that homicides fell by 10.8 per cent in 2018, but killings by police forces increased by 19 per cent with the majority of victims being men (99 per cent), black (75 per cent) and youths aged 15-29 years (78 per cent).

Despite strong legislation on gender-based violence, the number of registered cases of rape increased by 4.1 per cent between 2017 and 2018 and reached 66,041, the highest number ever recorded. Children under 13 account for more than half of these victims and sexual violence mainly occurs in the family environment. Reported femicides also increased by 11.3 per cent with more than 1,200 women being murdered primarily by their partners or former partners in a country where domestic violence is reported every two minutes (SDG5).

While access to education is high (SDG4), there are still 2 million children aged 4 to 17 out of school. Quality is also a challenge with 3.5 million students dropping out or repeating their grade in 2018 alone.

Overweight affects one in three children aged 5 to 9 and one in every 6 adolescents (SDG2). The HIV/AIDS epidemic is classified as stable with a general prevalence of 0.5 per cent but infections almost tripled over the past decade among adolescents (8,200 new HIV infections in 2018) and more than doubled among young people aged 20 to 24 (SDG3).

The number of Venezuelans entering Brazil continued to increase with 224,102 migrants and asylum seekers registered since 2015 including 130,622 in 2019. Estimates indicate that around 30 per cent are under 18. Between May and September alone 17,905 children entered the country. 13 per cent (2,438) were unaccompanied, separated or undocumented. Most migrants enter Brazil through Roraima, one of the poorest states of Brazil, currently hosting 50,000 migrants. The country registered 4,600 indigenous migrants in 2019 who face specific humanitarian and integration needs.

The Federal Government maintains an open-border policy, providing asylum and/or temporary residency to all migrants through the army-led "Operação Acolhida" with the support of UN Agencies and other actors. The government runs thirteen shelters that host approximately 6,800 people. An additional 40,000 migrants live in precarious shelters or houses. To ease

Brazil

the pressure on Roraima the government extended “Operação Acolhida” to Manaus, Belem and Porto Velho to accelerate the relocation of vulnerable migrants. More than 25,000 Venezuelans have already been moved to other cities (between April 2018 and November 2019).

2019 also saw an important increase in forest fires in Brazil and bordering countries. According to the National Institute for Space Research, forest fires in Brazil increased by 82 per cent compared to 2018 with 71,497 outbreaks representing the highest number recorded in seven years. The impact on families and children is still to be determined.

Major contributions and drivers of results

UNICEF Brazil continued to work with partners across government, civil society and private sector to strengthen the effectiveness of Brazil’s system for the guarantee of rights of children and adolescents through a mix of strategies, including: (i) supporting key policy stakeholders in advancing child rights at federal, state and municipal levels, (ii) supporting the humanitarian response to assist vulnerable Venezuelan children and their families arriving in Brazil, (iii) engaging the private sector for financial and non-financial support, (iv) mobilizing the wider public, adolescents, and corporate partners on child rights, and (iv) strengthening internal management and work climate.

Advancing Child Rights at Federal, State and Municipal levels

In 2019, UNICEF engaged in the analysis of public spending for children by partnering with the Ministry of Economy, sub-national government entities, research institutes like the Applied Economic Research Institute (IPEA), and Public attorney’s office. The final product is expected to be finalized at the beginning of next year. The network of partners built this year is a stepping stone towards the most complete identification of child-related budget ever in Brazil. Policy advocacy efforts also led way for a strengthened and more structured partnership between UNICEF and the Brazilian legislative branch on key topics related to adolescent health, education, sexual violence, juvenile justice including a strong partnership with the Parliamentary Front for ECD.

UNICEF continued to work with State and Municipal authorities to improve child outcomes through the UNICEF Municipal Seal Initiative engaging over 1,900 municipalities in the Semi-arid and Amazon regions, as well as through the Urban Center Platform (PCU) reaching 10 large state capitals (including Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo). Both initiatives support municipal actors, marginalized communities and adolescents by strengthening local capacities, systems and platforms for the implementation of public policies for the most vulnerable children, families and adolescents.

In **Health**, these two strategies allowed to train over 3,300 local public policy managers and community agents in some 1,200 municipalities on ante-natal care, vaccination, nutrition, syphilis, HIV, sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and ECD. UNICEF work to support HIV testing and treatment through the Youth Aware project was expanded to four new cities reaching over 3,000 adolescents and young people. The positive results were acknowledged by the Ministry of Health through the inclusion of Youth Aware data in its official information system. UNICEF engaged adolescents and health units for the prevention of non-planned early pregnancies, reaching over 20,000 students in urban areas, and, more than 30,433 adolescents and young people in small vulnerable municipalities.

Due to the fall in immunization coverage and the measles outbreak, Brazil lost the measles eradication certificate. To address the situation, UNICEF supported national vaccination campaigns in 1,200 municipalities in the Semi-Arid region, increasing five percentual points in the number of municipalities with adequate MMR/polio coverage in the region. In addition, UNICEF launched a large research with quantitative and qualitative components to understand the decrease of vaccine coverage in Brazil as a basis for designing effective policy measures.

UNICEF focused on the double burden of **malnutrition** – addressing **overweight** amongst children and adolescents, and undernutrition particularly in indigenous communities – receiving generous support from the insurance company AMIL. On obesity, a strategy to promote healthy diets included advocacy, development of materials and capacity building, particularly with adolescents in ten Brazilian capitals. UNICEF also partnered with the Consumer Rights Institute to influence the adoption of adequate front-of-pack (FOP) labelling regulation, due to be finalized in early 2020. Alongside strong advocacy within the Parliament and government Agencies, information materials reached more than 1,1 million and engaged 180,000 people.

On the issue of **undernutrition** affecting **indigenous children**, UNICEF completed a study on the “Determinants of child stunting among Yanomami children under 5”. The results were presented and discussed with the Yanomami indigenous community, where rates of child stunting are amongst the highest, and also shared and discussed in a national seminar with government, indigenous representatives and experts to define concrete actions. In addition, workshops on breastfeeding and healthy complementary food were delivered to two Indigenous Special Sanitary Districts prioritized by the Ministry of Health.

Brazil

In 2019, UNICEF continued to deliver interventions on **Early Childhood Development (ECD)**, an area which it looks to further build on and expand. UNICEF led a UN inter-agency task team securing Brazil's participation in the SDG fund on Social Protection to support the quality expansion of Brazil's home visiting programme, Criança Feliz. UNICEF also joined the National Pact for ECD promoted by the National Council of Justice and established a strong partnership with the Parliamentary Front for ECD, bringing together a wide network of partners to promote ECD practices. ECD interventions were promoted through the UNICEF Seal platform with over 6,000 early childhood schools engaged in a participatory process to improve the quality of early childhood education. The Baby Week initiative reached over 53,000 people in nine capitals, engaging families, health, education, social assistance professionals. In Rio de Janeiro, UNICEF supported a Baby Week in the juvenile justice system, advocating for the inclusion of the father's name in the birth certificate of adolescents in conflict with the law, highlighting violations on the rights of babies and young parents.

In **Education**, more than 180,000 out of school children and adolescents were identified across 3,050 municipalities (55% of municipalities in Brazil) through the implementation of UNICEF's School Active Search (SAS) strategy. A total of some 15,400 children and adolescent were re-enrolled in the public-school system as a result of this strategy. Local partnerships were key to re-enrolling children: in Rio de Janeiro alone, it was possible to re-enroll over 6,800 children and adolescents thanks to the partnership with NGO Cidade Escola Aprendiz, and the financial support of the Ministry of Education, which supported education managers in 24 municipalities with high levels of adolescent's homicides. A new massive online open course (MOOC) was developed and launched to improve the quality implementation of the SAS strategy, reaching over 4,700 managers from municipalities.

Improving the quality of education and learning, UNICEF rolled out the Successful School Pathways strategy to support schools, municipalities and states in improving the quality and inclusiveness of the curriculum with a special focus on gender, race and disabilities. The strategy is already being implemented in two states (Roraima, Sergipe) and in the Federal District partnering with state educational boards. Within UNICEF Seal, more than 5,000 municipal experts received remote assistance to implement the strategy to foster new inclusive curricula for the most vulnerable children and adolescents.

To guarantee permanence in school and contribute for the inclusion of children and adolescents with disabilities in public schools through physical education practices, more than 50,000 teachers and school managers enrolled in open Doors for Inclusion (*Portas Abertas para a Inclusão*), a massive online open course (MOOC), as a result of a partnership between UNICEF, Instituto Rodrigo Mendes and Fundación Barcelona. More than 8,600 participants have already been certified.

In **Child Protection**, UNICEF Brazil successfully implemented the first child protection capacity building cycle in the context of the UNICEF Municipal Seal Initiative, training over 1500 municipalities in the Amazon and Semi-Arid regions in the implementation of child protection systems. The focus was on sexual violence, the implementation of alternative measures to deprivation of liberty and on the reduction of homicides among adolescents.

UNICEF Brazil also developed a strategic framework to reduce the impact of armed violence on children and adolescents, highlighting the concept of territoriality as one of the main determinants of child vulnerabilities to become victims of such violence in urban settings. A total of four inter-sectoral committees to prevent Homicides in Adolescents are fully operational in Fortaleza, Salvador, Rio do Janeiro and São Paulo enabling sharing of good practices and strategies.

In 2019, UNICEF launched the study on "Education that prevents from Violence" highlighting the role of education in protecting children, particularly in low-income urban communities. The study was launched in Rio de Janeiro, gathering over 400 State and Municipal actors in education, social assistance as well as students and CSOs reviewing best practices and initiative to address violence in and around schools in communities affected by armed violence.

UNICEF's work on **empowerment of adolescents** built on the network of Adolescent Citizenship Groups established in over 1,500 municipalities enrolled in the UNICEF Municipal Seal and on the groups of adolescents that were mobilized in all ten capitals of the PCU. More than 39,102 adolescents engaged in life skills activities and public fora to discuss their rights with UNICEF support. The main issues addressed included the right to safe and inclusive sport; education for democratic citizenry and the right to vote; and healthy eating. Sports for Development initiatives trained 1,600 teachers, school managers and local authorities through Sports Caravans in eight municipalities, benefitting 24,000 children and adolescents.

Aligned with Gender Action Plan (**GAP**) programmatic priorities, UNICEF has been promoting non-gender-discriminatory roles, expectations and practices through adolescent empowerment programmes. In Recife, the Municipal Government identified girls' empowerment as a local public policy priority following UNICEF work on life skills development for adolescents, working with adolescents, technicians and decision-makers in communities with high adolescent pregnancy rates. New partnerships were established to disseminate the methodology to Salvador, São Paulo, Manaus and Belém in 2020. An innovative partnership with Dove allowed UNICEF to reach 707 adolescents in workshops

Brazil

on self-esteem and body confidence: the results of this work will be used for the development of a chatbot accessible to adolescents from all over Brazil.

The Generation Unlimited Youth Challenge initiative was adapted to the national context to support vulnerable adolescents in developing solutions to address issues of their interest. Over 700 adolescents were reached by peer-to-peer activities carried out by 18 adolescents. Building on this, UNICEF convened key partners to lay the groundwork for the activation of a GenU National Steering Committee in 2020.

Adolescents participation has also been an important tool to leverage the inclusion of indigenous youth and quilombola adolescents (Afro-Brazilian communities). In the Amazon region, a pilot methodology to promote the participation of quilombola adolescents in Social Assistance Reference Centers (CRAS) was pilot-tested in one city and a methodology to promote the participation of indigenous youth in public debates on education, indigenous movement, environmental issues, the right to health, including mental health was developed.

Finally, UNICEF supported Trilateral South-South Cooperation (TSSC) initiatives between the Government of Brazil and Angola (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), Argentina (Public Finance for Children) and São Tomé & Príncipe (Child Protection). Important steps have been taken towards a strengthened evidence-based TSSC agenda for children in Brazil and globally, with the development of a conceptual Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework and the implementation of an external evaluation covering eight years of cooperation with 16 countries.

Humanitarian Assistance for Venezuelan children and families on the move in Brazil

In 2019, UNICEF continued to scale its multi-sectoral humanitarian interventions to support the education, health, nutrition, WASH and child protection needs of the most vulnerable Venezuelan women, children and adolescents entering Brazil through the northern state of Roraima, one of Brazil's poorest and least populated states. In September, interventions were extended to Manaus and Belem in support of the newly created government led hubs for relocating migrants to other States in Brazil.

UNICEF and partners are currently running 23 integrated spaces, known as Super Panas, providing non-formal education opportunities and psycho-social assistance to children on the move in Boa Vista, Pacaraima and Manaus. The centers operate in the Government-run transit centers and shelters, as well as in the increasing number of informal shelters through mobile teams. These interventions reached over 11,500 children and adolescents with formal or non-formal education opportunities, including 5,734 girls and boys under 5 participating in early childhood education activities. Over 800 Venezuelan children and adolescents were supported to integrate the formal education system in Roraima. 27,600 children and adolescents were reached with psychosocial support interventions and over 760 cases of violence, exploitation and abuse were identified, supported and referred to relevant services. UNICEF is also working with 12,500 Venezuelan and Brazilian adolescents in schools and learning spaces, to foster local integration and increase their critical thinking skills through the UNICEF UpSHIFT methodologies on social entrepreneurship.

UNICEF is also supporting outreach capacity of the public health system through the operation of six health posts and two mobile health teams, which together contributed to the immunization of 3,300 children, the nutritional assessment of 2,400 children, and the distribution of nutritional supplements to 3,600 children. WASH interventions are benefiting an average 7,000 persons per month across nine shelters. A Cash-Based Intervention was launched in September supporting over 2,000 families (6,000 persons) to regularly access gender responsive hygiene items. C4D activities reached some 17,000 persons with messages on life-saving skills, protective practices and behaviors in WASH, Health, Nutrition, and information on access and use of available services.

Following the increasing number of unaccompanied and separated children, UNICEF worked with partners to support the identification and case management for these children. Two dedicated shelters (Casa Lar and Casa Passagem) were inaugurated in December in Boa Vista and Pacaraima.

With its longstanding presence in the Amazon, UNICEF is ensuring that humanitarian interventions are supporting and building on ongoing work with the municipalities in Roraima, Amazonas and Para. Over 460 municipal stakeholders were trained on child protection to strengthen capacities of the System of Guarantee of Child Rights across 14 municipalities of Roraima, including on procedures of temporary legal guardianship, and over 600 education professionals were trained on inclusive education, ensuring that the curriculum and learning are adapted to the needs of children and adolescents on the move.

In 2019, UNICEF continued to be an active member of the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform established by the UN Secretary-General to coordinate the response to refugees and migrants from Venezuela. In 2020 UNICEF will be co-leading the Education, WASH and Nutrition Sectors and the Child Protection Sub-sector.

Brazil

Public advocacy and citizen engagement on child rights

Against the background of a changed political landscape, UNICEF adapted its approach to communication, advocacy outreach and citizen engagement. UNICEF focused on identifying areas of common interest with the Government and on building relationships with key Ministries pursuing child rights goals through behind-the-scene engagement. In the second part of the year, UNICEF leveraged the 20th anniversary of the UNICEF Municipal Seal, the launches of the State of the World's Children Report on Nutrition and of the Successful School Pathways report, and particularly the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to more widely position in the public domain both the country's enormous achievements as well as persisting and new challenges for the realization of children's rights.

In addition to seeking the Government's recommitment to the CRC, UNICEF also invited the broad public through a multi-channel campaign to take action for children using the slogan "And you, what will you do?". It included TV PSAs, photo exhibitions in the National Congress and at a historical site in Salvador, Bahia, and the mobilization of influencers and adolescents on social media. UNICEF also organized public celebrations in several cities, including a national event involving parliamentarians, civil society and academia, where adolescents presented a Manifesto on their priorities for the realization of the CRC.

UNICEF's advocacy outreach generated 156 reports by prime TV broadcasters. Through the campaign "And you, what will you do?" UNICEF reached 7.7 million people with 3.5 million engaging with the messages. Throughout the year, UNICEF reached almost 300 million people on its various digital channels, 70 million more than in 2018.

Adolescent participation was also promoted through U Report. A variety of polls were developed for adolescents to voice their opinions on issues related to education, health, violence, equity, job market and other issues. A 17-year-old Brazilian adolescent, Felipe Caetano, was invited to give a speech during the UNICEF Executive Board Session. Three adolescents representing the Amazon, Semi-arid and Urban Centres, participated at the global Child Friendly Cities Initiative Summit that took place in Germany.

Private sector engagement and partnerships

UNICEF's engagement in private fundraising and partnerships in Brazil is growing each year in terms of funds raised; number of individual donors; partnerships with the private sector; and the impact on programme implementation. UNICEF Brazil raised BR\$ 48,4 million (approximately US\$ 12,2 million), a 3 percent increase versus 2018. The base of 227,308 individual pledge donors is one of the largest of all country offices. Companies and foundations that partner with UNICEF contributed financially and non-financially, with greater impact for children.

By end 2019, there were 18 companies and foundations partnering with UNICEF from sectors such as retail, banking, health care, pharmaceutical, electricity, telecommunication and technology. Financial contributions are significant, but these partnerships increasingly heighten impact and innovation for children. Major companies such as Samsung, Google, Itaú and Net Claro supported UNICEF with technology to address specific challenges in education and other areas. The alliance with MPT – Ministerio Publico do Trabalho – has generated good opportunities for financial support while strengthening the agenda to eliminate all forms of violence against children and child labor. In 2019, a Business Consultative Council with 11 members, most influent CEOs was created to further unlock innovation and fundraising growth for children.

Internal management and work climate

In September/October, the office went through an internal audit that concluded that the controls and processes were generally established and functioning. The office started addressing the identified recommendations to further improve internal management.

As a follow-up to the global Independent Task Force report on UNICEF work climate, the country office under the leadership of the Local Staff Association (LSA), established a volunteer-based "focus group" to come out with initial feedback and suggestions on the way forward. This resulted in a joint decision between LSA and management to hire external facilitation to lead a participatory internal reflection process to come up with a set of concrete recommendation. Meanwhile, the office promoted career development through the promotion of stretch assignments (12 in 2019) and encouraged flexible working modalities while promoting a performance culture in the office.

UNICEF Brazil significantly improved its premises and safety and security in most field offices. Four offices moved to nicer and safer locations and three offices were refurbished. The challenge remains to improve the premises in Recife and in particular in Brasilia where substantial restructuring is required.

Brazil

Lessons Learned and Innovations

The campaign for the 30th anniversary of the CRC was testament to the fact that despite a challenging human rights landscape, the overall willingness to engage for children's rights remains high among partners and the broad public. The high interaction with the mobilization campaign "And you, what will you do?" with almost half of those reached also engaging with the messaging – triggered also by the involvement of key influencers - demonstrated broad interest and commitment to children's issues. The CRC publication that highlights both the country's outstanding achievements and the severe shortfalls such as the extremely high homicide rates among adolescents, also reaffirmed the importance and power of evidence-based balanced analyses.

The UNICEF public positioning on sensitive topics - timely, impartial and substantial - produced positive results by strengthening UNICEF standing with stakeholders. In the aftermath of the death of nine adolescents and youths due to police action in the favela of Paraisópolis in Sao Paulo, the clear statement placed UNICEF in the position to work with partners for appropriate responses from the government.

Armed violence remains a major challenge in Brazil and in the Latin America and Caribbean region as a whole. In this regard the launch of the joint Child Protection and Education strategy "Educação é Proteção contra a violência" to address the issue of child protection within, near and related to the school, was a key milestone. Looking forward, more operational efforts are required to enhance programme convergence across education, child protection and adolescent interventions to create safe and protective environment for children and adolescents living in communities affected by armed violence.

The role of partnerships with the private sector for financial and non-financial resources and innovation is critical to advance child rights. For instance, co-creation and exchanges of practices with private sector partners has unveiled a great potential to foster innovative approaches to boost the active search of out-of-school children. It is also clear that business partners are open to engage their consumers and networking if we can provide simple, easy to understand advocacy messages and ways of communicating. At the same time, if we want to take on closer partnership with the private sector, UNICEF will need to review its planning dynamics to allow more flexibility for co-creation with the participation of business allies. More flexibility is also required on the operational and legal requirements that increasingly represent obstacles to broader alliances.

In 2019, ICT unit contributed with technology for development (T4D) to the School Active Search and Successful School Pathway strategies providing internal/in-house hiring of software developers. This change from the previous outsourced services brought an estimated cost avoidance/saving for the last 13 months in the amount of US\$ 235,000 as well as productivity increase of 43 per cent. This important contribution illustrates the importance to use T4D to untap other similar opportunities.

The continued migration flows in Brazil's northern region and the relocation of vulnerable migrants to other states, points to the need to ensure continuity of existing humanitarian interventions in Roraima, while expanding coverage to Manaus and Belem. This will require new partnerships with local NGOs, while simultaneously building on UNICEF's exiting programming partnerships with over 800 municipal and state authorities in Brazil's North Region. UNICEF will therefore invest in synergy and alignment of its humanitarian and programme interventions in the Amazon territory to better link municipal engagement on child rights with the migration and climate change agendas. Adolescent engagement can play a key role in this regard: for example, the use of design thinking (Upshift) approaches with Brazilian and Venezuelan adolescents produced excellent results to define solutions for issues related to access to public services, xenophobia, and integrative initiatives to face discrimination.

From an internal perspective, the Strategic Moment of Reflection, that the office undertook in 2019, was key to review programme results and strategies implemented in the first half of the Country Programme in order to align them to the evolving political context while simplifying the programme structure. As a result of the review, results were sharpened focusing on thematic priorities in health, education, child protection and adolescent empowerment and well-being, supported by a revised public and policy advocacy strategy. The coordination of the two municipal strategies to deliver country programme results (UNICEF Selo for small vulnerable municipalities across 18 states and the Urban Platform engaging 10 cities) was simplified, with one coordination mechanisms at Brasilia level. The territorial structure was finetuned to ensure a coherent and strategic approach in the Rio, São Paulo and Vitoria territory.

Managerial accountabilities were clarified at output level, with the annual management plan emphasizing the role of thematic working groups to ensure coordination and implementation across Brazil's nine field offices. Joint work planning was also strengthened to articulate country level annual targets across the three territories and ensure engagement of field teams in the preparation of thematic work plans. As the internal audit confirmed, these adjustments have proven to be an important step towards strengthening coordination and alignment of thematic strategies at sub-national levels and will need to be further sustained and deepened in 2020 and beyond.

Brazil

This year also reaffirmed the importance to continue to invest in staff wellbeing and working conditions. Only in 2019, four of the ten offices moved to safer and better premises and three were substantially refurbished providing better work conditions. On the other hand, Recife and Brasilia need relocation or restructuring as poor conditions are affecting staff morale. The active promotion of stretch assignments was well received for career development but raised concerns in terms of workload for colleagues requiring a more balanced strategy. The continued participatory reflection of the Independent Task Force report using focus group will be key to identify further actions to continue to improve the overall climate as well as safe and respectful work environment.